

SCHISMS IN THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(E. P. CHURCH) 1939 – 1991.



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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that in the preparation and presentation of this work, I have not sought assistance from anyone except as indicated in the reference. It is therefore my own original work.


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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the Glory of God the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit in whom I am what I am. (1 Corinthians 15:10)

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ABSTRACT

SCHISMS IN THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GHANA - 1939-1991

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (E. P. C.), Ghana, was established in 1847 by the North German Mission Society. Due to the events of the two World Wars, the Germans were deported and during their absence the United Church of Scotland and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches of America (the United Church of Christ, U. S. A.) took turns to superintend the Mission. After each of the wars, the Germans came back and nurtured their mission. From 1922, due to the First World War, the Bremen Mission Church became 'independent' prematurely of the Home Mission and from that time evolved into a Christian institution, within a Universal Reformed type of Christianity.

Between 1939 and 1991, a period of fifty-two years, the E. P. Church, the first established Church in the Volta Region, hitherto one family of Christians, experienced five major schisms.

In 1941, Prophet Wovenu, an evangelist of the E. P. Church at New Tadzewu established the Apostolic Revelation Society. In 1954, the congregations of the E. P. Church in the Buem Krachi area from Nkonya up to Kete Krachi excluding Worawora seceded and formed the Presbyterian Evangelical Church of Buem Krachi. In 1960, the late Mr. Frank Doh, also a member of the E. P. Church, established his White Cross Society at Etordome near Hlefi in the Kpedze District. In 1961, the late Sam John Amedzro a member of the Blengo E. P. Church established the Lord's Pentecostal Church. In 1964, Mr. Emmanuel Ntumi Atiegar one of the founders of the Accra New Town E. P. Church, established the Evangelical Presbyterian Reformed Church (Christ Evangelical Mission). Lastly, in 1991, a section of the E. P. Church became the core of the E. P. Church of Ghana.

The study attempts to establish the causative factors of these conflicts and their consequent 'Splits'. It seeks to establish that the conflicts were the result of not a single factor

but a combination of factors. Finally, the study attempts to give suggestions that would possibly reduce the occurrence of future divisions of the Church.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (hereafter referred to as the E. P. Church) is a Missionary Church, founded by the Northern Bremen Missionary Society, (hereafter referred to as the Bremen Mission). It was established first among the Ewes some of who occupy the Volta Region of Ghana. This explains why the bulk of its members are Ewes.

From 1922 to 1936, the Ewe Presbyterian Church in the British Mandatory Territory and Colony saw very important developments. The rapid growth of the Ewe Church within the unity of the Gold Coast Church and its sister church of the French Mandatory Territory necessitated the establishment of two separate administrative machineries. Rev. David Bensah was elected Moderator for the Ewe Church in the British zone with Rev. Robert Kwami as its Synod Clerk (1923).¹ The French zone also elected Rev. Andreas Aku as Moderator and Rev. Robert Baeta as Synod Clerk. Thus the two churches in the British and French zones became autonomous. Consequently, the need arose to prepare a more comprehensive document that would take care of the two sister churches in the Gold Coast and Togoland. The result of this need was the coming into being of what is called, "the 1931 Constitution"² of the Ewe Churches of the Gold Coast and Togo. This was a document written wholly by the African leaders of the Church.

The E. P. Church has contributed immensely to the development of the Volta Region and the nation as a whole in the areas of education, health care and agriculture, among others. The Church has thus built an image for itself both at home and abroad.

¹ Akpan Kwaku Mc Wilson - *The Emergence and Development of the Constitution of the E.P. Church and its Contribution to the Scheme of 1991* Mphil Thesis, (Unpublished) U.G. Legon, 1996, p. 52

² Akpan Kwaku Mc Wilson - *The Emergence and Development of the Constitution of the E.P. Church and its Contribution to the Scheme of 1991* Mphil Thesis, (Unpublished) U.G. Legon, 1996, p. 52

In 1926, the Church's name was changed from "the Bremen Mission" to "the Ewe Presbyterian Church"¹ in consonance with the establishment of the Presbyterian polity in the Ewe Church.

THE PROBLEM:

The L. P. Church, has been experiencing occasional conflicts which often result in sections of its members leaving it to form new churches. These conflicts in the Church have given it a chequered history of achievements and failures. The main effect of these conflicts and the resultant splits is that the good image of the church is eroded at home and abroad, in addition to the breakdown of the unity and peace in the Church. Since unity and peace are important factors that promote development and growth, the conflicts and their consequent divisions affect the development and growth of the E. P. Church in particular and the nation Ghana in general. If all the splits with healing gifts had remained in the E.P. Church, rather than seceding from it, there would have been greater physical and spiritual growth in the E. P. Church than it has experienced. Some of the conflicts and their resultant "break-ups" were violent. There were property and financial losses. Like all conflicts, rebuilding after conflicts means the retardation of ongoing development projects. Monies used in litigations could have been used for providing the basic needs of the members. These conflicts in the church also showed that the Christian virtue of love and forgiveness is not well established in the church.

What is Schism

Longman's Dictionary of Contemporary English, New Edition, defines schism as "a separation between parts originally of the same group, especially in the Christian Church"². The

¹ Aghetti, John K. - Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, 1847-1992, Accra, Manifold Tutorial Publications, 1990, p. 23

² Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, New Edition, 1987, pg. 931

Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English also defines it as "causing the separation of an organisation (especially a church into two or more groups, usually through differences of opinion"⁵. The two definitions agree that there is a separation of what was once a one whole.

The second definition added the cause of the separation as "differences of opinion". Relating these definitions to schisms in the E. P. Church, this study refers to separations that occurred in the history of the Church as the result of differences of opinion on various issues.

Schisms in the E. P. Church

In 1942, the E. P. Church at New Tadzewu under the leadership of Mr. Charles Nutornutsi Wovenu, became the Apostle Revelation Society. This separation was the result of the disagreement between Wovenu and the E. P. Church District headquarters at Abor.

In 1960, Frank Doh, of Etordome E. P. Church, established a separate Church, the White Cross Society. He felt he was empowered by God to use prayer and herbs to heal. He was also convinced that his practices were biblical in content and not Traditional African practices as the E. P. Church and its leadership thought. The Church, on the other hand felt that Doh's practices contradicted its established theological position.

In 1961, Sam Amedzro established the Lord's Church with the majority of its members from the Blengo E. P. Church. Like the Tadzewu and Etordome conflicts, Amedzro's The Lord's Pentecostal Church emerged as a result of differences in conviction and practices between his Prayer Group and the Blengo E. P. Church.

In 1964, Mr. Emmanuel Ntumi Atiegar, one of the leading founders of the Accra New Town E. P. Congregation broke away from it with a section of its members to form a new church, the E. P. Reformed Church.

⁵ <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/entry/10131761/schism>, Oxford Living Press, 1963, p. 206

In 1991, a section of the E. P. Church which include a large number of the Bible Study and Prayer Fellowship (B.S.P.F.) broke away to form the E. P. Church of Ghana. These break ups of the Church were as a result of disagreements over liturgical, doctrinal, policy, and ethical issues.

The divisions occurred in the Church as the result of differences in opinion of individuals and groups within the Church. There were differences of opinion on doctrinal issues as to which practices were Christian or not. Also, there were disagreement over constitutional procedures. The causes of the conflicts were many and those involved were different at different times and locations. Joseph R. A. Aryee in his article, "Conflict Resolution and Grievances Redressing Mechanisms at the District Levels in Ghana" wrote,

One of the inevitable aspects of human interaction is conflict. It is generated by the presence of several actors and exacerbated by several choices and decisions. Although conflict is unavoidable and therefore, inevitable, mechanisms must be found or devised to keep it within limits.⁶

What Aryee means by the above, is that human beings live together but they differ in understanding and action, therefore conflict is bound to occur but society must find means of controlling conflicts so that they do not become violent, destructive and divisive. I agree with Aryee's view as above and I aim at examining the causes of the Church's conflicts and coming out with suggestions that will help the church to contain future conflicts, managing them to fulfil the demands, goals and aspirations of her members.

In the E. P. Church from 1939 to 1991, the congregation of the E. P. Church at Tadzewu, as in the cases of Etordome, Blengo and Accra New Town congregations and some members in many congregations of the E. P. Church all over Ghana, had disagreements with the church at various times and places. The disagreements were on doctrinal issues relating to Reformed Practices and Pentecostalism (charismatic phenomenon). Some of the conflicts were Church

⁶ Joseph R. A. Aryee, "Conflict Resolution and Grievances Redressing Mechanisms at the District levels" in *Democracy and Conflict Resolution in Ghana* (ed) Mike Chigye 1995 (Accra: Ene Publications Ltd) 7-11

polity relating to organisation, administration and constitution, among others. There were also disagreements on liturgical issues relating to healing, taboos and prayers.

There were also disagreements on ethical issues relating to finance, moral conduct, accountability and personal issues. But the core issue of the conflicts reveals the nature of charismatic spirituality in a Reformed Church. It is the way the E. P. Church of the Reformed tradition reacts towards Pentecostal-charismatic appeals in the church through the years under review. As a Reformed, and always a Reformed Church, one would think that the E. P. Church would be accommodating to charismatic flares while the Roman Catholic tradition with its closed polity shall be hostile to charismatic. In real life as the study would show it was the opposite; the E. P. Church was inimical to charismatic pretensions while the Roman Catholic tradition is hospitable to charismatic. The author aims at finding out why the E. P. Church could not tolerate pentecostal/charismatic flares.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to

- a. Investigate the history of each conflict and its resulting division.
- b. Find and examine factors, which contribute to each of the conflicts.
- c. Find out the common pattern of the conflicts.
- d. Finally, make suggestions that will help to manage future conflicts and thereby reduce the occurrences of divisions in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although schisms have occurred in the E. P. Church, there is very little documentation on them. Even the little that exists is fragmented. Thus the study attempts to investigate the five schisms and document the findings for future use of scholars and the general reading public.

The study intends to review literature under the following categories.

- a) historical origin of the E. P. Church.
- b) schisms in general (African churches).
- c) historical origin of the “break away churches” under review by the author’
- d) Pentecostalism and Charismaticism in Ghana.

Historical Origin of E. P. Church

Agbeti, John Kofi. . Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, 1847-1992, 1990. Accra. This work provided the author with sketches of the historical origin and development of the E. P Church. It supported the work of a German missionary, Paul Wieggrabbe, Ewe Mission Nutinya, 1846-1936 (The History of the Ewe Mission). I, being an Ewe, used the first handwork of Wieggrabbe to crosscheck Agbeti’s historical narration since Wieggrabbe’s work ended up in 1936. and Agbeti’s work provided a continuation of the history of the Church as narrated by Wieggrabbe up to the 1970’s. The next work by Meyer also continued the narration through the 1990’s.

Birgit Meyer, Translating the Devil, an African Appropriation of Pietist Protestantism - The case of the Peki Ewe in Southern Ghana, 1847 - 1992. Meyer’s work covered the history of the last conflict in the E. P. Church. Meyer gave a background history of the North Bremen Mission, an area that had not been covered by most writers of the history of the E. P. Church. Her knowledge of German has given her advantage, to get access to the primary sources of the missionary reports written in the German language as well as access to people like Paul Wieggrabbe, the last of the missionaries who was in Ghana from 1926 to 1936. Her work gave a deep insight into the pietistic tradition. Meyer’s work provided premises to assess the ways in which the Ewe Protestants transformed Pietist version of Christianity to the E. P. Church Her

work supported the author's assertion that the "cultural and linguistic boundary that separates them (the Ewes and their allies) from the missionaries", were the initial source of conflict between the mission Christians. The author attempts at finding out why members of the E. P. Church are eager for prayer groups and sometimes go to traditionalists after church attendance.

Eugene Grau, 1964, The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Ghana and Togo) 1944 - 1946. A study in European Mission Relations affecting the beginning of an indigenous church. A German-born American Missionary wrote this work. Like Meyer, he had access to the German language, an advantage over other historians about the E. P. Church. He was able to use manuscripts written in German about the E. P. Church. He therefore, like Meyer, had a deeper knowledge about both the missionaries and their work in the Gold Coast and Togo. His work sub-titled "Congregation Becomes a Church 1922-1926" gave an insight into the origin and role of the synod. Under "misunderstandings" Grau pointed out that the Germans did not agree to the Presbyterian polity of church democracy. He quoted Beveridge, a Scottish Missionary's answer to a German's resentment of a synod's authority as saying:

It is annoying to find pastors and even missionaries are ready to weaken the authority of Synod Committee.

This is an indication that all was not well with the Presbyterian polity of church democracy from the time the Germans returned. The study seeks to find out what was wrong with the polity that even the German Missionaries resented it.

Schisms:

Under schisms, the author reviewed two works, first, Barret, D. B. Schisms and Renewal in Africa. 1968. In the author's statement of his problem, he felt that the phenomenon of schism was peculiar to the E. P. Church just as Barret thought it was to Western Kenya. Barret's work,

however, showed that the phenomenon "was a universal one in Africa with a history of over one hundred years".⁷

Barret asked, "whether hard experience of crises from one region of the world can be used to avoid the recurrence of similar crises in another region?"⁸ The answer to this question the author hopes will help other missionary established churches in particular and Christians in general to avoid the frequent occurrences of divisions in the churches. They can make the avoidance when they study the causes of the conflicts and the pattern they follow critically. Barret deduced that every Missionary Church in Africa has the potentiality of schism when he wrote:

The Schismatic bodies are therefore only part of a much larger movement of dissidence, the bulks of which remain in amorphous form within the Protestant and Catholic Churches. Conditions within these historical churches remain sufficiently inhospitable for the movements to continue breaking off...⁹

This warning by Barret had caused the author to find out what were the "conditions in the E. P. Church, a historical church, which set off schisms. It is also a warning to churches not to be complacent but be on the alert.

Schisms in the E. P. Church - the Historical origin of 'break away' Churches from the E. P. Church

C. G. Baeta, in Prophetism in Ghana was the first to be reviewed under this category. Published in 1962, it is one of the oldest to write on the Apostles Revelation Society and the White Cross-Society, two of this study's subjects. His interest was in identifying these two churches as, types of Christianity in Ghana. He did not show interest in their secession from the

⁷ David Barret, 1968, *Schisms and Renewal in Africa*, Nairobi, Oxford University Press, p. xvii

⁸ Ibid, p. xvii

⁹ Ibid, p. 4

E. P. Church. His work however, provided some of the causative factors of their conflict with the E. P. Church. For example, Wovenu was accused of practising exorcism, ritual sacrifice and polygamy among others. The study will investigate the causes recorded by C. G. Baeta and uncover others through further readings and interviews.

Agbo, F. D. K. wrote. Charismatic Qualities of a Religious Leader - Case Study of Apostles Revelation Society (A R S) 1975. His main thrust was to prove that Wovenu was called and chosen by God to do what he was doing. Agbo's charismatic assertion is similar to David Barrets work on, "Johana Owala, who left the Church Missionary Society in Kenya, to form the Moniya (god has given me a revelation) Luo Mission³. The meaning of Moniya - God has given me a revelation is parallel to Agbo's defence of Wovenu's Apostle's Revelation Society. Agbo's work had given a pattern, which runs parallel through all the five major schisms under review as follows:

- i. A member of the E. P. Church, in a congregation had a "call" from God through a dream or vision to start a prayer and healing group to help the people who are in bondage.
- ii. The group starts as a part of the E. P. Church. It starts revivals and innovations and practices that are at "variance" with the laid down practices of the E. P. Church.
- iii. The E. P. Church, in her pietistic position feared that her identity as a member of the Reformed Tradition is being threatened by Pentecostal flames. She therefore prohibits the deviant practises
- iv. Leaders and their followers on doctrinal grounds left the E. P. Church rather than for-go what the E. P. Church called deviant practices.

The study sets out to find out the parallel of this pattern in the five separatist churches under review.

Another literature reviewed is the work of Atakro MacWilson, 1996, The Emergence and Development of the Constitution of 1991, M. Phil. Thesis (unpublished) University of Ghana.

His main emphasis was on the 1991 schism, this schism is the fifth subject of this study among four others. Secondly, Atakro's main thrust was that the Constitutional issues were the major cause of the 1991 conflict and division. This study attempts to show that the constitutional issues were the immediate causes and that other factors such as issues of polity, ethics, and doctrine have equally contributed to the 1991 conflict.

Atakro's work gives a detailed account of the constitutional issues therefore this study will devote more time and space to the other factors that his work did not treat in detail. Atakro's work had also recorded the occurrence of the first four conflicts¹⁰ and divisions as historical events in the life of the E. P. Church.

Amedzo F. K., 1986, Indigenization within the E. P. Church, Ghana. In his long Essay for B. A. (Hons) Degree, University of Ghana. Amedzo reviewed the attitude of the indigenous leaders of the E. P. Church towards African culture with the intention to create an authentic African Church. Against this backdrop, the author tried to see how successful this intention was. The author, with Amedzo's work as background knowledge, reviewed Dzobo's indigenization moves. The question the author must answer is, "if Indigenization started long before Dzobo, why then was a section of the E. P. Church against Dzobo's indigenization moves?"

In order to know and understand the founders of the Prayer and the Healing groups under study, the author reviewed two works on Pentecostalism and Charismaticism. The first is Emmanuel Kingsley Kwabena Larbi's Ph. D. published thesis. The Development of Ghanaian Pentecostalism: A Study of the appropriation of the Christian Gospel in Twentieth Century Ghana Setting with special Reference to the Christ Apostolic Church, the Church of Pentecost and the International Central Gospel Church, 1995 University of Edinburgh. Although this work

¹⁰ Atakro, M. A. and K. 1996. The Emergence and Development of the constitution of the E. P. Church. Journal of the members of 1991 M. A. Ph. D. (Hons) (unpublished) UG, Legon, p.52

was based on the Akan concepts and worldview, it has its parallel among the Ewes. The historical background of the mission churches treated partly concerned the author's work as in the case of the German Bremen Society and its work in the Trans-Volta Area. More importantly to this work was Larbi's treatment of:

- a) the Pentecostal Churches (page 60)
- b) the charismatics in the mainline churches (page 72)
- c) Pentecostalist Prayer Camps (page 82)

Larbi's work helped the author to find out parallel Pentecostal ethos in the subjects of his study and their influences in the E.P. Church cases.

Hans, W. Debrunner, in his book, History of Christianity in Ghana, has written a few things about the Apostles Revelation Society. He did not write about the origin of the society but wrote on some of the teachings of the society. This helped the author of this work to observe the roles of the sacred objects and rituals mentioned in Debrunner's work. His work is thus, regarded as a secondary source for the study.

Birgit Meyer, has provided an in-depth study on the E. P. Church, the Lord's Pentecostal Church and the E. P. Church of Ghana. It has gone into great detail on the background histories of the Bremen Mission and the E. P. Church. It explained the rationale behind the formation of the Bremen Mission¹¹. In the case of the E. P. Church of Ghana, Meyer provided the study with details of the factors of the conflict. Meyer's Christian traditional diabolology asserted that the Pietist Missionary Society in Bremen believed that Satan, a fallen angel from heaven aided by demons (evil spirits), usurped the power of God on earth. They are responsible for evil acts on earth. The pietists believed that all non-Christian religions are the domain of the Devil.

Mike Oquaye (ed), Democracy and Conflict Resolution in Ghana, 1995 Gold-Type Publications Ltd., Accra, 233

People whose behaviour did not conform to pietist standards were assumed to be ruled by the Devil. They, thus encounter Satan directly through people. For example, people who lead their friends into evil acts. The only way to escape Satan and its agents was to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and be baptized in his name. People who fell into satanic bondage were freed through exorcism. Her theory is that the pietists had personified Satan and created a dual cosmology, one belonging to God and Christians and the other belonging to Satan and his agents. The author, however, wants to find out in the field the role of African traditional worldview and ideology as expressed in the E. P. Church.

Meyer however did not treat the other conflicts, which occurred in the Church outside Peki. For example, the Tadzewu, Etordome and Accra New Town conflicts and the study attempts covering these.

Agbenyenu Godwin's work, Appraisal of the Conflict in the E. P. Church, Ghana was devoted to the 1991 Schism in the E. P. Church that involved a section of the E. P. Church. It affirmed the author's contention that conflicts in the E. P. Church are a combination of many factors. Agbenyenu has mentioned Wovenu and Doh's conflict as past historical events, which should have attracted reconciliatory committees but did not. He, however, did not write about the conflicts of Amedzo and Atiegar.

METHODOLOGY

The study used both secondary and primary sources

Secondary Source

The study started with the Secondary Source. This was the aspect of the documentary research, which was done in the libraries, archives and offices. The relevant books and documents on the study were sought and read. Some of these were mentioned in the literature review and the rest formed the core of the bibliography.

The secondary source provided the study with the background knowledge of the various groups and personalities. It was also useful later in clearing doubts in some areas encountered in the field. It enabled the research to confirm ideas and words of scholars incorporated in the study. These acknowledgments formed the bibliography of this work.

Primary Source:

The E. P. Church, Ghana and the five churches, which emerged from it, provided the primary source for this study. The churches at Peki, Tadzewu, Jordan, Accra New Town and Ho, the head offices of the two E. P. Churches, the Christian Council of Ghana, and the Volta Regional House of Chiefs (hereafter, V.R.H.C.) have documents like session minutes and committee reports on the various conflicts and their resultant divisions. The documents were collected, studied and analysed. They included the various committee and synod minutes and reports on the study. Newspaper reports on the study, although often distorted, helped in identifying the various events as true historical events.

The study used interview schedules as the method for collecting the core of its data from leaders and members who witnessed the events under study as well as from experts on the events. It used group interviews on some occasions and individual interviews on others. Group interviews with elders and group members ensured answers to researcher's questions always because at least one of them comes up with the answer when others fail. The individual interviews were helpful when delicate and emotional issues were being dealt with. It made the interviewee feel free to give personal views without the influence of the presence of another party.

The greatest advantage of the interview method is that it enabled the researcher to collect information from all members of the group under study; adults, children, literates and illiterates because it involved verbal responses which all, except the verbally handicapped, could do.

Its greatest disadvantage on the other hand is that it cost more money because it involves much travelling.

ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study is organized into six chapters.

Chapter 1, which is the Introduction, seeks to state the context of the problem and outline the aims and objectives of the study, followed by a review of the relevant literature and methodology.

Chapter 2 deals with the historical background of the E. P. Church, from its establishment in 1847 up to date. It seeks to state the ethos of each missionary group that worked in the E. P. Church and how these teachings moulded the Church into a particular form.

Chapter 3 describes the first three conflicts in the Church involving Wovenu, Doh and Amedzro and the result of these conflicts. In the descriptions the study seeks to link the crisis with the mission heritage and the African worldview.

Chapter 4 deals with the conflicts and the consequent divisions between Atiegari and E. P. Church of Ghana.

Chapter 5 deals with the appraisal of the study.

Chapter 6 concludes the study with summary and suggestions.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

The study will serve as a document on the Churches under review on which future researches could draw. Drawing from the study as a document will point to researchers areas that the study had left out, thus providing new areas for future researches on the five churches and on conflict and conflict resolutions.

Practically, the study as a document would attempt to sensitize the churches on factors that generate conflicts and eventual divisions. This awareness will, it is hoped, minimize the

occurrences of divisions in the church. It is also hoped to sensitize on human relations and conflict management and resolutions.

The findings of the study would have applicability to other historical churches in Ghana and would enable them to learn from the mistakes and effects of conflicts.

CHAPTER TWO
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GHANA
INTRODUCTION

The E. P. Church is like the Biblical "Mustard Seed"¹². It evolved from the infant stage of a Mission Post at Peki Blengo in 1847 to an independent indigenous church in 1922. It went through the careful tutelage of three different missionary groups. These were:

- a). The North German Mission Society (the Norddeutsche Mission)¹³, a "nineteenth century pietist society,"¹⁴ did the pioneering work of planting the Church in Eweland (1847) until 1916 when its missionaries were arrested and deported during the First World War¹⁵.
- b). The United Free Church of Scotland in conjunction with the Church of Scotland took over the patronage and care of the E. P. Church in the English speaking areas of the former German Togoland and the Gold Coast Colony. This was at the request of the British Colonial Office, London in 1923.
- c). Lastly, the Evangelical and Reformed Churches, now members of the United Church of Christ, U. S. A., took over the missionary work in 1946 when the Germans were deported again as a result of the Second World War - Germany being the aggressor.

During the evolutionary years, 1847 to 1960, the E. P. Church, through the teachings of the Germans, Scottish and Americans, evolved to become a member of the Reformed family of the Presbyterian type of Christianity. The E. P. Church became an indigenous Church

¹² Matthew 13:31 (Mark 4:31 Luke 13:19)

¹³ Agbeti, John. Kofi. *Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, 1847-1992*, Accra Tutorial College Publications, 1990, p. 21

¹⁴ Meyer, Birgit. *Translating the Devil: An African Appropriation of Pietist Protestantism*, Amsterdam, Doctoral Dissertation, p. 66

¹⁵ Wiegandt, Paul. *The Mission Nuts of 1847-1916*. The Board of International Missions, U.S.A., p.48

independent of the missionary bodies overseas that established it but remained a member of the African and the World Bodies of the Reformed Tradition.

THE REFORMED TRADITION

One common denominator of the three missionary societies that moulded the E. P. Church into the Presbyterian brand of Christianity was the Reformed Tradition. The three missionary societies were members of the reformed family. Being members of one and the same tradition enabled them to sustain and attain the goal of establishing an “indigenous” church, an expression of the distinctive Bible centred Church, free from Europe’s direct denominational control and yet not isolated from the Universal Church.¹⁶ Thus, even though the three missions and societies used different approaches, they worked towards a common goal as members of the Reformed Tradition.

The Reformed Tradition had its roots in Martin Luther’s Protestant Reformation in 1517. Members of this tradition bear a variety of names, notably: Presbyterian, Reformed and Congregational. Thus the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana are expressions of the Reformed Tradition.¹⁷ At this point, it is apt to describe the main teachings of the Reformed Tradition. This is because some of these teachings are important to some of the conflicts. It would also show which of these teachings the superintending societies introduced and sustained in the E. P. Church.

The Reformed Tradition is founded on two basic principles. First, that “salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as a Personal Saviour”. Secondly, “the Scripture (the Bible)”

Gras, Eugene - The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (Ghana and Lagos 1914-1946): A Study in European-Mission Relations Affecting the Beginning of an Indigenous Church, 1964, p. 124

Nyame-Nyame, K. “The Reformed Tradition in Ghana and some of its Challenges”. *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, Vol. 3, Dec. 1993, No. 2, p. 17

is the only source of authority for all matters of faith in Christian thought and action". These two rules provide the basis for all other principles of the Reformed Tradition.

Apart from the above basic principles there are the following distinctive features of the Reformed Tradition:

Worship

In spite of local variations within the Reformed family, the following characteristics apply to all Reformed worship:

- a) Reformed worship is focused upon the praise of God, not on the experience of the worshipper.
- b) It testifies to the centrality and authority of the Bible in Christian faith and practice.
- c) It emphasizes the importance of personal and corporate prayer.
- d) It emphasizes the singing of psalms and other hymns that depend heavily on the Bible for their content.
- e) Reformed worship emphasizes the importance of preaching as a means of grace.
- f) It reflects the importance of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper in Christian faith and life.¹⁹

Creeds and Confessions:

Creeds and Confessional statements are part of the Reformed Tradition. The Apostles Creed and Confession during the Lord's Supper are the common creed and Confession in the E. P. Church. Their authority stems from Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church to whom they point and they are interpretations of biblical truths.

Form of Government

The Reformed Tradition does not allow centering authority in one person as the Catholics do in the person of the Pope. At the same time it does not allow too open a democracy, that is,

¹⁹ Wallace M. Wilson, 1979. Guides to the Reformed Tradition: The Church, John Knox Press, Atlanta, p. 132.



absolute freedom to do as one pleases. In other words, democracy should not be taken for lawlessness. The Reformed Tradition therefore, has a government that emphasizes governing bodies (courts). Representatives at these governing bodies are elected by members and are held to be first and foremost responsible to God and then to the people who elected them. These courts in the large majority of cases are the Session, the Presbyteries and the Synods. Each court works with appropriate committees.

The Role of Pastors

The Reformed Tradition emphasizes the principle of “the priesthood of all believers”¹⁹ that is, the ministry of Christ is given not only to a particular person or group of people, but to the entire Church and is distributed among many officers. With the above principle in mind, the Reformed Tradition upholds pastors as “teaching elders” who have been called and trained to preach and teach the word of God, to administer the sacraments and lead in pastoral care. To enable them to carry out these special duties, the tradition strictly recommends that pastors must be fully equipped spiritually, academically and emotionally. Hence the tradition puts premium on high quality and thorough training. The governing courts confirm their call and monitor their training.

The Reformed Tradition and Society.

The Tradition does not see salvation as an end in itself but rather as a means to an end. It therefore upholds the view that human beings are saved to serve, that is, it invites others into the kingdom of God (evangelism) and to respond to the needs of the society in which they live. In other words, Christian spirituality includes action that is relevant to society.

¹⁹ “Ela ye are ahoem gromon, ahoem priesthood.” I Patr 29

Reformed and Always Reforming.

The Reformed Tradition is not static. Setri Nyomi puts it like this: "It is not a tradition carefully protected from adulteration for the past four hundred years. It is a living heritage which continues to be built upon to meet the needs of every time and culture"²⁰. The Reformed Tradition is therefore supposed to be opened up to changes so as to meet the various challenges of the time. Each of the missionary groups that nurtured the E. P. Church laid emphasis on these features of the Reformed Tradition. They put in place structures that would facilitate the development, growth and sustenance of these features. For example, the Ewe Bible and Hymn book are to facilitate the Reformed Tradition among other things. The Church's Constitution contains liturgy, ethics and policy of the E. P. Church.

THE NORTH GERMAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY (THE BREMEN MISSION)

For a clearer understanding of the E. P. Church as an institution, that has stood the test of time, it is apt that a retrospective review is made of the Founding Society (the Norddentsche Mission) which had its headquarters first in Hamburg, then moved to Bremen in North Germany²¹.

Historical records cited by J. K. Agheti, Birgit Meyer and Williamson respectively assert that from 1700, Protestant Christians in North Germany decided to send missionaries to countries that were not Christian. The emphasis was on Evangelization, that is, to bring Christianity to people who were not Christians²².

The North German Mission Society was formed on the 11th April, 1836 with Rev. John Hartwing Brauer as its first inspector. The main belief of the founding members of the society as stated in the Encyclopedia of Religion is as follows, "Meaningful religiousness must involve the complete religious renewal of the individual believer. The fruit of such renewal must be visible

²⁰ Setri Nyomi, 1993 (p. 18)

²¹ Craig, 1964 (p. 1)

²² Ibid, p. 2

in the form of "piety", that is, life expressively of love for God and man built on vivid sense of the reality of God's presence in all situation of life²³. This type of Christianity demands that converts must dedicate their total life to the love of God and humankind in all spheres of life. It centered its concept of religious authority on the Bible. The founders of the North German Missionary Society (hence to be referred to as the Bremen Mission) were pietistic and therefore they offered a pietist type of Christianity through their missionaries to the Eweland. In Grau's work: Missionary Policies as seen in the work of missions with the E. P. Church, Ghana, it is affirmed that the Presbyterian Churches in the Gold Coast and Eweland, were direct offshoots of the Swabian Pietism. He quotes Rev. Dr. C. G. Baeta as follows:

We in the Presbyterian Churches of this land are direct offshoot of Swabian Pietism and please God. This type of Christian witness may never be wiped out from the earth²⁴.

In Baeta's writing about Dr. Ken Hartenslein, a former director of the Basel Mission part of which was quoted above, he pointed out some tenets of pietism as follows.

.. Swabian Pietism, that particular expression of Christianity which so successfully combined fervent earnestness, deep humility, enthusiasms curbed by sober and realistic self-restraint, distaste for fuss, display, exuberance or extravagance of any kind, and simple straight forward faith in God, the Bible and sound doctrine²⁵

The above characteristics of Swabian pietism underscored the ethos of the Bremen Mission between 1847 and 1916. This pietist type of Christianity is rooted in the socio-economic background of North Germany in the eighteenth century. The 1800's were the period of Industrial Revolution and urbanization in Europe. It was a period of transition from traditional operative agrarian society to increasingly modern, democratic industrial ones. The change

²³ Encyclopaedia of Religion, Vol. 2, New York, Maxwell Publication Company, 1987 p. 3

²⁴ Grau, Eugene, 1968, Missionary, "Policies As Seen in the Work of Missions with the E.P. Church, Ghana", p 77

²⁵ Grau, E. Ibid

brought along its negative life patterns. The pietistic, being moralists, abhorred the industrial urban life such as greed and strife, cheating and oppression of the poor and extravagance of all kinds. Instead, they advocated ascetic type of life and laid emphasis on Bible study²⁶.

Using the Great Commission, Matthew 28:19, "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples..." as basis, the pietist deemed it a solemn duty to bring "people of the world"²⁷ to Christianity. They formed revival groups, some of which became founding members of missionary societies.

The North German Missionary Society's aim was to send missionaries to other lands to evangelize. Rev. John Hartwig Brauer, its first Inspector assigned to effect the evangelization of other lands set up a missionary school in Hamburg on 10th October 1837. The school was moved to Bremen, which later became the headquarters of the society. Bremen as the headquarters accounted for the society being known and called, the Bremen Mission. The name also referred to converts of the Bremen society as affirmed by Paul Wiegrabe in his book, Ewe Kristo Hame Nutinya; "Bremen Hamea" (Bremen Mission) for the Church established by the Bremen Mission. "Bremen Mission Hametorwo" (Members of the Bremen Mission Church) for members of the Church established by the Bremen Mission²⁸. Lutheran and Reformed Groups founded the Bremen Mission. It started as a non-confessional society so as not to produce "little copies" of the home church but an indigenous missionary society with an expression of a distinctive Bible Centred Church. A Church free from Europe and America's denominationalism yet not isolated from the universal church. A Church with a distinctive liturgy, Church Order and Hymnal²⁹.

²⁶ Meyer, Hegt, Op.cit, p. 21

²⁷ "People of the world" as used by the German pietists is referred to people who have not known Christ and have trusted, He not accepted Him as their Lord and Saviour.

²⁸ Wiegrabe, Paul, Op.cit, p. 54

²⁹ Meyer, Hegt, 1996, op.cit, p. 18

Unfortunately for the society, soon after its organization, many of the Lutheran groups became strictly Lutheran societies and withdrew their support for the North German Mission. The incident of the Lutheran withdrawal left the rest of the member groups of the society purely Reformed even though it continued to pursue the non-denominational policy.

The society sent out its first missionaries to New Zealand on December 25th 1842, the second to India on May, 26th 1843 and the third to West Africa on March 18th 1847. It was this third group made up of Lorenz Wolf, Juer Bultman, James Graff and Karl Flats that eventually ended up at Peki in 1847. They arrived in Cape Coast on 5th May, 1847. Bultman and Wolf left for Gabon two weeks later, to explore the possibility of opening a station there. Their attempt was unsuccessful; Bultman died soon after their arrival there and the French Authorities in Gabon would not allow rivalry between their Roman Catholic Missionaries working there and the German Protestant Missionaries. Wolf returned to Cape Coast to learn that Flats too had died. They, however, learnt about the work of their compatriots, the Basel Missionaries at Christianborg. Wolf and Graff therefore went to Accra. At Christianborg, they learnt about Peki in Eweland and the desire of its Chief Kwadzo Dei II for Missionaries. Wolf, guided by Prince Nyangamagu the son of Kwadzo Dei who was then a pupil in Accra arrived at Peki Blengo on Sunday the 14th of November 1847. Lorenz Wolf was thus the First Missionary of the Bremen Mission and he "planted the gospel seed" that became the E. P. Church today.

Although the Bremen Mission started the E. P. Church as a non-denominational mission, it did not lose sight of its Reformed Tradition. The main purpose of the mission in coming to Eweland was to invite the people of the land into the kingdom of God, that is to evangelize and win the people over to Christ. In the Reformed vein, therefore, the Bremen Mission put a premium on evangelization. From 1847 to 1918 when the last missionary of the society left the field for Germany, the society's emphasis was on preaching and teaching of the word of God, the Bible. The mission schools became effective tools of evangelization during their stay in Ewe

Church. Agbeti recorded that "On 8th February, 1848, Wolf opened a school with 14 boys. He taught them Biblical History, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Singing..."³⁰ and from that time the Bremen Mission effectively used both the formal and informal schools to build up the Ewe Church from a mission post in 1847 to an independent indigenous church in 1922. The formal schools made use of the children who are more teachable than adults of the society. They were taught Biblical text stories and hymns in the schools and they in turn taught their peers and adult members at home. This heritage has provided the E. P. Church with quality leaders. The African Assistants were instrumental in evangelization and in helping to bring more people to Christ as shown by the following statistics in Table I below:

Table 1 Statistics of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Gold Coast of Ten-Year Period from 1890 to 1910 (1913)

Year (10 yrs.) Interval	Europeans Missionaries	Native Pastors	Native Catechists	No. of Christians	Scholars Graduates of Bremen Missionary School	Stations
1890	19	1	16	717	358	3
1900	33	1	62	2,316	1,296	4
1910	58	3	213	8,274	5,895	8
1913	40	7	244	11,341	7,311	15

Source: West African Church History-Christian Missionary Training, 1842-1972, New York, E. J. Brill, 1991, p. 63.

The Statistics above demonstrated the following trends: A careful look at these figures reveals that the increases in the number of African Assistant could be a contributing factor of the spectacular increases in membership of the Church from 1890 to 1910. There was an increase of 197 African Assistants in two decades with a corresponding increase of Christians numbering 7557.

The statistics also showed that there could be other contributory factors like increase in the number of European missionaries who were supervisors. Thus one can mention increasing supervision as a contributing factor to the increase of Christians. The statistics also revealed an increase in graduants from the Mission Schools. This could also partly account for the corresponding increase in Christians since the school graduants could be employed as teachers and catechists.

The Bremen Mission complemented the formal education with the informal schools as agents of evangelization. Some of the courses pursued at the Mission Seminary were Catechism, the art of supervising, counselling, and fostering peace to mention but a few. These were also taught in special catechumen classes for beginners, lay persons and believers. Special syllabi were designed to provide special education for converts before baptism. Believers, who were to be confirmed as full members of the Church, had to go through confirmation lessons. Couples getting ready for marriage went through counselling. Lay members were chosen to

become elders in the Church. As members of the Reformed Tradition with high premium on quality and thoroughness, the missionaries and their agents took these classes seriously and their products,

such as Aku,³¹ Baeta³² and Kwami³³ proved the worth of the effort. They lived according to the tenets of the Swabian pietism quoted above. People who upheld the Bremen Missionary views of strict discipline and thoroughness often came into conflict with people who held opposing views. The most effective means instituted in the E. P. Church by the Bremen Mission that served to unite the congregations into a united church were the liturgy, the Hymn Book and the Church Order. The liturgy was translated from a liturgy produced by the Basel Mission in South India by Lodholz in 1875. The first part dealt with worship services, the second part with Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, Wedding, funeral and Ordination. It also had a list of invocations and the Apostles' Creed³⁴.

The liturgy ensured uniformity of worship in the Church and brought into the Church a universal identity. A deviation from this form of worship, the elderly members fear, would make the E. P. Church lose the church's inherited tradition. Either the church's attempt to maintain this mode of worship as in the liturgy became a factor of conflict or the attempt to deviate from their mode of worship became a factor of conflict. The second edition, of the Church's Hymnal by J. Knusi containing the same number of hymns was edited by Burgi. to contain 251 hymns with notes and was published in 1896. Again hymns are peculiar Reformed features, thus its possession brought the E. P. Church into union with the Reformed family. The heritage of hymns and hymn singing also contributed to some of the conflicts in the E. P.

³¹ Very Rev. Aku Andreas was one of the pioneer student of the Western School in Germany. He became the moderator of the Church in 1922.

³² Rev. C.G. Baeta-Prof. Erenmas was Synod Clerk from 1946-1948.

³³ Rev. Robert N. Kwami, a pioneer student of the Western School in Germany – was the first Synod Clerk of the E. P. Church 1927-1945.

³⁴ *Conf. E. op. cit.* p. 22

Church, as the study will show in chapters 3 and 4. The first Church Order, which evolved to become the Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana and Eglise Evangelique Presbyterienne du Togo, was produced by Zahn, the Bremen Mission Inspector (1900). The Mission Committee in Bremen accepted it on February 28, 1876 with the expressed wish that it be revised every three years. Dauble, Schreiber, Schlunk and Spieth revised it in 1914, a true revision because it adjusted Zahn's principle to the new situation brought about by a much larger membership. Dauble's 1914 Order remained in force until the revision accepted by General Synod at Kpalime in 1931. It was the revision of the 1931 Church Order that became the major factor in the 1991 schism. The Bremen Mission was built around a strong central committee headed by a Mission Inspector. The missionaries in the field were controlled and directed by the Mission Committee in Bremen. The Missionaries had to seek clearance from the Mission Inspector before making a major decision. This direct control of Bremen was at variance with the Presbyterian form of Government. Thus when the Scottish Mission came to establish the Presbyterian form of Church government there was a friction between the Bremen and Scottish Missionaries about the authority of the Synod Committee¹⁵.

The Bremen Mission brought Christianity to Eweland and found the E. P. Church. This study contends that the E. P. Church's traditions, practices, belief systems and reactions towards situations and people are to a large extent the result of its experiences with the missionary groups that established and nurtured it to maturity.

The pre-missionary converts of the Bremen Mission like most Africans regarded the world as being made up of material and spiritual beings. At the top of both beings was the Supreme Being, Mawu, the creator of all things. Material things especially those with extraordinary appearance and nature, like huge trees, large rocks, mountains, streams and

¹⁵ *Constitution*, p.123

forests, were regarded as dwelling places of spiritual beings¹⁶. This belief accounts for some Ewes, like other Africans worshipping rocks, and special trees. Ewes also believed that nothing occurred by chance. In every situation, it was believed that there must be a cause and an effect or effects and these were attributed to the supernatural or spiritual powers. This belief of the Ewe Christians and Non-Christians makes them to seek the favours of traditional good spirits and seek protection against the malevolent ones.

The early Pietist Bremen Missionaries impressed it on their Ewe converts that they were living in the darkness and their religious beliefs and practices were that of the devil¹⁷. They could be saved only if they do away completely with their indigenous way of life. The Ewe converts from the beginning had to choose to be either indigenous Africans or Western type Christians. They were thus put between two cultures, the indigenous and the foreign. From the Missionary teachings about the evils of the Ewe culture, some of the early Christians voluntarily separated themselves from their non-Christian compatriots and established a wholly Christian communities. This concept and practice of discrimination set up a pattern of conflict and division among the Ewes, Christians versus the "heathen" (pagans). This discriminatory tendency in later years of the E. P. Church developed among members of the church who accused some members of bringing heathen practices into the Church. Chapters Three and Four will show how religious practices became a divisive factor in the E. P. Church.

The "planting" and "parental" roles of the Bremen Mission ended when the First World War started in 1914. The British Government deported the German Missionaries. Although the Bremen Mission aimed at establishing a non-confessional independent Church in Eweland, they still had control over it. The Mission in West Africa was under the total control of the founding

¹⁶ Anas, C., 1987 (p. 10)

¹⁷ Meyer, 1995 (p. 16)



society in Bremen. As stated earlier, the Missionaries could not take independent decisions in the field but had to consult the home society. The Bremen Mission underrated the capability of the African assistants as pastors. Grau writes, "While elders and teachers were given voice in the local congregations it was not until 1882 that the first African pastor, Rudolf Mallet was ordained, and that was done by a missionary without the consent of the home committee"⁵⁸.

When the Missionaries left suddenly because of war, the leadership, and supervision and care of the E. P. Church became the responsibility of the native agents of the Church. The work of forty Missionaries fell on seven native pastors⁵⁹. The church at times did not practice the Reformed principle of, "priesthood of all believers" as described earlier in this chapter, that is, giving equal opportunity to the native Christians to perform when they have the capabilities.

The Scottish Mission that took over from the Germans after World War I tried to remedy this situation by establishing the Presbyterian form of government.

The Scottish Mission

The Scottish Mission, by the request of the British Colonial government, took over the superintendship of the E. P. Church from the Germans on 8th March, 1922. Their first Missionaries were A. K. Wilkie and T. L. Beveridge. Their greatest contribution to the E. P. Church was the Presbyterian policy of Christian democracy. The Bremen policy was a total control of missionary activities by the Bremen Mission Board under a Mission Inspector. Its missionaries took instructions from Bremen and sought clearance from home on all matters concerning the African Mission. They sent regular reports to the Board

⁵⁸ Grau, *op. cit.* p. 23

⁵⁹ *op. cit.* p. 62

The Presbyterian form of government began in the British zone of the Ewe Church in Ho, 12th - 13th September, 1923. The first Synod of the E. P. Church was attended by all the pastors, catechists, selected teachers and elders and all the missionaries. Three missionaries, Freburger, Schoesser and Schroeder represented Bremen while Wilkie and Beveridge represented the Scottish Mission⁴⁰. Beveridge who opened the Synod said this among others, "the Ewe Christians, no longer children, had advanced from a Mission to a Church, with a name of its own, the Ewe Church."⁴¹ He explained the Scottish policies to the delegates as follows.

- a) the missionaries in foreign field formed councils that represented the home church and had full powers to act in local matters without reference to Europe;
- b) The Scottish Church's policy to form local church courts, whose decisions need not be submitted to the home committee, but which had access to the home committee through the Mission Council. Thus, the Synod of the Ewe Church would be a body having the final say with powers to carry out or delay decisions. It should have Synod Committee to act in its name. The meeting decided on a Synod Committee of five members. Reverends Bensah, Binder and Kwame were elected (as the African members of the Synod Committee) with pastors alone voting and the whole conference approving Bensah to be Moderator and Kwami the Synod Clerk. Thus the foundation was laid for the Presbyterian form of Government in the Ewe Church that has evolved into the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, of today.

It is apt to describe the features of Presbyterianism as a branch of the Reformed Tradition. This will enable the study to show who deviated from the Reformed tradition in the conflicts that occurred through the years. It will also help future leaders and policy makers to know the facets of the tradition that need reforming to meet the needs of the present in

⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 100

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 100

consonance with its old slogan “Reformata Semper Reformanda” (Reformed and always reforming).⁴²

The main emphases of Presbyterianism are:⁴³

- a). the Church is a community of body in which Christ only is head and all members are equal under Him;
- b). the ministry is given to the entire Church and is distributed among many officers;
- c). all who hold office are elected by the people they represent;
- d). the Church is to be governed and directed by assemblies or courts of office holders, pastors and elders chosen to provide a just representation for the Church as a whole.

Its doctrinal Characteristics are:

- a). Justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ;
- b). the priesthood of all believers;
- c). the authority of the Holy Scriptures, the supremacy of the Holy Spirit in matters of faith and order.⁴⁴

In the book, *E. P. Church, 150 Years*, L. T. Beveridge in his address to the First Synod of the E. P. Church is quoted as saying, “You have joined today the great family of the Presbyterian Church. Do everything to set the whole work on a high standard...” The study will attempt to show in chapters three and four how keeping the Presbyterian form and standard became a source of conflict that led to divisions. Another important contribution of the Scottish Mission to the growth of the E. P. Church that also partly contributed to the popularity and intensity of the conflicts in the church was education. The following declaration of the Foreign Mission

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 18

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 18

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 18

Committee of the Church of Scotland underscores the importance of education to the mission Board. It states, "The most important thing for the Gold Coast after the First World War was the development of an efficient primary education. There must be a sound foundation laid before higher training can be useful and effective".⁴⁵ Wilkie and Beveridge in concert with British Colonial Government helped the Ewe Church Schools to reach a high standard. First the German oriented teachers were re-taught the British system of educating using English as the new medium of instruction and communication. In 1925 the British Government introduced new educational schemes in the Gold Coast. The Church schools did not only provide the Church with personnel but these products as members of the society became opinion leaders who took up issues of the church as will be shown in some of the conflicts in the Church.

The Scottish Mission, within its short caretaker years, 1922-26, left an indelible mark of Church policy that became partly the cause of the 1991 schism

- a) The Presbyterian policy of Church government compels leaders to observe and follow the constitution of the Church.
- b) At times, the church fails to observe and follow the constitutional procedures as in the 1931 constitution. Instead it adopts unconstitutional policies and conventions as in the case of constitutional amendment and election of its officers.

Such acts bring the church into conflict with some of its members.

⁴⁵ Gray Eugene, 1964, Op Cit p 22

The American Mission

The American Mission, the last of the caretaker missions that nurtured the E. P. Church, came to the Gold Coast Mission field in 1946, after the Second World War when the Germans were again deported and the Scottish declined to take over the E. P. Church. The “middleman” in that negotiation was Dr. E. Voehringer.⁴⁶ The new partner of the E. P. Church was the product of a union established at Cleveland, Ohio on June 26, 1934. It was between two Christian bodies of Swiss and German background. They were the Evangelical Synod of North America and the Reformed Church in the United States of America.⁴⁷

The Evangelical Synod, the younger of the two, was a product of a German Missionary society that sent agents to America in the 1840’s to work among German speaking Lutheran and Reformed peoples.

At St. Louis, it took up the name, German Evangelical Synod of North America. It formed the Evangelical Synod with four others with similar belief and policy. These were the German Evangelical Church Association; the German United Evangelical Synod of the East, the Evangelical Synod of North West and the United Evangelical Synod of the East.

This background underscores in no small measure a close or identical relationship of the Evangelical Synod with the Bremen Mission that started the Ewe Church and the United Free Church of Scotland. They were German and reformed traditionally though American in name. Their faith and policy logically were thus identical with the Ewe Presbyterian Church, which they were asked to come and help develop into maturity. The Reformed heritage was retained. The second partner to the union was the United Free Church of America.

The original members of the Reformed Church were Germans who migrated to Pennsylvania in the eighteenth century. The establishment of the Reformed Church was

⁴⁶ Dr. Voehringer was the last Bremen missionary to leave the Gold Coast during the Second World War. He was born in the Gold Coast by German colonial parents (submitted in America).

⁴⁷ H. S. Swad - Handbook of Denominations in the U. S. A., Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985, p.251.

attributed to Michael Schlatter. He was sent by the Dutch Reformed Synod of South and North Holland as a missionary among the German immigrants. The Church then took the name German Reformed Church in 1793. The "German" was dropped in 1869 and thereafter called the Reformed Church in the United States.⁴⁸ The German heritage was common to the Reformed Church as it was to the Ewe Church.

Again, the contents of the Ewe Presbyterian Church's Hamedodo (Constitution) 1931, was similar to the beliefs and Articles of faith of the Reformed Tradition as cited earlier in this chapter. Its polity was Presbyterian.

The first Missionary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church was Rev. Eugene Grau, who was born in Germany⁴⁹ but brought up in the U.S.A. We can say, therefore, that the Evangelical and Reformed Church and its first Missionary had a German background that ensured the continuity of mission work in the E.P. Church. The American had provided the first high institution of training for middle power personnel and some of these were actors in the 1991 conflict and division. By providing funds and personnel in the fields of education and health, the American Mission helped the E.P Church to reach maturity. The mismanagement of some of these formed the subject of accusations levelled against the Church in the 1991 conflict. The three Mission groups presented the same message of God's love for humankind in the life of Jesus Christ. The message became the common denominator but their approaches made the difference. While the Bremen Society used a moralistic approach stressing on the dos and don'ts

⁴⁸ Michael Frank, *Seed of Faith*, Saratoga, N.Y.: Paulist.

⁴⁹ Grauel, 1964 Op.Cit. p. 4

of Christianity, the Scottish used the democratic approach of equality of humankind in carrying out duties for God and our neighbours. The Americans as champions of freedom, put in place, instruments or structures that would enable Christians to be self-sufficient by being wholesome Christians physically, morally and mentally. Taking some of their predecessors as role models and mentors, the leaders of the E. P. Church took to policies, which accounted for their different approaches to contemporary issues of their members. The different approaches accounted for some of the conflicts in the Church. The study will show how strict adherence to the Church Order or extreme democracy resulted in conflicts, some of which resulted in major schisms within the Church.

The next chapter will deal with the first two major schisms at Tadzewa (1942) and Etordome. The chapter also discusses a temporary break off from the E.P. Church by members of the congregations of the Buem Krachi area.

CHAPTER THREE

SCHISMS IN THE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 1939 - 1962

INTRODUCTION

In the introduction in Chapter One, I pointed out the salient points of the genesis of the E. P. Church but for a reminder and as an introduction to the turn of events in the Church, I wish to reiterate that from 1922 to 1936, the Church both in the Gold Coast and Togo saw very important developments.

First, the rapid growth of the churches both in the Gold Coast and Togoland necessitated the establishment of two separate administrative machineries. Secondly, the Church's name in the Gold Coast colony was changed from the "Bremen Mission Church" to the "Ewe Presbyterian Church" in line with the establishment of the Presbyterian polity introduced by the superintending Scottish Mission.

These very important developments in the Ewe Presbyterian Church were clouded by two unfortunate historical events that occurred in 1939. The first was the Second World War. The involvement of Germany as the aggressor resulted in the second deportation of the German missionaries from the Gold Coast and Togo.⁵⁰ (The first deportation occurred in 1916 during the First World War). The second historical event was that, in 1939, Mr. Charles Kwabla Nutoruti now referred to by his followers as, "Mawufe ame", (man of God) came from Akwatia and established the township and Christian community of New Tadzewu; an event that had left an indelible mark in the history of the E. P. Church.

⁵⁰ B. A. A. G. - *Asotolowo Ee Delefa Dɔ* - in *Prophetism in Ghana*, London, S. C. M. Press Ltd., 1962 p.79.

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1939-1962

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⁵⁰ See C. G. Ansong-Govi for "Dedeia Habobo" in *Prophetism in Ghana*, London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1962 p.79

Nutomah started the Tadzewu project as a personal response to a revelation he had from God to leave his town, Anyako, to a "promised land"¹¹ just as God called Abraham out of Ur to Canaan¹². He voluntarily put the Church he established under the E. P. Church, in the Abor District. However in 1942 he broke away from the supervision of the E. P. Church and became an independent Church, the Apostles Revelation Society. This division is the first major conflict and permanent breakaway from the E. P. Church. From 1939 to 1991, a time span of fifty-two years, there had been six major schisms resulting in the establishment of the Apostles Revelation society (1942), the Presbyterian Evangelical Church of Buem Krachi (1954), the White Cross society (1960), the Lord's Pentecostal Church (1961) Christ Evangelical Mission (1964) and the E. P. Church of Ghana (1991). The E. P. Church did not only lose members but many of these members went away with the gifts of the Holy Spirit that would have enriched the Church if they had remained.

The study attempts to show that the conflicts under review were the products of controversies over the following:

- a) ownership of properties like money, land, buildings,
- b) doctrinal issues like mode of worship and use of religious artifacts,
- c) Constitutional issues like amendments and tenure of office of the executive, and
- d) a clash of personalities, personality goals and dreams.

In the following chapters (three and four), the discourse will show how the interplay of the above factors produced the splits mentioned above, starting with the first, Wovenu, at Tadzewu.

¹¹ Charles Nantomah related the establishment of Tadzewu to the establishment of God by Abraham. He asserted that he was called by God to leave Anyako.

¹² Nantomah believed that he established Tadzewu just as Abraham came to Canaan as narrated in Genesis Chapter Twelve.

THE APOSTLES' REVELATION SOCIETY (A. R. S.)

(Apostolowo Fe Dedefia Habobo) Tadzewu.

The Apostles' Revelation Society (Apostolowo fe Dedefia habobo) with its headquarters at Tadzewu was founded by Mr. Charles Kobia Nutumuti Wovenu.⁵³ He is generally called prophet Wovenu and his followers call him, "Mawu fe ame" (man of God). According to him the name, Wovenu, meaning "he has received mercy", was revealed to him by God in a dream.⁵⁴ According to Wovenu, the establishment of New Tadzewu and his life as a prophet were his response to God's revelations.

Wovenu was born at Anyako in the Keta District in December, 1918. His father was Nutumuti Kluvia and his mother was Mikayanawo. They were traditionalists. Kluvia was a known medicine man and Mikayanawo belonged to a snake-cult, a "Dasi", (wife or devotee of the snake-cult)

His revealed surname, Wovenu (he who has received mercy) is significant in relation to his life history, especially his early childhood. It is affirmed by Wovenu⁵⁵ that his life was rough right from the womb. He asserted that his maternal grandfather, Dzakpata Sewomu drove Mikayanawo, his mother, away from home because of his (Wovenu's) conception when his father, Kluvia, had not customarily married her. He contended that he was born in the bush, after his birth he had to stay away from his parental home and was cared for by Cephas Gordor his foster father⁵⁶. It was at the intervention of Rev. Robert Domingo Baeta⁵⁷ that he was baptized at Adzamu in Togo on Second Advent, 28th November, 1926.

⁵³ Kobia, C. G. (1982), p.76

⁵⁴ Wovenu, CKN – Op Cit p. 12

⁵⁵ ibid

⁵⁶ Nutumuti, Peter. Ashon, Dzido. & What Do You Know About Prophet C. K. N. Wovenu (Mawu fe Ame) and the Church of Apostles Revelation Society (A. R. S.) – Accra, July 1985 p. 38 Answer 11

⁵⁷ ibid, Answer 14

Wovenu did not only lack the paternal love of his father but lacked his care too. He stayed with Mr. Alfred Kpodo, an uncle, at Kibi and between 1930 and 1935 attended the Kibi Government Boys' School. He was then taken to Anyako, his hometown, to continue his education, stopping at Standard Five.

New Tadzewu was sited at the eastern part of Old Tadzewu. The name, Tadzewu, was derived from two Ewe words, "Tadze and Wuti". Tadze means red pond and Wuti means silk-cotton tree (*ceiba petandra*). Tadzewu, therefore, means "The silk cotton tree of the red-pond". Historically, Old Tadzewu was by a tall silk-cotton tree near a pond of red colour. The redness of the soil through which the run-off water flows to gather in the pond gives it the colour. The silk cotton-tree serves as a landmark for travellers coming to the town⁴⁸.

Incidentally, there was a silk cotton tree at the place where Wovenu sited his township thus "new" was added to Wovenu's Tadzewu to differentiate it from the old township⁴⁹. Tadzewu was originally under the Keta District but is now under the Ketu District Assembly. It is on the Accra-Aflao road about twelve kilometres, north-east of Abor and the same distance from Akatsi and Dzodze.

Before Wovenu's arrival in 1939, Old Tadzewu had neither market, School, Post Office, Police Station nor a Clinic. It had an intense perennial water problem that made the Catholic attempt to evangelize the area fail. The water problem also accounted for the sparse population of Old Tadzewu in 1939. (The population was between 150 and 200). The roads linking Tadzewu with its neighbours were neglected and unmotorable. The inhabitants of Old Tadzewu were ruled by two chiefs, Togbui Tenu I and Togbui Ayivor I. Togbui Nutornuti, Wovenu's father was the 'chief' of the non-citizens of Tadzewu. The people were mostly farmers, and a few were traders. There were only two Christians, Mr. Fred Yaoto Nyatefe and Madam Nora

⁴⁸ The information was obtained by the author in a Research interview with P.W.D. Nutornuti, a spouse of the ARS and a cousin of Prophet Wovenu. The interview was at New Tadzewu on the 15th of March, 1997.

⁴⁹ Quoted P.W.D. Nutornuti in the above interview. It was by a father the site of the silk cotton tree (Anabat) near the Chapel stands at its place today.

amenowovi Tsega. The rest of the people were traditionalists who worshipped Afa, Yewe, Kunde and the pond, Tadzre. This was the scene set for Wovenu to combat as an evangelist, for he came to Tadzewu in response to God's call⁶⁰.

Wovenu arrived at Tadzewu on 1st November 1939. The following day, 2nd November, he bought a piece of land which formed part of New Tadzewu from Togbui Dahomegbor Sedzro⁶¹. This portion is from the Abor-Akatsi road to the present A.R.S. gate. The latter portion of New Tadzewu was bought in a mysterious manner.

The area under review was originally a farming land. One day, Wovenu's sheep went up here and destroyed the farms. Wovenu was taken to the Chief's court and was made to pay for the damage. That night Wovenu prayed to God about the plight the animals had put him into. God then revealed to Wovenu that not only the destroyed farm, but the whole of the land that contained the farm would become the grazing land for his "sheep", the congregation he had established. Not long after, the owner came to Wovenu with a proposal to sell the land to him. Forewarned by the revelation that the land now on sale would be his property, Wovenu bought it and paid three times what was proposed. The owner was surprised but accepted it. Someone heard about the purchase and went to the owner with a much higher sum. The owner was said to have been warned by God in a revelation that night not to accept the new offer else he would die. Thus by revelation from God, Wovenu owned a large stretch of land, over a mile square, from the school eastwards through the mission to the eastward environs of New Tadzewu Healing Centre. God's promise came true⁶². Wovenu, freely gave this land to members of the Apostles' Revelation Society to build and settle on⁶³.

⁶⁰ Wovenu, C.K.N. Op. cit., p. 14.

⁶¹ Wovenu, C.K.N. Ibid, p. 14.

⁶² Wovenu affirmed that he was called to establish Tadzewu as Abraham in Genesis 12.

⁶³ The houses Wovenu gathered for the city could not be called a congregation, but they formed the nucleus of it.

On the morning of 2nd November, 1939, Wovenu gathered his first congregation made up of a few adults and children. He preached to them about God and Jesus. Twenty-four children out of those who came to the meeting became the nucleus of the school he started.

From the beginning of his Tadzewu work Wovenu attached great importance to education, which was second only to the preaching of God's words. He travelled as far as to Malabar and recruited pupils for his school. Everything went on well with the school until 1945 when Wovenu ran into a problem with the Ewe Presbyterian Church. The problem was over a school grant of eighty-five pounds (£85) given to the New Tadzewu school which the leaders of the Church at Abor felt must come under their disbursement. The leaders at Abor quickly established a Primary School at Old Tadzewu to justify their claim for the grant.

The District Commissioner, Mr. T. A. Mead, had given this grant to the school at New Tadzewu. The E. P. Church claimed that the said grant was meant for its school because its school was the one permitted by the Education Department¹⁴. Wovenu also claimed the money was meant for his school which the D. C. had actually seen. Eventually, the disputed grant remained in Wovenu's school where it was originally sent. The ownership of the school grant of eighty-five pounds and the scheming of the E. P. Church to collect this grant by establishing a rival school became factors of conflict between Wovenu and the E. P. Church. It became a contributing factor to Wovenu's breaking away from the Church and establishing his independent Church, the Apostles' Revelation Society. According to Apostle Nutomuti, the principal informant on the Tadzewu conflict, the church leadership at Abor did not take kindly to Wovenu's victory over the 'Church'. Rev. Ametefe of Abor therefore decided to transfer Wovenu from Tadzewu to curtail his growing influence over the growing church there.

Wovenu's school was free so as to give equal opportunity to all to have access to education. The Church on the other hand, asked him to introduce payment of fees, a condition Wovenu would not accept nor effect.

During the period of the conflict Wovenu was alleged to have had revelations from God encouraging him to go on with the school project, for God was in full control and that the school

¹⁴ Records interview by the author with Apostle P. W. D. Nutomuti of the Apostles' Revelation Society, Tadzewu, March 15th - 17th 1997.



ould not be a failure⁵⁵ The people patronized Wovenu's school and that of the Church fizzled at. At the beginning of Wovenu's evangelization of Tadzewu and its environs, he prepared the people to become members of the Ewe Presbyterian Church. After preparing the people in the catechumen, he invited the Pastor of the E. P. Church, Abor to baptize them.

He worked on his own for two years organizing the people to provide themselves with the needed social infrastructure like good drinking water and roads. He taught them to acquire occupational skills and live good lives as Christians. Wovenu's work then fully became part of the Ewe Presbyterian Church's organisation. This was in agreement with Rev. Elias W. Amakloe's suggestion that Wovenu's Tadzewu work should be part of the Ewe Church⁵⁶. Naturally, Wovenu, being a member of the church, agreed. Nutumuti asserted that during Rev. Amakloe's tenure of office at Abor, he worked cordially with Wovenu and his newly founded church. When he died, Rev. D. K. Ametefe took over and was also friendly until the grant issue came up. After Wovenu won the grant for his school over the Abor Church, Ametefe's attitude towards Wovenu changed. It is alleged that Ametefe felt Wovenu was becoming too popular at Tadzewu and to curtail his growing influence and popularity he tried to transfer Wovenu from Tadzewu as the Church's evangelist. But Wovenu would not go because he claimed new Tadzewu as his personal property.

During an interview with him at Tadzewu on 15th June, 1997, Apostle Nutumuti asserted that the E.P. Church in Ametefe's time put certain conditions before him in order to work under its auspices. One was that he should stop holding special sessions for healing. Another was the payment of fees in his school as discussed above.

It was mentioned earlier that Wovenu was called by God to perform a duty. As he has stated in his Golden Jubilee Brochure

⁵⁵ Otiaku, C.G. 1962, p.04,p.80

⁵⁶ Ibid P.79

Esì woyè Wòwenu fè yoyò esì Yehowa nuto lè ngo na de nanewo⁶⁷
ta la, cwo kekledeme na Wòwenu kaba be woanyae be, fofoa Nutornuti
Klúvia lè viviti kple Satana fè babla me, eyata woavli ade fofoa tso
satana

si me. Enumake Mawu na nuse Wòwenu be wobla akpa tso Anyako beva
fofoa fè no fè...

(Since Wòwenu was called by God for a special
purpose that is, his father Nutornuti Klúvia was in darkness and bound
by Satan. God (who was leading the project empowered Wòwenu to leave
Anyako to Tadzewu and fight to free his father).⁶⁸

Wòwenu considered himself as an instrument of God thus he had no alternative but to obey God's command and ignore that of men no matter the outcome⁶⁹. He thus made up his mind on doing what God has asked him to do. Wòwenu established a prayer and a healing camp where he treated many ailments including insanity through prayer and fasting and the use of herbs. He practised sacrifices as atonement for the sins of his clients. He introduced the observations of food and prohibitions of sexual intercourse. His assistants were forbidden to eat food prepared by women in their menstrual periods. Menstruating women and those who had just given birth were not allowed at worship grounds until they had undergone purification rites. Polygamy was not forbidden provided the women were married traditionally and at church. These practices contravened the E. P. Church's rules and regulations. These were against the missionary traditions. The E. P. Church discouraged such practices whereas Wòwenu encouraged them. There was therefore a doctrinal conflict between Reformed Tradition practised by the E. P. Church and Pentecostalism as practiced by Wòwenu. The E. P. Church administration at a point

⁶⁷ The author used capital to emphasize the word 'nuto' as it is the Wòwenu had a purpose for ordaining New Tadzewu that is to save his father and other from Satan.

⁶⁸ The English version was the author's interpretation of the original in Akan.

⁶⁹ Ash 52.

of the conflict gave Wovenu a transfer from Tadzewu. The idea behind the transfer was to cripple the New Tadzewu project. The Church however, had forgotten that New Tadzewu, land, school and church were the brain-child of Wovenu, and it would be impossible to deprive him of his right to his property.

Consequently, Wovenu and his group at New Tadzewu broke away from the Ewe Presbyterian Church in 1945 because as Wovenu put it in Baeta, "These conditions were unacceptable to me"⁷⁰

The coming of Wovenu to Tadzewu brought many changes. Fetichism and idolatry gave way to Christianity⁷¹. Christianity in turn taught the people new ways of living. Robbery, cheating and other social crimes in the community were reduced and in their place came formal and informal education. Farmers were encouraged to improve their techniques of production. Organized communal labour for the provision of social amenities like public toilets, good drinking water, schools, roads, a market and a clinic became the accepted norm to mark the beginning of what Tadzewu is today. Wovenu had given the people a new sense of identity and respectability⁷². It therefore stands to reason that the people supported him. His religious policy relating to organisation, education, and administration added to his charismatic leadership. These satisfied needs of his generation and his people gave him power and authority over and above the E.P. Church he served as a local catholicist.

The E. P. Church failed to win the support of the people. The rival school it set up to compete with that of Wovenu for the purpose of securing the government grant failed for lack of patronage. The school grant of eighty-five pounds from the District Commissioner went to Wovenu's school. Neither did the Church succeed in making Wovenu stop his prayer healings nor could it take Wovenu away from his Tadzewu property by trying to transfer him. Strict

⁷⁰ Baeta, G. PKC, p. 80

⁷¹ Wovenu, C. N.K. op cit, p. 18

⁷² Nana, P.W. D. op cit, p. 41, Annex 28

adherence to the Church' rules and lack of diplomacy by the Church resulted in the breaking away of Wovenu and his followers. Wovenu's conflict occurred under the moderatorship of Rev. Amegashie (1940-1951). Amedzo in his work, *Indigenization within the E. P. Church*, writes thus about Amegashie, "He was a disciplinarian and maintained rigidly the Christian tradition of the Church and prevented the Church from unexamined cultures and traditions, which would pollute it."⁷³ His policy could partly account for the conditions given to Wovenu and his leaving the fold of the E. P. Church quietly.

On the other hand, the seemingly high educational level of the clergy of that time as compared with that of the laity made the power of the ruling clergy undisputable. There was little or no challenge to their power and authority at that time. Furthermore, it was Wovenu, an individual, struggling against an organised church.

Wovenu named the new Church; the Apostles Revelation Society. He however asserted that there was no difference between the doctrine of the A. R. S. and that of the E. P. Church. He contended that food taboos of A. R. S. are those stated in the Old Testament.⁷⁴ They practise fasting and allow polygamy; the latter they contend has basis in the Scriptures.⁷⁵ Although, they abhor loose morals in sexual matters, they do not permanently excommunicate members who violate the norms of the Church.

Another factor that increased the disagreement between Wovenu and the E.P. Church at Abor was the School Grant issue discussed above. This ethical issue although remote contributed to the building up of tension between Wovenu and the E.P. Church.

⁷³ Amedzo, E. K. (1992). *Indigenization within the E. P. Church*, 1986, U. G. p. 21

⁷⁴ Amedzo, E. K., *Ibid*, p. 21

⁷⁵ Apostle Matthew's command that there is no divorce in the Bible, which prohibits or proscribes polygamy.

The immediate reason why Wovenu “broke away” from the E.P. Church in 1945 was that, he was healing with herbs and roots; a practice that is similar to that of African Traditional healing practices. He was practising exorcism and observing taboos that were also observed by the traditionalists. In other words, he was assumed to have introduced heathen practices into the E.P. Church practices that the pietist missionaries taught their Ewe Christians to avoid at all cost. The reaction factor came into play when the Abor leadership tried to intimidate Wovenu by transferring him from Tadzewu and his subsequent refusal to go on transfer from his own acquired property.

A pattern is being established that would be followed up in all the five major schisms that occurred in the E. P. Church. It runs as follows:

- a) A lay member of the E. P. Church started a group within the E. P. Church set up.
- b) As time went on the group's practices came into conflict with the written down Presbyterian and Reformed practices (constitution)
- c) The E. P. Church tried to protect her Presbyterian and Reformed tradition by prohibiting non-reformed practices
- d) The leader of the group and adherents would not abandon “proscribed” practices because of their conviction that the practices were biblically based and useful to the practitioners
- e) Inevitable split of the church occurred and the practitioners of the “new” faith becoming independent of the E. P. Church.

Now and again this phenomenon occurs in the E. P. Church. The church should have used dialogue and diplomacy and attempt at reconciliation rather than the use of open confrontation; a pattern that was to appear in the next conflict, involving another member of the Church, Frank [x-0].

THE WHITE CROSS SOCIETY

(Etordome, Yordan Habobo)

The White Cross Society started at Etordome, near Hlefi, on the Anyirawase-Kpedze road. Originally it was known as Etordome Nyanyue Presbyterian Home Gbedododa kple Doyofe, (The Prayer and Healing Group of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church)⁷⁶. The White Cross Society was founded in January of 1957 by the late Frank Kwadzo Doh. He was born at Etordome in 1910⁷⁷. He lived with his uncle who was a hospital dispenser at Lome. The late Pastor Andreas Aku of the Ewe Presbyterian Church at Lome baptized him on the 18th of December, 1915. Doh attended school at Lome from 1918 to 1927, finishing at Kpalime, the uncle's new place of work. Doh contended that at the end of his education at Kpalime, one Pastor, Quist threw a small Bible at him saying that it should be his working tool in life. He believed that the Bible gift from a Pastor was a call from God to heal by the power of God's word. Doh like Wovenu, took his evangelization and healing as his response to God's call that must not be disobeyed at any cost. After his schooling at Kpalime he became an apprentice to Messrs Alfred Lawson and Lassey at Keta in brick-laying for three and a half years after which he was employed by the French Togoland government to construct wells and to do other masonry work in rural areas.

After some years in Togo, the District Commissioner at Ho requested that Doh be released to British Togoland to do the same work. He worked at Ho and later at Ziofe.

At Ziofe, Doh started a local Evangelical Presbyterian Church in one Bernard Atipoe's house. During a hymn practice one Sunday afternoon, Atipoe's son, Togbui fell very ill and "suddenly stiffened and seemed about to die"⁷⁸. Doh prayed over the dying boy, anointed him

⁷⁶ *Photo, C.G. Op. cit. p. 6*

⁷⁷ *Photo, C.G. Op. cit. p. 9*

⁷⁸ Akumash, Bosteng, Kwame + A study of the Demography of Ghana: A study of the White Cross, B.A. Degree, Legon, Ghana, 1964, p. 42

twice and threw his handkerchief on him. Togbui was miraculously restored to life. The incident, according to Doh, was the beginning of his healing career. He also alleged that from that day onwards he began to see visions and had dreams that were instructions from God. The news of this exceptional healing power spread far and wide. He was regarded as a man of spiritual power and many began to send cases of ailments to him.⁷⁰ Doh left Ziofe for Etdome, his hometown and established a prayer and healing centre. He prepared a prayer ground on the steep and wooded hillside that is at the north of the village school playing ground. The place was decorated with natural flowers and marked with a cement cross as a site for Christian worship.

He built a settlement for his 'flock' at Etdome similar to what Wovenu did at Tadzewu. The settlement has a water reservoir and an electric generating plant. A maternity clinic and a school were also established.

Doh makes every effort to lead his people and clients to consult God about their affairs rather than consult traditional gods of Yewe, Afa, Konde Tigare, Trowo and anti-witchcraft shrines.⁷¹ Doh affirmed in Baeta that, "If asked, God would himself supply all the knowledge that people needed to have". He felt that it was proper to establish a special place of worship and prayer where God's people could go and talk with their maker. He was trying to meet some aspects of religious needs of the people; a service that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church was unable to offer its members.

At the beginning, Doh was helped by Messrs. Erasmus Motte and Traugott Keti. Motte who also received visions acted as the leader anytime Doh was away, Keti was Third in

⁷⁰ Baeta, OCEP 198.

⁷¹ Interview with Pastor Paul Telle of Jordan, 28th February, 1997.

command. The Society had a committee of seven in consonance with Acts 6:3 which states, "so then, brother, choose seven men among you who are known to be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom."

They prayed for God's guidance and empowerment before all activities. The Society engaged in exhortations, encouragement, Bible Study, exorcism and healing. They practised fasting and observed taboos as specified in the Old Testament. Each day of the week was set aside for specified tasks as set out in Table 2 below:⁴¹

Table 2 Chart of daily activities at Etorlome Prayer and Healing Centre

Days	Mon	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
Categories of people	non-resident expectant mothers	Bethesda in-patients at the Healing Centre	Out-patients (children)	Out-patients (adults)	Healers assistants and nurses	Free	All
Activities	Prayers exhortation s healing	"	"	"	Retreat	Gardening domestic chores	Divine service morning/ Afternoon

In addition to the daily activities above, there is fasting on the first Tuesday of each month for the entire society and on the 15th of each month for the leadership. The society observes the following taboos. It does not allow footwear of any kind to be taken into all places of worship be it building or an open space assigned for worship and prayer.

Pastor Tefe traces the practice to Exodus 3:5, Moses at the Burning Bush. It states:

"Take off your sandals because you are standing on holy grounds."

Tefe explained that the practice denotes respect for God by His creatures and it is also to avoid bringing dirt on their sandals to the holy presence of God. The society also forbids bringing into

⁴¹ The taboos observed by the Society are all prohibitions (Leviticus 11) (b) Particulars of women after childbirth (Leviticus 12)

a place of worship clothes used at night in a matrimonial bed. Such clothes, it asserts, are unclean and become an abomination before the Lord.

Another taboo of the society is that women in their menstrual period are not allowed at places of worship. Women who have given birth are like women in their menstrual period. Menstrual women are however clean to attend worship without any cleansing ritual after seven days. Women who give birth have to undergo a cleansing ritual in consonant with Leviticus Chapter 12. "One who gives birth to a male undergoes purification on the fortieth (40th) day" (Lev. 12:3-4) "and the one with a female, on the eightieth (80th) day" (Lev. 12:5). Men of the society would not eat food cooked by such women, not even their wives.

The society heals through prayers, fasting and the use of herbs. They however do not forbid the use of orthodox medicine. The group uses holy water and oil in healing and anointing. Candles of various colours are also used allegedly to enhance answers to prayer.

During worship, prayer and healing sessions, participants are exhorted to remove falsehood and pretence from their lives; parents are to show real love to their children; children are taught to obey their parents and elders; unfaithful wives and husbands are made to confess and reform. Bible studies and prayer form an integral part of each day's activity of the society. Clients to the healing centre are encouraged to pray and fast as part of the healing therapy. They are taught Bible texts and given special portions from the Bible, especially from the Psalms, to read at regular periods at home or at the centre. Non-Christians who come to the centre for help are encouraged to convert. The society also encourages their non-communicant clients to become communicants because it believes that participation in the Lord's Supper enjoins Christian responsibility on the participants. On Sundays, Christians, other than those from the E. P. Church, are asked to go to their churches. Premarital sex is discouraged. Polygamy is forbidden. There are stringent sanctions imposed on members who indulge in adultery and fornication. For example those who indulge in adultery and fornication are made to leave the

prayer camp for three months. They are re-admitted only when the offenders show remorse and repentance. These measures are aimed at improving Christian life style of members and people who use the services of the society.

At the beginning, Doh and his group got along well with the local congregation and the Church at large. Baeta asserts that several people were leaders in both the society and the local congregation⁸². The Central authority of the Church, Baeta continued, held a moderate view about the group from the beginning. This might come from the fact that, its activities were, at the beginning, localized and were unknown to the Church Authorities.

However, in 1959, a Synod delegate from Xlefi District made a formal complaint about the 'new customs' being practised by the Prayer Group of the Etordome E. P. Church.

According to Pastor Tefe of the White Cross Society, a Presbyterian of the E.P. Church, Etordome, who attended the Church's Synod in 1959, wanted to know at that Synod, if the "new" practices of the Etordome Prayer Group were permissible. If yes, he wanted to know further why the customs being practised by the group were not practised in all the congregations of the Church? If the customs were not permissible, why was the group allowed to practise them at Etordome E.P. Church?

The practices identified at Etordome among others are the following:

- a) the prohibition of all footwear in church and places of worship and prayer 'shrine'.
- b) the prohibition of women from places of worship during:
 - i. menstrual period
 - ii. childbirth
- c) fasting;
- d) practice of divine healing and exorcism;

⁸² An assertion made in a research interview with pastor Tefe and two elders at Yordan, 28th February 1997

- e) speaking in tongues.

In reaction to these complaints the Church set up a committee chaired by the late Very Rev.

A.K.

Abutiate to investigate the doctrine and practices of the group and report to the Church. Pastor Tefe confirmed that the said committee visited the group then at Etordome in 1959. The committee's report could not be traced at Ho, and the Very Rev. Abutiate, unfortunately is dead and could not be interviewed.

In 1960, the Church sent out circular, Ref. No. CH/15 1-60 of 8th November, 1960 to all congregations; the summation of which states:

All those whose practices clashed with the E. P. Church should no longer consider themselves as members⁸¹

Pastor Tefe of the White Cross Society, Jordan, asserted that at an anniversary of the E. P. Church at Agate, in the same year, Rev. F. H. Buatsi, the then Synod Clerk (1954-1962) reiterated the contents of the circular quoted above. He also enumerated some of the practices termed earlier as "New customs". Tefe stated that the E. P. Church refused to administer communion, baptism and burial to the Etordome E. P. Church because of the practices of the Prayer Group. This study noted that the Church followed up its strategy of isolation of offenders with denial of pastoral care. The society had no option other than to perform these functions and performing them marked its break away from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

The E. P. Church has thus suffered another split. The cause for the division followed the pattern of 1945 when Wovenu and his Healing Church became the Apostles Revelation Society. Doh established a prayer and a healing centre at Etordome as a healing centre of the local E. P. Church. His group and the Church co-existed at the beginning. The group with all intentions tried to remain part of the Church. But intolerance from a section of the Church especially the elderly ones with missionary tradition caused the leadership to place restrictions on the group.

⁸¹ KERRY: 1975: 153-154. *The History of the Church in Ghana*

With the feeling of charity and sympathy to the sick and the spiritual needy, Doh, like Wovenu, would not stop his mode of praying nor stop healing through prayer. The Church ordered that the E. P. Church Membership Cards of the group members be withdrawn and its members should not be given the Lord's Supper by the E. P. Church. Isolated by the E. P. Church Administration, the Prayer Group in the Etordome E. P. Church reorganized itself into an independent fully-fledged church. This reaction was a defence mechanism aimed at counteracting the isolation by the E. P. Church. The E. P. Church, in order to prevent others from repeating practices it disapproved, pronounced sanctions on the group. Wovenu and Doh did not push their cases far but decided to go their own ways to curtail their conflicts with the E. P. Church.

Doh, like Wovenu felt he had a service to render, that is, to heal, and the E. P. Church would not allow him to render this service to the Church. The only option left for him was to leave the E. P. Church.

THE LORD'S PENTECOSTAL CHURCH (AGBELENGOR)

The doctrinal practices characteristic of Prayer and healing groups described above proved to be the leading factor of the next conflict that is to be reviewed.

The Lord's Pentecostal Church at its inception was known as the Lord's Church. It started as a prayer group at Blengo Peki in 1959 within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The late Samuel Yao Amedzro, a member of the Blengo E. P. Church, founded it. Meyer described Amedzro as a "non-active" member of the Church. The assertion, if true, does not deny the fact that Amedzro was introduced to Christianity through the E. P. Church; and, therefore, was a member of the E. P. Church.

Amedzro was the son of a polygamous father and a mother who was a member of the Apostolic Church of Ghana. He was baptized in the E. P. Church, Blengo and attended its schools. He was a good footballer⁸⁴. Oral tradition has it that Amedzro took to reckless living. He was a ballroom dancer and smoked, drank, and had several wives. Meyer asserts that he ridiculed his mother's loud praying. The above characteristics of Amedzro made him a questionable character, especially, as a leader in a pietist traditional church as will be shown in the discussion below.

He fell sick suddenly in October, 1958. When neither western nor traditional medicine could cure Amedzro, he was taken to Tekrom, a village near Guaman, Akan, in the Jasikan District. There was a Healing Centre established by Mr. T. K. Bokuma operating at Tekrom. The Healing Centre was a Prayer Group within the E. P. Church. Bokuma healed the sick by praying and laying of hands.

By the time Amedzro was healed at Tekrom he learnt the practices of the Healing Camp. At Tekrom he had two visions. In the first vision, he claimed God gave him a new name, which was written on his forehead in the vision. His new name was John. From then on, Amedzro was known as Sam (Samuel) John Amedzro. Thus, he gave up Yao, which was his birthday name. The change of name, Sam John, symbolized a new identity. Being given a name by God, made him God's property; a servant of God.⁸⁵

According to him, in the second vision that occurred in the eighth month of his stay at Tekrom, God was purported to have called him "to go and work for the Lord."⁸⁶ This vision puts

⁸⁴ Amedzro's life history was interviewed by Dr. Waiaku, the immediate predecessor of Amedzro. Waiaku was also Amedzro's friend.

⁸⁵ Meyer (1983), op.cit. 186

⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 184

Amedzro in a position similar to that of Wovenu of the Apostles Revelation Society and Doh of the White Cross Society. He was called to the holy vocation of an evangelist and healer.⁸⁷

When Amedzro returned home to Blengo in 1959, he organized a prayer group in line with the Tekrom group in his house. Members of his family and friends joined him. Prominent among them were his two close friends, Messrs. B. A. Y. Menka a member of Blengo E. P. Church and E. K. Wuaku.⁸⁸

Mr. Emmanuel Kwaku Wuaku (Tsirifo Kwaku) of Peki Avetile was a Methodist. He was Amedzro's childhood friend and football teammate. Wuaku affirmed that they did things in common when they were in school and as teammates. Incidentally, Wuaku's wife also fell sick and was taken to Tekrom when Amedzro was still receiving treatment there. The two friends were brought together to experience God's healing power and learnt to commit themselves to Christ, the Lord.

Back at Blengo, Amedzro, from his Tekrom experience, set up a prayer group. He established a prayer ground in the bush akin to Wovenu's in Tadzewu and Doh's at Etordome. He began to heal the sick through prayer, exorcise evil spirits and perform 'wonders'. The group quickly attracted people from and around Peki who heard about the healing powers of Amedzro.⁸⁹

The majority of Amedzro's followers were women with little or no education. An old member of the group attributed this trend to the Biblical text, which states:

Now remember what you were my
brothers when God called you from
the human point of view, few of you
were wise or powerful or of high social
standing.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 184.

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Matthew 28:19/20

Consequently, the social structure of the Blengo group, similar to that of Tadzewu and Etordome underlined the need for healing activities. The healing act served as a security against the many diseases that threaten the survival of some of the members of the Church. It is true that the Church had hospitals

According to Debrunner, mankind's four expectations from religion are:

1. Social fellowship
2. Emotional experience
3. Healing
4. Security against real or imagined evil forces.⁹¹

Out of the above, the Historical Churches provide only the first two leaving out the two which to the African are also very important. The church provides physical healing but, according to followers of the Prayer and Healing groups, fails to provide spiritual healing. Relying on the African Primal World view of the physical and spiritual, the African Christian believes that the physical world is controlled by both good and evil spiritual forces and man must be protected against the evil ones while seeking the goodwill of the good spirits. Since the Mission Churches do not provide sources of information through which to get this treatment, most of her members seek these elsewhere, very often with the Spiritual or Pentecostal Churches.

Wuaku asserted that the group was not at its beginning a Church, but a prayer group within the E. P. Church. The majority of its members were members of the Blengo E. P. Congregation and many were communicants and elders in the Blengo church. Meyer affirmed this when she quoted from Blengo E. P. Church Diary of a meeting between Rev. E. Y. Tawia and the Blengo Church Session on 20th April 1960 under the topic Tekrom Group. Again like Wosenu and Doh, Amedzro at the beginning did not aim at establishing a church but a group

⁹¹ Debrunner, H., 1965 op. cit. p. 320

within the Church with a charisma to heal the sick to set humankind free from the chain of sickness bonded by Satan and its evil forces.

Amedro and his group had a commonality with Wosenu and Doh in the area of taboos.

1. women in their menstrual period were not to attend prayer meetings;
2. members were to abstain from sexual intercourse on Saturday nights, before Sunday Services,
3. sick members were not allowed to go to hospitals when sick and not to take western medicine but to rely only on prayer

They drum, clap their hands and dance at worships. They have prayer and healing sessions, which are practices that the parent church, the E. P. Church does not allow. The group, like the Apostles Revelation Society and the White Cross Society, uses materials which they believe enhance the achievement of prayer requests or protect members from evil forces⁴². These were candles of various colours, the Cross, florida water, perfumes and incense and some oils. The Reform tradition does not promote the use of material objects as aids to prayer. This practice of the prayer group thus became a factor of conflict between the group and the mother church at Blengo. The conflict became the problem of the entire Church because the practice, it was feared, could eventually spread in other congregations of the entire Church if not stopped.

The group, after a year of its existence, incurred the hostility of the local congregation. Meyer recorded that in 1960, the case of the Tekrom Prayer Group appeared four times in the Blengo E. P. Church Session Minutes. Blengo E. P. Church was concerned because the founder of the group, Amedro, although a nominal Christian, was, nonetheless, a member of the Blengo E.P Church. In addition, the majority of the members of the group were members of the Blengo Church and they included presbyters.

⁴²According to Rev. Wiaaku the use of artefacts was abolished after the death of Amedro in 1971



Members of the E. P. Church outside Blengo felt that the Blengo E. P. Church had introduced new customs and practices into the Church. This was a threat to the Church's identity and image as a member of the worldwide Presbyterian family. The E. P. Church also felt that the group's practices were a threat to its authority over the religious lives of its members. Finally, the tradition of the E. P. Church as a historical church in relation to rules and regulations were being undermined by the practices of the Blengo Tekrom Group. Prominent among these was the acceptance of a polygamist, Amedzro, as a group leader.

The Blengo Church reacted to this wave of religiosity, which it felt threatened its existence and identity. On April 20th, 1960, Rev. Tawiah, the Pastor of the Blengo Pastoral District summoned a representative meeting of all the Peki congregations⁷⁴. Dzake, Avetile, Isame, Blengo and Dzogbati were all represented except Wudome. Other members of the meeting included the late Rev. G. B. Ansre and the late T. Asieni. The agenda was on the Tekrom Group whose headquarters was at Blengo. Top on the agenda was their unusual method of loud and mass prayer.

For the Church to challenge the way of praying of a group within the church at Blengo as it happened at Tadzewu and Etordome pointed to the fact that the way of praying was a real problem, and a controversial one, in the Church. This was a liturgical issue that related to immediate course of the Blengo conflict. It involved healing, the observation of food and sex taboos and the mode of prayers. While the E. P. Church would want to maintain her Reformed and pietistic traditions, the Prayer Group was enthusiastic with Pentecostalism. The liturgical issue thus assumed a doctrinal position. Neither the E. P. Church nor the Prayer Group would compromise on this position.

⁷⁴ The reactions of the local Blengo congregations to the Prayer Group was a result of pressure from the Church headquarters. An example was the case of Dzegbedzro.

The meeting noted that one of the Church mothers of the Blengo congregation, Madam Angelina Kwadzo and a presbyter Yao Adzanu and some other communicants of the Church were members of the Prayer group. The meeting also noted that their leader, John Sam Amedzro and most of the members were polygamists. The meeting again noted that during the inauguration of the Prayer Group at Blengo, Bokuma, its founder openly declared that the entire body of the Tekrom Group including the Blengo Branch was an integral part of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and would not do anything against it.

The meeting decided that Presbyter Adzanu should be seriously admonished. The Presbyters of the Blengo Church were to call the communicants involved and talk seriously to them to desist from the practices of the group. Meyer asserted that the fact that Tawiah called a Peki representative meeting on the Peki Tekrom Prayer Group, coupled with the fact that the minutes of the meeting were recorded, showed the magnitude of the threat the prayer group posed to the E. P. Church. The meeting underscores the supposition of the leaders of the Church that the prayer group "violated the Church's rules and neglected the Church's monopoly on the organisation of Christian life".⁵⁴

The Blengo Church at that instance was claiming the Church's right of authority and its identity as a branch of the universal Protestant family. Wuaku in a research interview with the author affirmed Meyer's account of Rev. F. Tawiah's meeting with the Prayer Group, which took place on 29th April, 1960.⁵⁵

She stated that Rev. Tawiah at that instance wanted Amedzro to declare where the groups allegiance was, for the Church or against it. Amedzro did not make any declaration but instead recounted his Tekrom experiences. While the E. P. Church would not compromise her Reformed

⁵⁴ Meyer *First Steps* (C.E.P. 198).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p.187.

Tradition with Pentecostalism, the Prayer Group on their part would not also give up their Pentecostal fire for the old Reformed Tradition.

That meeting ended without a meaningful compromise. The Church's interest and emphasis was on its long tradition with set rules and certain modes of conduct during worship. A tradition that the Church at all times protects and maintains. However the African Christian believes that the root of all ailments starts from spiritual sickness and when the spirit is not healed, the physical healings of the hospitals are incomplete

This factor of religious dissatisfaction is a major issue in the E.P. Church conflicts; an African encounter with Christianity. Debruner (1962), p. 30, Baeta (19), p. and Larbi (1995), p. 31, agreed variously with Margaret Field that:

The primary vulnerability of the patient to the disease is of supernatural Origin and until, redemptive ritual has been performed, the hospital efforts are futile.⁸⁶

This Primal Worldview of the African and, for that matter, Christians will make them seek spiritual protection and healing as a matter of great importance, no matter the consequences. The prayer Group phenomenon will exist so long as the Mission Churches do not offer alternatives or antidotes to this African need.

According to Wuaku the group's conviction in the power of prayer and fasting under the guidance of the Holy Spirit made it impossible for them to listen to the Church and stop any of the religious practices acquired at Tekrom. Our persuasion was, "it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man"⁸⁷ he emphasised. With that in mind they defied the Church and continued with their Tekrom practices and at the same time tried as best to remain members of the mother church. The Blengo conflict started with a liturgical issue but ended up a doctrinal one, an issue that neither the E. P. Church nor the Prayer Group would compromise on.

⁸⁶ Margaret Field

⁸⁷ Larbi, 1995, op.cit, p. 31

Wuaku affirmed that at an E. P. Church Anniversary at Tsame, on 20th November, 1960, Rev. Tawiah publicly read a circular sent from the Church's Headquarters, Ho.⁹⁸ It stated that any member of the E. P. Church who continued to belong to the Tekrom Prayer Group ceased to be a member of the Church unless he or she stopped the practices of loud praying and fasting. In addition, such a member must desist from observing the taboos of not wearing shoes or sandals to worship, women in their menstrual periods not entering the Church or Prayer Grounds and not using western medicine when sick.

The E. P. Church, in reaction to the Blengo Tekrom Group, adopted the same method or approach it used at Agate against the White Cross Society. She declared them ex-communicated. The Church adopted the policy of isolationism against people or group of people who violated its rules and regulations or challenged its authority and identity. Again the outcome of the Church's reaction was, as in the two previous instances under review, a counter reaction. Amedzro and his group and some sympathizers organised themselves into an independent religious group. The Prayer Group took the name, "The Lord's Church".

Wuaku recounted some incidents that marked the group's break away from the Church:

1. In December, 1959, when the son of Christian Sai Kwadzo died, the E. P. Church Blengo said it would bury the boy only if the father promised to break away from the Prayer Group.⁹⁹ The Church did not bury the boy because Sai Kwadzo would not denounce the Prayer Group. The performance of burial and burial rites is one of the functions of the Church that it uses as a sanction against defaulters.¹⁰⁰

This sanction was inappropriate because it did not make Sai Kwadzo denounce the Blengo Tekrom Group, nor did it make the Group stop the practices. The sanction rather gave the Group the chance to exercise the right to perform burial rites. The group therefore became independent as far as the performance of the Christian rite of burial is concerned.

⁹⁸ Appendix 5.

⁹⁹ Sai Kwadzo was a traditionalist who became a member of the E. P. Church through the conversion process.

¹⁰⁰ Hamedzro Section 129 of the English p. 46.

2. On Christmas day, 1960, the Group organised its first independent Sunday Service.¹⁰¹ This was an indication that the Group had separated from the E.P. Church Blengo and had rejected the conditions given to them by the Church.
3. On 29th October, 1961, the Peki Prayer Group split decisively from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church when for the first time it baptized one of its members in the 'Amimli' Stream.¹⁰²

The Blengo Prayer Group had performed the religious rite of Baptism which was the preserve of only the ordained. Consequently by this act, the Group, which is no more dependent on the E. P. Church for vital services, like baptism and burial broke the authority of the E. P. Church. The denial of the important service of Baptism, the hallmark of Christianity, no more serves as a mechanism for making the Group obey the Church's rules and regulations.

Secondly, the Group decisively broke away from the E. P. Church doctrinally in the ritual of baptism. It broke away from the Church's tradition of effusion as a mode of baptism. It adopted the Pentecostal mode of baptism by immersion thus breaking the Reformed Tradition. The adoption of the Pentecostal mode of baptism is another commonality of doctrinal practice of the Lord's Pentecostal Church with the Apostles Revelation Society and the White Cross Society. The group believes this mode of baptism is the mode in the Bible and as the Lord's servants they must do the Lord's will and not obey man's rules.

From the 29th October, 1961, the Group called itself The Lord's Church because it was the Lord that called the leader, Sam John Amedzro at Tekrom in a vision to go and work for Him, the Lord. The name was changed to The Lord's Pentecostal Church after the death of Amedzro and the election of Rev. Wuaku as the new leader. Rev. Wuaku affirmed that the change was for two reasons. First, the addition of Pentecostal was to identify it with Pentecostalism rather than its first move towards the practice of an Independent African Church. In consonance with its new inclination, The Lord's Pentecostal Church abolished the practice of not wearing shoes or sandals to worship and the wearing of the cross. Secondly, the addition of

¹⁰¹ Meyer *Ibid.*, Op. Cit. p. 185

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 188

Pentecostal was to distinguish the church from another church bearing the same name, "the Lord's Church". The Church was also known in Ewe as Agbelengor, which according to Wuaku is a descriptive and apt name given by a young man called Agbeka. Agbeka gave the Group that name because of its constant preaching on "Life here after". This in Ewe translates as - agbe le ngor - meaning the 'real' life is ahead. This name has become the affectionate name for the group especially in the Peki Valley.

The establishment of the Lord's Pentecostal Church marked the third strand of a church that was established by a member of the E. P. Church; The A.R.S. was the first followed by the White Cross Society and then the Lord's Pentecostal Church. The main issue of the conflict was the question of authority. Whether they had to obey that of God as in the Bible or that of the church's as in her constitution. It was Pentecostalism versus the Reform tradition.

The following are identifiable similarities and differences that it bears with both the Apostles Revelation Society and the White Cross Society:

1. Similarities

- a) Founder was a member of the E. P. Church; founder was called by God in a vision. Belief in healing through prayer and fasting.
- b) Has a healing centre
- c) Conflict with the Church involved Mode of Prayer.
- d) Belief in obedience to God rather than the human institutions (ecclesiastical) when it has to decide between the two.
- e) Establishment of independence as the last resort.

2. Differences

- a) Doctrinally, the Lord's Pentecostal Church was "Pentecostal" rather than in the African Independent Church mode as was the Apostles Revelation Society and the White Cross Church.
- b) The Lord's Pentecostal Church is ecumenical, in that it belongs to the Ghana Council of Pentecostal Churches but the Apostles Revelation Society and the

White Cross Church do not belong to ecumenical unions.

At the beginning, the Lord's Pentecostal Church followed the taboo practices peculiar to African Independent Churches such as not wearing sandals to worship, restriction of menstrual women from attending worship and prayer sessions and the use of religious artefacts, not having sexual intercourse on the night before religious services and ceremonies or rites and the use of candles and Florida water. Wuaku affirmed that religiosity must be a spiritual rather than a physical manifestation.

Though the Church still considers prayer the most effective remedy against all human problems, members are allowed to supplement it with western medicine when appropriate. Being a member of the Council of Ghana Pentecostal Churches has brought it from being a local Church to a member of a national and also an international movement. It has changed its theology and attitude to the Bible.

Concerning the conflicts and the eventual break from the church by Wovenu, Doh and Amedzro the issues were partially those of Polity where the power and authority of the E.P. Church were challenged by the growing influence of the three charismatic leaders. There was the issue of ethics in the cases of Wovenu and Amedzro. Wovenu was involved in a conflict over finance, the receipt of eighty-five pounds from the Education Administration while the Abor E.P. Church felt the money was meant not for Wovenu's school but rather for her school. Ethically, the Church at Blengu felt the polygamous Amedzro was not qualified to be a leader of any sort in the Church or a leader of a group in the Church. All the three were however involved with the issues relating to liturgy, healing, taboos and prayer. The liturgical issues have become doctrinal where the E. P. Church's Reformed Tradition came into conflict with the flare of Pentecostalism in some of her congregations. These congregations thus did all they could to push the perpetrators out. This sanction is from missionary heritage, the Church Order now called the Constitution. Section 3 on the administration of Church Penalties states.

... Should they stick to their opposition, then they have clearly shown that they have severed their membership from the church....¹⁰⁵

The missionaries taught their converts and the church that the Ewes and their cultural practices were 'devilish' and 'heathen'. Members of the Church should not indulge in them and members who indulged in any facet of the Ewe culture must first be warned and when persistent should be considered as non-members of the E. P. Church. The Missionaries did not permit healing with herbs. Neither did they permit exorcism. The Prayer Groups under review used herbs to heal, practised exorcism and observed taboos that were perceived by the church as African traditional religious practices. To the Church these Prayer Groups were practising Ewe traditional rites. The Church therefore applied the sanctions it felt were appropriate to the offence they had committed. The Church viewed these practices under traditional pre-missionary practices without looking at their scriptural contexts. If the Church had viewed these practices scripturally and positively, the situation would have been different. The next conflict and division to be reviewed clearly demonstrates that dialogue is an effective mechanism in solving conflicts. This was the secession of the Buem Krachi congregations of the E. P. Church in 1954.

THE PRESBYTERIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF BUEMI KRACHI, 1951-1964

The present name of the Church, Evangelical Presbyterian Church was given to it in 1954 after the crisis under review. The E. P. Church, then called the Ewe Presbyterian Church, experienced a crisis that involved some congregations in the Buem Krachi area. Some of these congregations were Nkonya, Jasikan, Borada, and Guaman.

The congregations involved in the crisis were among the fifteen congregations the Basel Mission handed over to the Bremen Mission in 1903 as a result of a Colonial demarcation of

¹⁰⁵ Hamedaka p.98 Section 214

Togoland between the Germans and the British, Grau E. 1964, p. 16.¹⁰⁴ It covered Vakpo through to Yendi. The shift from British Togoland to German Togoland involved a change of language, that is, from Twi language being used by the Basel Mission workers to Ewe which was being used by the Bremen Mission. For the Ewe speaking congregations, the change was acceptable but for the congregations who spoke Nkonya, Lelemi and Akan and for whom Akan had been used by the Basel Mission agents, it was not easily acceptable. They preferred to use Akan in worship, church life and in their schools.¹⁰⁵ They were reluctant to use Ewe.

According to Rev. Pwé Anare, the Nkonya and Buem congregations did not like the use of Ewe both in church and in their schools. They came together and decided to form their own church in which they would use Akan. They complained about the name, Ewe Presbyterian Church. To them, the name marginalized the non-Ewe members of the church as if the church had only Ewe members.

In the views of the Nkonyas and Buems, the church authorities discriminate against the non-Ewes in appointing personnel of the church and its schools. During that time, there were no pastors, teachers and catechists from either Nkonya or Buem, they were all Ewes. They felt the church was discriminating against them.

The political climate of the time also accounted for the Buem Krachi crisis. It was the period of two political parties in the then Trans Volta Togoland.

1. The Convention People's Party (C.P.P.) which was nationwide, in the Gold Coast and
2. Ablorde which was pro-Togo and Ewe.

It was evident then that some of the church's executive members such as Rev. Galevo and Rev. Ametorwobla, the then Synod Clerk were members of the Ablode Party. Since the Nkonyas and the Buems were not in favour of only Ewe in the church and would not want to be politically united with the Ewes in Togo, they supported the C.P.P. which was anti-Togo unification.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Grau E., 1964 - p.16

¹⁰⁵ The Lelemi are those who speak the various Lelemi dialects

¹⁰⁶ Rev. Prof. Anare's father, the late Rev. G.B. Anare was one of the Ewe teachers who taught in the Buem area and thus had a knowledge of the events of the crisis.

In 1954, the Buem Krachi congregations of the E.P. Church, except Worawora District, declared their autonomy and established a church under the name, "Presbyterian Evangelical (P.E.) Church of Buem Krachi with its Headquarters at Guaman. According to Rev. Daniel Yao Aglubie, one of the pioneer pastors of the P.E. Church, the 'break away' group asked one Rev. E.P. Kwafo, a retired pastor of the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast to ordain pastors for the church. Three pastors, Reverends Edwin Akoto, W.S. Nyarko and Coleman were accordingly ordained in 1960. Coleman died a few months after his ordination and Rev. Aglubie from Nkonya was ordained in 1961 by Reverends Kwafo¹⁰⁷ and Nyarko¹⁰⁸.

According to Ansre, both the Basel and Bremen Mission Churches in Accra and Ho were not happy about the turn of events. The two churches, the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast and the Ewe Presbyterian Church met under the co-chairmanship of Rt. Rev. Ojdjidjah and Rt. Rev. Galevo and discussed the grievances of the P. E. Church. Finally at the E. P. Church Synod at Kpedze in 1956, the name, Ewe Presbyterian Church was changed to Evangelical Presbyterian Church, to give it a universal outlook that would include non-Ewes. In addition, the E. P. Church agreed to give equal opportunities to all members of the Church in matters of education and ordination indiscriminative of tribe.¹⁰⁹ It also agreed to use Akan alongside Ewe at worship and church functions. It also agreed to absorb the agents of the P. E. and re-educate them as members of the E.P. Church.

The Buem Krachi crisis was solved through dialogue and negotiation. One factor that the author thinks contributed to the solution of the crisis was the victory of the C.P.P. over Ablode in the 1954 Plebiscite that united British Togo to the Gold Coast. The fear of the Buem Krachi people of their uniting with Togo was removed by the victory of the C.P.P. They felt

¹⁰⁷ Research interview with Rev. Prof. Ansre at Adenta Accra

¹⁰⁸ Research interview with Rev. I. Y. Aglubie at Volu-Krachi

¹⁰⁹ The constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana and Togo, - Evangelique Presbyterienne du Togo p. 62, 83

they had a role in the C.P.P. government. However, the language problem remained in the Church and kept on showing up at worships and church functions.

CHAPTER FOUR
CHRIST EVANGELICAL MISSION
(EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN REFORMED CHURCH)
1964 - 1992

The schisms discussed in Chapter Three occurred in rural areas, in the Volta Region. The next conflict however took place outside the Region. It happened in Accra the capital of Ghana in 1964.

The Evangelical Presbyterian Reformed Church, now Christ Evangelical Mission, was established at Accra New Town (Lagos Town) in 1964.¹¹⁹ Christ Evangelical Mission, like the Apostles Revelation Society, the White Cross Society and the Lord's Pentecostal Church, was an off-shoot of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Its establishment like the aforementioned churches came as a result of the conflict that arose in the E. P. Church, Accra New Town, congregation between a section of its members and Mr. Emmanuel Ntumi Ateigar.

Mr. E. N. Ateigar is a native of Kpando. His father Kweku Adzah Ntumi was a linguist of the Kpando Paramountcy. His mother died when he was young.¹²¹ Born on 5th February, 1913, Mr. Ateigar was educated at the Hohoe Ewe Mission Senior School. He became a pupil teacher of the Ewe Church in 1933. He taught in the Ewe Presbyterian Schools and later left to join the Catholic Mission School at Jasikan. Ateigar said he left the Ewe Presbyterian School because he refused to pay a levy imposed on its teachers by the Church.

¹¹⁹ Part of the history of Christ Evangelical Mission was obtained by the author from Mr. E. N. Ateigar in his Adenta home, a suburb of Accra. He, despite persistent appeals, refused to speak about the New Town conflict and the establishment of Christ Evangelical Mission. He said that the experience was too bitter for him to recount.

The family, history and establishment of the Christ Evangelical Mission was narrated by Mr. John Wokoshe Yaa Ntumi, stepbrother of Mr. Ateigar.

Unlike Wovenu, Doh and Amedzro whose educational levels were not high, Ategar had a B. Sc. Economics Degree from the University of Ghana, and belonged to the middle level income group, a position he used to good advantage in both the establishment of the New Town E. P. Church and latter in that of the Christ Evangelical Mission. His position as a sales representative of B. O. A. C. also gave him foreign exposures to Britain and Germany. These exposures helped him in his organization of the two Churches, E. P. Church, Accra New Town and Christ Evangelical Mission, Kotobabi, Accra. Being a teacher of the Ewe Mission for over twenty years makes Ategar different from preceding schismatics. His long association with the Church as its employee presupposes that he has knowledge of the doctrines, faith, practices and polity of the Church (his former employer).

Ategar started what is now the Bethel Evangelical Presbyterian Parish Church as a "house church". The Church began in his house in 1955.¹¹² Ategar, his family and a few friends who were Ewes and members of the Ewe Presbyterian Church met on Sundays and worshipped in Ewe as members of the Ewe Church. This group was later joined by a group of Ewes who left the Adabraka Presbyterian Church in 1960.¹¹³

The group had worshipped at Adabraka Presbyterian Church of Ghana for, until then, there was no Ewe Presbyterian Church in Accra and the Ewe Presbyterians in Accra who sought to continue active life as Christians joined the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. As Dovlo puts it, "this was normally an uncomfortable alliance because church services were carried out in the local vernacular, mainly Ga and Akan. Even where they (the Ewe members) could speak these

¹¹² J. O. Dovlo, "The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, West of the Volta River," in *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* Vol. 1, Dec. 1991 No. 2 p.39

languages, there was still a feeling of being foreigners, having belonged to an acutely ethnic Church in the first place which carried out its life in Ewe¹¹⁴.

The incident that precipitated their mass exodus was as a result of a supposedly derogatory remark made by the then Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, The Rt. Rev. Max E. Dodoo, when he visited the Adabraka branch on 13th March 1955. Wuaku writes that the Rev. Dodoo castigated the minister, the Rev. I. T. Laryea for allowing the use of Ewe. On the day in question Messrs. Doku and Wuaku read the day's text in Ewe alongside Ga and Akan¹¹⁵. The action of the head of the Church towards the Ewe members and the Ewe language caused the Ewes to take a decision. The next Sunday 20th March, 1955, a resolution of secession by the Ewe members was served to the Presbyterian Church Authorities¹¹⁶.

These aggrieved Ewe members of the Adabraka Presbyterian Church of Ghana joined Atiegar in his house to worship on subsequent Sundays. The Ewe Church in Atiegar's house was under the leadership of Atiegar but the Rev. E. K. Paaku, a Pastor of the Ewe Church in Togo who was then living in Accra, served it on part-time basis. Atiegar also invited E. P. Pastors working in Accra like C. G. Baeta of the University College of the Gold Coast and G. K. Ampofo, who was with the Department of Social Welfare to support Rev. Paaku. Although the Ewes broke away from the Presbyterian Church of Ghana their relation to her was not completely severed. In April 1960, the Synod Clerk Rev. I. A. Kwansa, Rev. S. S. Odonkor and Mr. Justice Nii Amar Ollenu visited the "break away group" at the house of Mr. Atiegar. Mr. Justice Nii Amaa Ollenu offered to pay the transportation of Rev. Paaku so that he might

¹¹⁴ *ibid* p. 37

¹¹⁵ Wuaku, *op. cit.* in *ibid* p. 39

¹¹⁶ Information obtained from research interview with Mr. M. W. Ollenu a former member of the Adabraka Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

continue his part-time services to the new Ewe Church, giving him one pound (£1.00) for that purpose, for a start.¹¹⁷

In August of 1955, Messrs. John Alorvor and G. M. K. Wuaku were delegated to the Synod of the Presbyterian Church at Odumase to request for an Ewe speaking Minister to serve not only the New Town Church but also the newly founded Nima Ewe congregation. The Rev. E. A. Caesar, an Ewe speaking Minister (trained at the Bremen Mission Seminary at Ho) was appointed to do this job in October, 1961 and served till January, 1962. In January that year (1962), Atiegari announced to the congregation that he had stopped Rev. Caesar from working with the New Town Church on the grounds that he was not fully committed to the Ewe Church. No one openly challenged Atiegari for deciding for the whole church because he founded the Church. This was one of the problems that Dovo later mentioned in his work quoted above that the churches established by individuals in their homes with their monies (at their beginnings) would naturally have to bear these founders' influences and dominance. This ownership situation occurred in Wovenu and Doh's conflicts with the Church. Atiegari replaced Rev. Caesar with Rev. Kwawu, a retired pastor of the A. M. E. Zion Church who was an Ewe. It is alleged that Atiegari asserted that he asked the E. P. Head Office at Ho to provide his Church with a pastor but it would not do so on the grounds that there was a gentleman's agreement between the E. P. Church and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana not to trespass into one another's area of operation. The Presbyterian Church contested Atiegari's right of establishing an Ewe Church on the basis of the aforementioned unwritten agreement. At the arbitration, Atiegari is alleged to have contended that the so-called agreement was a pre-independence arrangement between the missionaries that had been invalidated by Ghana's Independence. His contention also asserted that the E. P. Church being a religious organization in Ghana under the constitution of Ghana, had the freedom to operate anywhere in Ghana. Atiegari won his case and

¹¹⁷ Dovo, *op. cit.*, p. 40

had thus broke the religious restriction of churches to specific language areas. This problem of expansion outside the Volta Region was finally resolved on 13th July 1988 by a Joint Synod Committee meeting of the E. P. Church and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana¹¹⁸.

The first batch of E. P. Church, Accra New Town's confirmation took place in 1959 with seventy-nine (79) confirmants prepared by Mr. John Yao Nutty who was also a teacher in the Church's School. Atiegar made these confirmants the founding members of a prayer group in the Church. Atiegar's basis for establishing a prayer group in the Church was to encourage its members to turn to the Almighty God in times of need and doubt and thus discourage them from consulting traditional gods. He insisted on constant prayer and personally taught them how to pray¹¹⁹. This prayer group became the backbone of Atiegar's new church, the E. P. Reformed (now Christ Evangelical Mission) after the schism.

Atiegar also formed a second church choir with part of the 1959 confirmants. He named it "Nucleus of Holiness". The name of the choir was an indication of his quest for real spirituality in the church, his zeal for spiritual growth of the members. He was later accused in 1963 by a section of the congregation of establishing a rival church choir. He defended the formation of the second choir as an opportunity for every member to play a meaningful role in the Church.

Here, again the author thinks Atiegar had an unofficial reason for a second choir with a different name. He was from the beginning not establishing an E. P. Church but a church of his own blue-print and when the time came he used as an excuse, the challenge of the youth and started a church of his choice.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p. 45

¹¹⁹ Research interview conducted by the author with Mrs. Gladys Ametia Yao-Ali, a member of the 1959 confirmation class of Accra New Town I.P.C. and a leading member of the Atiegar v.L.M. Mr. Nuten was Atiegar's nephew and he helped in the Accra New Town Church.

In 1962, Ategiar went to Britain for a B. O. A. C. Course. During his absence, the Christian Youth Builders (C. Y. B.) the Youth Wing of the E. P. Church was formed in the Accra New Town Church. It was to lead a "revolt" against Ategiar the following year.

Again in his absence, the New Town E. P. Church secured ownership documents¹²⁰ on the land bought from one Mr. Gbiblewu. The plot of land purported to belong to the Osu Stool turned out to belong to the Gbese. It was the Gbese Stool which signed the ownership documents for the New Town Church. The formation of the C. Y. B. and the procurement of legal ownership document on the New Town E. P. Church land became two important factors that undermined the continued leadership of Ategiar and his claim over the church and its properties when he returned from Britain. The C. Y. B. led a revolt against Ategiar's continued absolute leadership of the New Town E. P. Church and the New Town Church used the land ownership document procured to oust Ategiar in the court of law. When Ategiar returned from Britain and Germany, he initiated some changes in the Accra New Town E. P. Church. He insisted that members kneel down during prayers. He went round to make sure members complied with this innovation. He also insisted on the use of the litany every Sunday. The use of the litany on Sunday was new in the E. P. Church and would not be a cause for conflict but the insistence on kneeling at all prayer periods was not a Presbyterian Practice and could spark off resentment. On Sunday, the 24th of March 1963 after the opening prayer and first hymn, a spokesman of the youth read out an eighteen-point question on the following:

- A Church matters;
- B Organizational matters.
- C School matters.
- D Matters on accounts

¹²⁰ Information about the conflict was given by Mr. M. W. Oti mentioned earlier who was secretary of the Committee of Enquiry. His information was supported by a full text of the Committee's report and Newspaper reports on the issue.

Since these matters could not be solved there and then, a Committee of seventeen (17), twelve men and five women was set up to investigate the allegations and report its findings to the Church¹²¹. In addition to the eighteen allegations, the Committee also took action on an anonymous letter from a member to the Bremen Mission about Mr. Atiegar.

The Committee began its work with seventeen members but finished with fifteen. Two of the members were asked to stay away because they were alleged to be involved in some of the allegations (they were found later to be innocent). Mr. J. B. Akie chaired the Committee. Mr. M. W. Ofori served as its secretary and was assisted by Messrs. A. A. K. Tse and E. K. Gaga. It held ten sessions and five executive sessions and consulted the E. P. Church Head Office, Ho on 7th April, 1963, before submitting its report to the congregation on 21st April, 1963. Mr. B. C. B. Nutsugah received the report on behalf of the Congregation. The Committee met Mr. Atiegar during the sessions, put each question or allegation to him and received his explanations and put down their findings and comments under each topic treated. The questions put to Atiegar by the youth of Accra New Town congregation were issues involving Polity, Liturgy and Ethics. For easy identification of the issues of the conflict and future comparisons with the other conflicts that occurred in the E. P. Church, the questions put to Atiegar are packaged under the issues mentioned above as follows:

The issues were related to Church, Church Polity; organization, administration, ethnicity, founder and charismatic leadership.

- a) The first question was why the New Town congregation had no Presbyters as pertained in the other E. P. Church Congregations. Atiegar's answer was that he proscribed the consecration of Presbyters in the congregation because it had negative results at many places. However, he would allow it if the congregation desired it.
- b) Another question on the organization of the New Town congregation was why the congregations has two Church Choirs instead of one as practised by all the congregations of the E. P. Church. His answer was that his intention was to

¹²¹Information was obtained from the Report of the Committee set up by the Accra New Town Church to investigate the allegations of a section of the youths against Atiegar.



promote as many groups in the congregation as possible so as to provide platforms for every member to fully participate in worship and service.

- c) The third question was what difference was there between Accra New Town Congregation and the E. P. Church (in the Volta Region)? To this he said there was no difference in the areas of teachings (doctrines).

The above questions point to the following facts:

1. That the Accra New Town congregation was not organized nor administered according to the constitution (1931) that was in use at the time.
2. For Atiegar not following this aspect of the church's polity made the youth feel that there was a deviation from the E. P. Church's polity.

The second organizational lapse pointed out as related to two Church Choirs in one congregation was a seed of rivalry. If he wanted to promote many groups as he stated, it would have been appropriate to encourage the members to form one. Again deviation from the practices of the E. P. Church is inferred when the youth wanted to know whether the New Town Church was E. P. Church in polity; that is, organization, administration and in line with its constitution.

The next set of questions put to Atiegar was related to liturgical issue of prayers. The youth would want to know the benefit the congregation derives from kneeling during prayers instead of the usual practice of standing. In his defence, Atiegar said when he introduced kneeling, it was acceptable to the congregation but if the congregation felt it was wrong to kneel down to pray to God he asked for forgiveness.

The committee noted that kneeling down during prayers was not new in the E. P. Church. The crux of the issue was the compulsion attached to it. The issue of compulsion was raised in the next question related to prayer.

The youth would like to know why Atiegar had been going round during prayer sessions. He explained that he went round to ensure that each member knelt down well so as to set example for visitors.

The Committee however saw that Atiegar's walking around during prayer sessions did not portray a good image of the congregation, especially, before visitors. In addition it was noted that the floor at that time was rough and thus inflicted physical pain on kneeling members.

Reference to physical pain suffered when members knelt on the rough floor was an ethical issue: a leader's unconcern for his or her people. It was therefore an issue of a moral conduct of the leader.

Another ethical issue raised by the youth was that Mr. Atiegar openly disgraced those who failed to kneel down. In his defence Atiegar explained that it was not his intention to insult or disgrace anyone in public but it was his jealousy for God that made him say what he said.

Apart from the accusations from the youth as stated above a member of the New Town congregation, at the time of the committee's meeting, anonymously wrote a letter to the Bremen Mission Headquarters in Germany telling them that Atiegar had not established an E. P. Church congregation but a church of his own with its own liturgy and polity. His request for personnel to train leaders of the said congregation should therefore not be considered because the E. P. Church had a Seminary that trained the E. P. Church Agents. If the said Church were to be an E. P. Church congregation, Atiegar would have requested the E. P. Church for personnel.

The Committee did not treat the anonymous letter seriously because it was anonymous and there was no one to support the accusation even if it had truths in it. It however noted the contents as another source of accusation against Atiegar.

The Committee under review attested in their report to the New Town congregation that the E. P. Church Headquarters at Ho unofficially recognized a level of independence of Atiegar, as the founder of the New Town Church. It stated that when it presented the new order of worship introduced by Atiegar in the Accra Church to Ho, it promised to compare it with that of the Fogo order and come out with the ideal. In that sense Ho had given Atiegar's order an equal recognition with the Church's. This lapse partly contributed to the conflict and division that occurred in New Town in 1964. Atiegar felt he had an inalienable right to direct the course of the congregation therefore when he was challenged and placed in a minority position he left the New Town congregation. The notion of power and authority as related to polity was therefore,

an underlying cause in the New Town conflict while ethical and liturgical issues were the immediate causes. However, doctrinal difference was the bedrock that Atiegar and the E. P. Church would not compromise on; the E. P. Church would want to maintain her Reformed Tradition while Atiegar would not give up his pentecostal enthusiasm.

After the findings of the Committee were submitted to the church, some members started meeting at Atiegar's Accra School of Economics, adjacent to the Primary School. According to Mrs. Gladys Yawa Alifo, a founding member of the New Town Church, some elders pleaded with Atiegar to come back to the Church but he refused. Instead, Atiegar and some members of the E. P. Church especially members of the 1959 class of confirmants, and the prayer group mentioned earlier, formed Atiegar's new church. According to Mrs. Alifo the new group first met at the Aburi Botanical Gardens on Sunday, 31st March, 1963, and prayed over the impending gloom that loomed over the New Town E. P. Church. The group went to the Aburi mountains with Mr. Atiegar, their leader in view of the "persecution" in the Church, to seek God's support and guidance as Jesus and his disciples did on Mount Olives (Luke 22:39-40; Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42). After the prayers, Atiegar informed the group that he was breaking away from the New Town E. P. C. and forming a new church. Atiegar established the Accra New Town church and the E. P. Church later came in. When he felt he could not operate with the E.P. Church, he left the Accra New Town Church. It is important to note that prayer group phenomenon appeared in Atiegar's schism too. It was however not a major issue of the conflict as it was in the other conflicts. The first act of Atiegar's open confrontation with the E. P. Church, as a whole, was, his sending out of a circular letter captioned "The Malpractices and Anomalies in the E. P. Church." He summed up these Anomalies and Evil practices as:

- i. The careless and trifling manner in which the Lord's Supper was administered in the E. P. Church.

- ii. The shallow way in which Sunday and other services were conducted.
- iii. The evils of money and how money matters absorbed the spiritual worship of the whole Church.
- iv. The method of election of Church heads was satanic and evil in the Church.
- v. The satanic spirits of envy among some pastors and church members; seeking of high places in the Church; discrimination; tribal consciousness and many others which created in the Church hatred, quarrelling and bad thought against one another.

These allegations in my view were weighty accusations which the Church should have critically examined and not ignored. All the five allegations were repeated by the "concerned members" E.P. Church in 1988. The fourth and fifth allegations occurred during the Buem Krachi crisis. This is a proof that they are real problems, which must be resolved in the church to avoid future conflicts.

Ategar contended in the preface of the booklet of his accusation of the Church that his new Church, E. P. Reformed Church was out to stamp out the evils he had enumerated and asked all who agreed about the existence of these evil practices to join his crusade. He gave wide publicity to this booklet. He circulated it at Hohoe during the Church's Synod. This action landed him at the Hohoe Magistrate's court on a charge of breach of public peace¹²².

Ategar's renewed vigour and desire for spiritual growth of the Church were expressed in the booklet mentioned above. His argument about evil practices in the E. P. Church was in line with spiritual renewal trends as stated by Bittlinger in The Church is Charismatic¹²³.

¹²² Research notes with Magistrate's Administration, 21st February, 1977.

¹²³ Bittlinger, Arnold. The Church as Charismatic - The World Council of Churches and the Charismatic Revival, 1982 (Geneva), p. 11.

He was advocating the renewal of the Church's liturgy of pure adoration and supplication, a leadership filled with the Holy Spirit and knowledge and method of Christian leadership. Sacraments that are biblically based and effective and a sharing Church should support these. He had challenged the Church to examine its life and work critically. Atiegar's renewal approach differed from the others in that he was a radical reformer

Ironically, he was also accused of the very things he accused the Church of. For example, seeking of high place and tribal consciousness. Nor was his accountability and stewardship any better than those of the Church?

The E. P. Church Executive reacted to Atiegar's general manoeuvres. The Synod Clerk on 23rd April, 1964 sent a Pastoral Letter out directing that Atiegar's circular to the pastors should be disregarded and not discussed until further notice. It further directed that Atiegar's Hymn Books stocked by pastors and the E. P. Church Bookshop for sale should all be returned to him immediately. On 25th April, 1964, the Synod Clerk issued a circular to all congregations that Rev. M.T. Simpri who was in the employment of Atiegar was no more a pastor of the E.P. Church because he failed to comply with Synod Committee's directives which asked him not to join Atiegar²⁴. He was also accused of playing a divisive role in the Acera New Town Church. A pastoral letter to all pastors of the E. P. Church was sent out by the Synod Clerk on the same, 25th April 1964 explaining why synod Committee had struck off Rev. Simpri's name from the roll of pastors of the E. P. Church. On 1st October 1964, the Synod Clerk sent a letter of excommunication to Mr. Atiegar for the following reasons:

- a) taking steps to undermine the E. P. Church and thwart her plans and purposes through the publication of falsehood and rumours;
- b) employing Mr. M. T. Simpri whose name has been struck off the list of E. P. Church Pastors;

²⁴ The circular under review is circular Rev. SI/72-64. Appendix II. The circular under review is circular Rev. SI/72-64, Appendix II.

- c) for establishing his own church under the name Evangelical Protestant Reformed Church¹²⁵.

The second and third reasons were strong cases, against Atiegar but the author feels that there were truths in Atiegar's publication that needed to be, addressed instead of branding them "falsehood and rumours."

In response to Head Office's promise to the delegates of the investigating Committee discussed above, Rev. C. K. Dovlo, then a Member of Parliament for Keta, was asked to take charge of the New Town E. P. Church. Rev. C. K. Dovlo came in to inherit an ensuing legal battle between the New Town E. P. Church and Mr. N. K. Atiegar. The first litigation was over the ownership of the place of worship of the New Town E. P. Church. Atiegar broke away from the Church in 1964 claiming the land on which the church and school were built as his personal property. As the founder of this church, many of the Church's documents were made in his personal name. First he removed the Church's signposts and landmarks¹²⁶. On 1st September, 1964, Atiegar went to the Church and caused damage to two door latches and forced the doors open. The Church caused his arrest and he was prosecuted at the New Town Magistrate's Court. He told the court that both the Church and the land on which it was built were his personal properties and that he gave notice to the complainants (the E. P. Church) to quit by September 1st. The Magistrate reminded Atiegar that since the right to ownership case was pending before the High Court, he had no reason to take the law into his own hands. He was bonded in the sum of five hundred pounds (£500.00) to be of good behaviour until the Court decided on the case. Atiegar's claim at court was another indication that he was not establishing an E. P. Church but a church of his own blue-print and he did so by establishing the Christ Evangelical Mission which was unlike the E. P. Church.

¹²⁵ Extracts from Stood Clerk's circular Ref. UC 11-64 of 1st October 1964.

¹²⁶ A research interview with Mr. M.W. Osei, a member of the New Town Church at the Achimota residence.

The Accra High Court mentioned above gave its judgment in the Accra High Court suit No. L225/64

Ategar, versus

Rev. C. K. Dovo

M. Ofori

Amesimeku

in favour of the New Town E. P. Church based on the fact that the church had the correct ownership document on the land from the Gbese Stool, supported by an affidavit from the Gbese Stool which states:

That the land, the subject matter of the suit is the property of applicant's stool as contained in the decision of Jackson J. O. 31st May 1951 and confirmed by the judgment of the West African Court of Appeal (W.A.C.A.) on 4th March, 1954 and affirmed by the Privy Council on 19th December 1960 in Kokomlemle Consolidated case¹²⁷

The judgment of the court appeared in the 26th September, 1964 edition of the Daily Graphic. The New Town E. P. Church was fortunate that it obtained a valid ownership document in its name when Ategar was in Britain, without which they would have lost the suit and the church property.

The second case was over the ownership of the E. P. School, identified on the Site Plan as 'A' in Appendix. ... The New Town E. P. Church sent an application of ownership to the Accra City Council. This case too was decided in favour of the New Town E. P. Church. Thus the civil courts gave ownership of the Church, land and school to the Accra New Town E. P. Church.

¹²⁷ Daily Graphic, September 8, 1964 p.

The court cases between Atiegar and the New Town E. P. Church set a precedence of church cases going to court at variance with Paul's condemnation of litigation, especially, before Civil Judges. I Corinthians 6:5 and 6 which underscores Paul's displeasure:

Shame on you! Surely there is at least one wise person in your fellowship who can settle a dispute between fellow Christians? Instead, one Christian goes to court against another and lets unbelievers judge the case" (Good News Version.)

Common Characteristics of the "Group-Leaders"

Atiegar is similar to Wovenu, Doh and Amedzro, the three preceding schismatics in that,

- A He, as an individual, started or founded his church through his personal efforts rather than through the Headquarters at Ho. It began in his home. He used his personal resources to nurture it until it became well established. True to Dovo¹²⁸ he (Atiegar) thought that he had an inalienable right to run his Church and when he was opposed he broke away with a section of church members
- B Atiegar, like the other three schematics under discussion aimed at revitalizing the church. He introduced new measures to bring renewal into worship, purity of the sacraments, spirituality of the ordained ministers and quality of life. His practices were not overt as the former.
- C His recognition of demons, evil and Satan in the life of the Church and its members. His renewal efforts were geared towards their eradication¹²⁹.

¹²⁸W. J. Dovo, p. 104

¹²⁹Presented in the Book of History and Times of the Holy E. P. Parish Church, Accra-New Town

He, however, differed from the first three in his approach. He was a radical reformist. This attitude could be attributed to his level of education, his contacts with foreign cultures and geographical location of operation. (This area will be dealt with in the next chapter). He, unlike the three men, shunned and forbade the use of religious elements like holy water and incense. He did not establish a healing centre although he advocated healing through prayer.

There was also dissimilarity of questioning or accusation. In the first three conflicts the leaders of the various groups were questioned by the E.P. Church leadership but in Atiegar's his authority and spirituality was challenged by members of his Church. His conflict was an internal conflict at first and assumed ecclesiastical dimension only when Atiegar wrote an accusation against the E. P. Church hierarchy. Again Atiegar differed from the other three groups' leaders in that he challenged the church leadership for shallow liturgical practices of the church, ethical and spiritual laxity of clergy. His counter-accusations inferred that the church leadership and the clergy were worse than he had been accused of.

Atiegar's schism unearthed some weaknesses of the E. P. Church as follows:

- a. the Church has no guideline or blue print for the establishment or planting of new congregations. This deficiency allowed would-be founders to operate, as they thought fit. This brings problems of control over these congregations in the future;
- b. there is no definite guideline on the role of the laity in Church administration; that is, there is no uniform modality for the stewards nor limits of the laity such as their present job description. This deficiency has given the "lay leaders to operate as they choose thus resulting into lots of varieties in order of worshipping in the Church; a breeding ground for conflicts;
- c. lack of job description for Church agents as at that time made enthusiasts overplay their roles;

- d. foot-dragging is characteristic of church administrators. Many conflicts like the Accra New Town case could have been avoided or resolved if the administration acted promptly and decisively.

These weaknesses were responsible for another conflict that involved the whole Church and eventually resulted in another schism, that gave birth to the E. P. Church of Ghana. The core of those involved in it were members of the Bible Study And Prayer Fellowship (B.S.P.F.).

THE BIBLE STUDY AND PRAYER GROUP (FELLOWSHIP)

E.P. CHURCH OF GHANA

The Bible Study and Prayer Group of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, started as the Amakom Prayer Group within the E. P. Church, Amakom in Kumasi, Ashanti. It was started in 1960 with five members¹³⁰. They were Messrs. W. K. Do-Kporzikokfo, L. K. Blame, G. Y. Adinkra, G. F. K. Akuayi and Madam C. A. Abovi.

Amakom E. P. Church was established in 1944 and although its membership was mainly Ewes, ministers from Ramsayer Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG) pastored the congregation. The Ramsayer Presbyterian Church has a long history of prayer group. Its prayer group started as far back as the 1930's. Thus activities of the BSPG began in Amakom Church in the 1960's and gained a lot of experience from the Ramsayer groups. Mr. E. K. Hennon, a founding member of the Ramsayer group and a Presbyterian was instrumental in nurturing the Amakom Group.

Initially, they met strong opposition from other members of the Amakom Church and therefore had to hold their meetings in private. The results of the group's activities however,

¹³⁰ B.S.P.F. 10th Anniversary Souvenir Programmatic History 1988. B.S.P.F. Publications p. 8

became evident to non-members in the congregation. Some became attracted to it and the group began to grow. The openness of the group's activities reduced opposition to it. By 1964 the group was firmly established in the Amakom E. P. Church congregation and most of the leaders of the group became leaders of the congregation.

The group then realized the need for a constitution to guide its conduct and activities. A committee of three made up of Messrs. O. K. Atubra, R. N. K. Klaye and G. F. K. Acquayi was appointed to draft the constitution which was submitted to the group in 1965. It was approved as the constitution of the group that same year. This constitution formed the basis of the Constitution in both the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Amakom group adopted it with some modifications and changes.

It was from the Amakom E. P. Church that Prayer groups were established in the congregations in and out of the Volta Region. First, individuals from Amakom tried to plant the group in their home churches. Secondly in 1975, Dr. N. D. Sodzi an executive of the Amakom group and Mr. E. K. Hennor were sent to the Synod of the E. P. Church to plead with it to accept prayer groups in the E. P. Church. The Amakom group also publicized the Prayer Group by organizing annual conventions. The first was at Ho in 1976; 142 people representing 10 groups attended that convention. Another was organized at Hohoe the following year with 300 people representing 52 groups in attendance. At the Hohoe Convention, the Amakom Executive was mandated to act as the National Executive.

In 1978, the Amakom Group sent 4 delegates, Messrs. N. D. Sodzi, E. K. Hennor, W. K. Do-kporzakokko and O. K. Atubra to the E. P. Church Synod to argue its case for acceptance.

It is said that some of the dignitaries of the Church including members of the clergy opposed the idea of accepting the group into the E. P. Church. The group and its activities were nonetheless accepted by the Synod of the Church that year. In the same year, (1978) at its Peki

Convention at Blengo, where Lorenz Wolf sowed the Gospel seed in 1847. Rt. Rev. C. K. Dovi, the then Moderator of the E. P. Church formally inaugurated the Group as one of the organs of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

FRICTION WITH THE EXECUTIVE

In 1979, a year after its acceptance by the Church the Synod decided the following:

Prayer Groups:

Synod Committee has taken the firm stand of expelling from the Church, members who are connected with prayer groups whose faith, practice and procedure are not in conformity with those of the Church. Pastors were earnestly asked to oversee all prayer group activities so that they run according to the approved Constitution.¹

The Church became uneasy about the activities of the Prayer Group and decided to control it. Examples of some of these activities are the speaking in tongue, loud mass prayer, spirit possession and exorcism control. The E. P. Church, thus, insisted in protecting its liturgical and doctrinal tradition inherited from the Bremen Mission. This projectionist character of the Church and its leaders confirms C. G. Baeta's statement about the Church's identity thus:

... We in the Presbyterian Church of this land are a direct offshoot of Swabian pietism and please God, this type of Christian witness may never be wiped out from the earth.¹²

The Group's constitution accepted by the E. P. Church Synod in 1978 spells out its aims and objectives as follows:

- i. to read and study the Bible seriously with an open mind in order to grow and mature in Christian life, through the study of relevant Christian

¹ Synod Report 1979
¹² C. G. Baeta, 1988, op. cit. p. 77

- literature (e.g. Hamedodo) and non-church literature to promote the glory of God and edification of this Church and children,
- ii. to learn more about prayer and pray more effectively, to realize the power of Christ in us so that we shall be able to do God's will more effectively and follow the steps of our saviour and Master Jesus Christ, through prayer and Bible study to understand and endure pain, suffering and needs of others,
 - iii. to inspire, awaken and encourage growth among members of the entire congregation.¹³³

These were laudable objectives, some of the groups acted contrary to these ideals which made the church executive to step in.

Membership:

Membership of the group was open to only members of the Church. Non-church members were however allowed to attend meetings but could not hold office at any level. In case such members want to become full members of the group, they were expected to first become full members of the E. P. Church according to procedures in the "Hamedodo" 1931:28;1991 Article VII 1

The Basic Faith of the Group:

The Basic faith and Order of the Study and Prayer Group shall be the Bible, especially the revelation of God made known in Jesus Christ and as interpreted by the E. P. Church.

No teaching contrary to the doctrines of E. P. Church shall be tolerated in the Study and Prayer Group.¹³⁴ This was the most controversial area which both the church and the group

¹³³ The Constitution and Regulations for the Bible Study and Prayer Group of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of West Africa, Kumasi, 1991, The Light of Life, p. 8

disagreed and accused each other of. While the group accused Rt. Rev. Prof. Dzobo, the moderator of the E.P. Church, of introducing traditional African Practices into the Church, the Church also accused the Group of spirit possession, belief in witchcraft and demons and practising exorcism

The Main Activities of the B. S. P. F:

The following were the main activities of the B. S. P. F:

- a. Arrange such training courses as are necessary both at Local District and National level,
- b. arrange regular meetings for Bible Study and Prayer in the week, in the local congregation,
- c. raise money from donations or contributions from members or well wishers.
- d. all moneys and properties acquired by the Group must be invested in the E. P. Church through its congregational representatives,
- e. do all such acts and other things that are approved by the E. P. Church as incidental or conducive to the attainment of the aims and objectives of the E. P. Church in general and the Study and Prayer group in particular.

Among the five activities of the group as above, the fourth, required that all moneys and properties acquired by the group must be invested in the E. P Church through its congregational representatives. This was resented by the group and that sparked off unpleasant reactions from the executives of both sides. This is an indication that financial accountability is one of the major problems in the E. P. Church that needs streamlining.

Relationship with the Local Session:

The Prayer Group shall be established as one of the groups in the Local Congregation. The Local Session shall have full authority over the Prayer Group based upon "Hamedodo" or Regulations, Practice and Procedure. The Prayer Group, however, shall have the freedom to

liaise with other Prayer Groups both at District and National levels. Where difficulties arise regarding practice in the Group, care shall be taken to solve this in the spirit of love and gentleness. The session shall in all cases ensure that the Bible Study and Prayer Groups are encouraged to function and not to discourage members from doing so.

This was well put but it was ineffective because the local congregations and their sessions up to the clergy were not educated on the activities of the Prayer groups. They therefore became spectators rather than supervisors. The church was not adequately prepared for this new role of teaching and leading a prayer group.

The Group's officers shall be as follows:

1. the Father of the Group,
2. Leader,
3. Deputy Leader,
4. Assistant Secretary,
5. Treasurer,
6. Financial Secretary and
7. Organising Secretary.

They shall hold office for a period of two years and shall be subject to re-election.

The Constitution spells out the composition of the Executive of the group, its duties and duties of the other members. It also contains the activities of the Group, including how to conduct the Bible Study Classes.

The main goal of the Bible Study and Prayer Fellowship has been reflected well in its Constitution. It was to vitalize the church and its entire membership. The Bible Study sessions were designed to create platforms for educating the members of the congregations (thus educating the entire Church) and reviving Christian living in accordance with the Bible. In this way the group associated with the missionary tradition of pietism. Appraisal of the group's

activities, however, showed that only a section of the Church, that is, the group members instead of the entire Church was involved. This divided the church into members and non-members of the group.

The Group lays emphasis on regular Bible Study, fasting, prayer and deliverance from the evil spirits that militate against the physical and spiritual well being of members of the Church. This was to satisfy members' need for true spiritual fulfilment.¹¹⁵

One of the features of the group that corresponds with Arnold Bittinger's major characteristics of Charismatic Renewals is its lay Initiative.¹¹⁶ The group at its beginning was made up of lay men and women and youth in the congregation of the E. P. Church. In Amakom, from 1960 to 1978, when the Group was officially accepted into the entire E. P. Church by Synod, it was purely a lay group.

Another feature is the lay participation of the Group, the ethos of the Charismatic Renewals as asserted by Bittinger. There is a strong element of lay participation in singing, praying, reading of the scriptures, personal sharing and witnessing. According to the Church, at meetings, members sing, clap their hands and dance; the last two practices are in conflict with the E. P. Church's normal worship practice.

Members of the group pray in unison and aloud and some in strange tongues. Again, this practice conflicts with the church's tradition of structured or liturgical praying. The group also accepts testimonies from the individuals concerning their experiences with God and Jesus in healing, saving from a mishap and answered prayers. These form part of the worship service. Another important feature of the Group, that is similar to Charismatic Renewals, is the issue of Holy Spirit Baptism. Great emphasis is laid on the physical baptism of Immersion as a symbolic act of cleansing. This is accompanied by the experience of the Holy Spirit baptism; an event

¹¹⁵Bittinger, *Arnold Op. Cit. P. 7*

¹¹⁶Id. p. 47

that is taken as the hallmark of being 'born again'. This experience is demonstrated by the Gift of speaking in "tongues".¹³⁷ This is one gift that is purported by the Group to be lacking in the E. P. Church (as in the other Historical churches). The Holy Spirit Baptism is accompanied with the gifts of the Spirit, like healing, prophecy and visions. This has been the main area of the group's conflict with the non-members of the Group in the E. P. Church. Members who were 'born again' felt superior to those not given the Holy Spirit Baptism and thus could not speak in tongues. The non-members of the group also looked upon the 'born again' as pretenders. This feeling of superiority by the 'born again' undermined authority in the church. As Abamfo Ofori Atiemo in *The Rise of Charismatic Movement in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*,¹³⁸ said, such attitude generates the problem of who wields "de facto" authority in the church; a conflict involving the 'born again', that is, B. S. P. F. and the traditionally recognized hierarchy of ordained ministers¹³⁹ really occurred in the E. P. Church.

Praise and worshipping are another feature of the B. S. P. F. Their meetings, and conventions are characterized by the praise of God and deep recognition of the worthiness of God and Jesus his Son to receive praise, glory and honour (Rev. 4:11; 5: 8-10) They use Western Musical instruments of all sorts plus African ones accompanied with the clapping of hands.

The following description by Baeta of Spiritual Churches' worship as quoted by Doviolo¹⁴⁰ are applicable to the B. S. P. F. in its early years

Rhythmic swaying of the body, loud music, hand clapping, ejaculations, poignant cries and prayers, dancing and various motor reactions expressive of intense religious emotions, speaking in tongue, falling into tongues, witnessing such as recounting publicly one's own miraculous redemption.

¹³⁷ Sub 24

¹³⁸ Atiemo Ofori Atiemo, *Op. Cit* p. 47

¹³⁹ David Irem - "A Comparative Overview of Independent Churches and Charismatic Movements in Ghana" *Trent Journal of Church and Theology*, Vol. 2, Dec. 1992, No. 4, p. 68

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid* p. 68

This mode of vibrant and ecstatic worship of the group conflicts with the EP Church's severe and routinized form. In this aspect of worship the group fell into similar patterns with the A. R. S., the White Cross Society and the Lord's Pentecostal Church.

Evangelism:

The group, like all revitalizing movements, attaches great importance to evangelism. Members invited friends to their Bible Study and Prayer meetings on Wednesdays and Fridays. They organized Agape or Fellowship feasts and invited friends from the congregations and tried winning them into the groups. They offered prayers to deliver members and non-members from spiritual problems and bodily sickness and failures. The results of their activities attracted more people into the group. Here too, although the group had promoted spiritual growth in their congregations, the Church hierarchy thought the prayer groups were practising, what the church termed, "strange Liturgical practices". This was the accusation that was levelled against Wovenu's Church at Tadzewu, Doh's Etordome "Gbedododa Kple Doyoyo Habobo" and Amedzro's Tekrom Prayer Group at Peki Blengo

It was difficult to tell which practices were Presbyterian and therefore accepted and which were not. Views on the practices varied. There were differences of opinion on this issue of the group's practices. It was common to hear people say, "Wome fia mi alea o" meaning, (this is not what we have been taught (it is not our tradition). As humankind differs in opinions and interests, conflicts are bound to exist. In revitalizing the E. P. Church and its practices, the B. S. P. F. came into conflict with the prevailing traditions and practices and these conflicts, which started culminated in the schism of 1991.

In 1984 (Agenda and Reports 1984:13) the Policy and Guidelines Committee (PGC) was appointed by the Synod Committee and charged:

to study and appraise reports from various organs and courts of the E. P. Church and to make recommendations based on the subject matters of the reports for Synod's consideration and adoption.

In 1985, PGC acknowledged spiritual growth in the Church but attributed it not only to the activities of the BSPF but also to that of the Women's Bible Class, Church Choirs, Christian Youth Builders and general membership of the Church¹⁴¹. It went on further to accuse the BSPF of adopting practices and doctrines which were in conflict with the Reformed teachings and practices of the E. P. Church. The practices mentioned are:

- a. Clapping of hands while singing and instead of this, the group should use local percussion instruments.
- b. Pentecostal prayer, whereby the whole group prays loudly at the same time and thereby missing the serenity when one communes with God.
- c. Baptism of immersion instead of sprinkling which is the accepted mode of the E. P. Church (as a member of the Reformed Tradition).
- d. Bible Study and Prayer Groups be encouraged to use Hymns from the "Hadzrigbale" since these hymns contain great inspirational feelings based on biblical texts.

The minutes do not indicate that Synod accepted these recommendations as resolutions but it is an indication of the committee's objections to some of the practices of the BSPF.

In 1986, the Policy and Guidelines Committee recommended to Synod to change the name of the Bible Study and Prayer Group to Bible Study and Prayer Fellowship. The reason offered was that since the Group was meant to embrace the entire congregations of the Church the word "Group" in the name was causing misunderstanding and engendering division. The Synod accepted the recommendation and effected the change "to reflect more appropriately the original name and practice of the early church".¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ E.P.C Church Synod Agenda and Minutes, 1985 - 86.

¹⁴² E.P.C Church Synod Minutes, 1986 - 87.



Since the executives of the BSPG were not consulted on a matter concerning it, they were naturally not pleased.

In a statement dated 11th June, 1987, the Synod Committee Executive Council made the following observations. (These are also contained in Synod Agenda and Reports 1987:B2):

- a. That the Bible Study lessons be taken up by the E. P. Church Theologians since the Church could now count on her achievements in this field.
- b. That approval is sought from the Executive Council before invitations are extended to other theologians outside the E. P. Church.
- c. That the Internal Auditor is to inspect the accounts of the Fellowship.
- d. That the annual budget of the Fellowship be submitted to the Central Financial Committee for study and approval be effected by the E. P. Church Synod Committee
- e. That the Reformed Tradition of pulpit manners be maintained.
- f. Hence too much interruption of "Hallelujah Amen" during the course of teachings as well as preaching is uncalled for.

The letter naturally irritated the National Executive of the B. S. P. F. One is, therefore, justified to ask:

- a. what was wrong with the Bible Study lessons that warranted the take-over by theologians of the mother church;
- b. who these theologians were, whether other groups like the Women Bible Class, the Christian Youth Builders were also to seek approval from the Executive Council when inviting teachers outside the E. P. Church, and
- c. whether the accounts of these groups were also subject to auditing as that of the BSPF.

The author considers the Synod Committee's suggestions as quoted above as an attempt to curb the growing popularity of the Group.

The internal auditor of the Church made adverse findings against the treasurer, of the B.S.P.F. declaring a misappropriation of funds. In a reaction that sought to prove this report wrong and salvage the image of the BSPF, the National Executive engaged the services of an external auditor, Mintz and Associates. The external auditor did not find any misappropriation of funds and therefore disagreed with the internal auditor. The alienation between the BSPF and the Executive Council of the E. P. Church deepened.

The BSPF report to Synod that year, 1987, accused the pastors of being responsible for the major problems of the Fellowship. Referring to the letter of 11th June 1987, from the Executive Council, the Synod described some of the points raised as:

questionable, irrelevant and totally unrelated to the proper role the Executive Council should play in promoting the aims of the BSPF.¹⁴³

It continued:

We find a gradual alienation taking place between the lay leadership and the pastors. This is unfortunate and Synod has to do something.¹⁴⁴

Instead of Synod dealing promptly with the declining relation between the BSPF and the Executive Council, it passed on the responsibility to the Synod Committee.¹⁴⁵ The members of the BSPF were members of E. P. Church and they were entitled to equal opportunities enjoyed by the other groups, like the C. Y. B., Bible Class and the Church Choir. When the Executive Council of the Church tried to deny them their rights and privileges of formation of associations or groups, choosing their leaders and enjoying good governance, they asked Synod, the highest authority of the Church to normalize things. When Synod failed to play its moderating role, then it inevitably called for conflict within its ranks. The crisis worsened with the advent of the "Revolutionary Guards"¹⁴⁶ and the "concerned members." That was what followed Synod's

¹⁴³ E.P. Church Synod Agendas: Report, 1987, 29.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ E.P. Church Synod Minutes 1987:17.

¹⁴⁶ a The "Revolutionary Guards" were a group of people believed to be members of the B.S.P.F. who demonstrated against Rt. Rev. Dzobo's administration at the E. P. Church Headquarters also on 29th June, 1988.

inability to work on the BSPF's request to address the alienation developing between it and the Executive Council" in 1988. On 24th June, 1988, a delegation representing "a multitude of nameless and voiceless members" of the E. P. Church who had scattered all over the country, Ghana, met the Moderator of the E. P. Church at the Trinity College, Accra, at the residence of Rev. Dr. L. K. Buama. This meeting was possible after booking an appointment with the Moderator.¹⁴⁷ The Delegation placed before him their individual and collective grievances. They also voiced out their dissatisfaction with the Moderator's administration of the affairs of the Church. The delegation, led by Mr. James Agbeblewu discussed issues including:

1. Constitutional matters
2. Finance
3. Doctrinal issues and
4. Proposal to appoint an Independent body of Arbitrators.

There was no compromise on the appointment of a body to investigate the dispute, particularly on the constitutional matter and the meeting ended. The events that followed this meeting however proved that the delegation was not satisfied with the response of the Moderator.

The following week on 29th June, 1988, a demonstration was organized by the "Revolutionary Guards" at Ho, the Church's Headquarters. In "the Light" a Newsletter¹⁴⁸ of the 'Silent Majority of the E. P. Church', it is written:

The concerned members, after deliberating on issues raised at the meeting with the Moderator, decided to present to him a resolution on the matters discussed. The decision was spontaneously supported by a good number of members of the Church who shared the same views.¹⁴⁹

147. The "concerned members" were six individuals of the West Volta Presbytery who met Rt. Rev. Dzobo at Trinity College on issue of Dzobo's administration. It was they who took Dzobo and the E.P.C Administrator to court over Dzobo's Moderatorship for a third term.

148. "The Light" Newsletter of the Silent Majority of the E.P.C., 1988 p.12

149. "The Light" Newsletter of the Silent Majority of the E.P.C., 1988.

150. The Light Newsletter was also read by the INPF during the conflict.

The above statement provided a premise to suggest that the delegation that met the Moderator at Trinity College on June 24, 1988, was related to the "Revolutionary Guards". In their resolution, passed on to the Executive Council, they called on Rev. Prof. N. K. Dzobo, the Moderator, Rev. G. K. Atimpo, the Synod Clerk and Rev. S. Y. Asamoah, the Inter-Church Relations Secretary to step down.

The demonstrators presented copies of the resolution and positional statement to the media houses such as the Ghana News Agency, Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, the Graphic Corporation and the New Times Corporation in Ho. The demonstrators thus invited the media into the Church's affair; an action that has cost irreparable damage to the image of the individuals and the Church. The media distorted the facts of both sides to attract market and the reading public. The following day, 20th June, 1988, the Moderator wrote a pastoral letter to all E. P. Church congregations. The letter accused the BSPF and Dr. N. D. Sodzi of organizing the demonstration. The Synod Committee also held an emergency meeting to discuss and act on the issue. It described the demonstration as "illegal and provocative".¹⁵⁰ It went on further to suspend the constitution of the BSPF and dissolved its National Executive.

The B. S. P. F and Dr. Sodzi in separate letters denied any involvement in the demonstrations. They also accused the Synod Committee of not giving them a hearing when the BSPF in its report to Synod in 1987 complained about the degenerating relationship between it and the Executive Council.

The Church on 3rd July, 1988 reacted to the Resolutions and positional statement of the demonstrators and equally served the media houses of the resolutions as quoted above for equal publicity. In an attempt to exonerate itself, the Church endorsed the invitation of the Press and Media into its affairs.

¹⁵⁰ E.P. Church Synod Agenda and Reports, 1988/23

In all the preceding four secessions that occurred in the E. P. Church, that of the 1991 took the largest magnitude and publicity and the media houses played no mean a role in the overplay of the issue. It was given prominence, front-page coverage and sensationalized to attract the reading public.

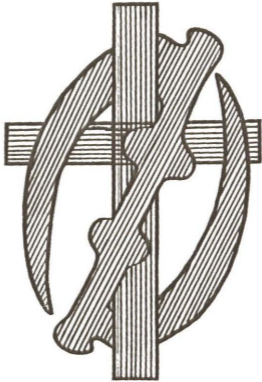
The Synod Committee in another reaction to the open confrontation tried to proscribe the national rally of the B.S.P.F. but failed to achieve this proposal. The Fellowship defied all directives of the Executive Council from Ho and went ahead to hold the national rally at Anloga instead of Ho. The imposition and the defiant attitude deepened the erosion of the Church's influence over the B.S.P.F.

Two other issues, which worsened the critical situation in the E. P. Church, which involved the B. S. P. F., were Rev. Dzobo's Indigenization policies and a purported constitutional amendment.

Dzobo's Indigenization or Africanization Policies:

In his capacity as the Head of the E. P. Church, Rev. Dzobo decided to indigenize or Africanize the Church. He felt that the African must be able to contextualize his worship. To him Africans, in this case, the E. P. Church, had come of age to develop the Christian faith for themselves as Africans. An era as Amedzo puts it, "where the African is free from theological inhibitions and protectiveness". In other words, the E. P. Church is free to express the Christian faith in the culture of Africa.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Amedzo, I. K., 1986, op. cit. p. 27.



MELAGBE

In his “Melagbe”¹⁵² theology” Rev. Dzobo sets out to explain and show that “a true African can also be a true Christian without losing his African identity and at the same time keep with the Gospel”¹⁵³

In this attempt to Africanize Christianity in the E. P. Church, Dzobo introduced what he believed to be,

best elements of the various religion and cultural traditions
which have the power of releasing the imprisoned splendor
and greatness of the African soul and culture

into the Church. He wore the Melagbe Symbol to Church and public gatherings. He also introduced the talking drum to herald the preaching of sermon, an attendant holding a linguist staff behind the preacher and the drumming and dancing of Ewe traditional dance types like “Gabada” and “Atrikpai” at Church, but with scripturally based songs. He also planned to adopt libation as a form of praying.¹⁵⁴

His worst area of conflict with the B. S. P. F. was doctrinal, based on his “Melagbe” theology. According to Rev. Prof. Dzobo, it is an invitation to African Christians to think and conceptualise theologically as Africans. In the “Melagbe” theology, “Melagbe” is used by him to portray African theology as a theology which has as its major and principal objective, the reflection on the ultimate meaning of life or existence as an African has come to know it.

Rev. Dzobo further contends that Africans have arrived at an era of freedom from theological inhibitions and prohibiteness and are calling for culturally and spiritually liberated and cultivated evangelisation in Africa.

The “Melagbe” Theology, according to him, therefore, is an intellectual and religious mechanism for interpreting meaningfully and living this life as experienced in Africa by Black people. The Theology reflects the worth of the African humanity and her human community.

¹⁵² Melagbe according to Dzobo is derived from the Bible which is the Book of life and from the indigenous African Traditions which is a tradition of life. It is the interpretation he derived a symbol, the cross interwoven with the Gye Nyame symbol. The Cross of Christian alternative symbol plus the Akan Afiagye symbol.

¹⁵³ DZOBO, N. K., Melagbe Theology, E.P. Church Press, 1986, p1

¹⁵⁴ DZOBO, N. K., 1986, Op. Cit. p. 27

In his "Melagbe" theology, Dzobo emphasizes the moral good entailed in traditional concepts and rituals but neglected the belief in the existence of spirit possession, magic and witchcraft.¹⁵⁵ According to Dzobo these do not exist but come from our imagination.

Dzobo's "Melagbe" Theology has made him a champion of African Theology in which the African theologian "undertakes to pursue relentlessly true faith interpretation and understanding of our human existence and to pursue in valid and viable faith solutions to its problems as we experience it in Africa and as Black people all over the world."¹⁵⁶ He has put up a new theology; a theology that is asking African Christians to explain, understand and react to the Christian Religion in their own way, different from the way Rome, Geneva, London, New York, Bremen and Paris explained, understood and reacted to Christianity.¹⁵⁷

In other words, African Christianity should be genuinely African in context and experience and not a photocopy of our missionary mentors. He has, to that effect, advanced the method of inquiry.¹⁵⁸ By this method he advocates that the African Theologian should try to answer the following questions:

- a) What does it mean to be a true African and a true Christian at the same time?
- b) Is there any strong link between African and Christian apprehensions of spiritual and moral realities?
- c) Does the African have to lose his/her cultural identity on becoming a Christian?

¹⁵⁵ "Melagbe" Theology, the New Perspective in African Theology, was a paper Rev. Prof. Nathaniel Dzobo presented at Bartholomian Logo in order to the 9th January 1986. It is given as a paper at the 1st consultation of Norddeutsche Mission Family of Churches.

¹⁵⁶ Dzobo, K. South, Melagbe Theology, 1986, p. 5.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p.1

¹⁵⁸ *West Africa*, 1998, op.cit, p. 195.

- d) To what extent does the Gospel help to bring out the imprisoned splendour and greatness in us as Africans? Etc.¹⁵⁵

Dzobo further advocates that the African Theologian has to stand both in the Christian and indigenous African traditions as Simon Peter stood in his Jewish tradition of messiahship to answer the question, "who do you say I am?" (Mat. 16: 15).

To some in the E.P. Church, championed by the B.S.P.F., Dzobo is advocating Religious pluralism.¹⁶⁰ But others embraced the indigenisation programme of Dzobo, who was the moderator of the E.P. Church.

According to Dzobo, the "Melagbe" theology uses the biblical revelation seriously and at the same time take equally serious the indigenous African worldview, thought and belief systems, African culture, religion and civilisation. For example, the religious symbols, myths and proverbs. In theologising the African theologian, he advised him or her to consider the existential methods of the African's experience, and thus, making his answers to the above questions, applicable to the real needs of the African Christians.

In pursuance of these objectives of his theology, Dzobo embarked on a vigorous indigenisation policy in the E.P. Church. His indigenisation was a revolution in the E.P. Church, and an attempt to change from the missionary Christianity built on Western and Judaic Christian cultures to biblical Africanisation of Christianity as the "Melagbe" Theology aimed at. The moves generated a lot of controversy in the E.P. Church. A section of the E.P. Church championed by the B.S.P.F. felt Dzobo's indigenisation moves were unscriptural and must be stopped.

The B. S. P. F., with the task of reviving Christianity spiritually in the E. P. Church, championed the anti-indigenization campaign against Dzobo. They and the elderly members of the E. P. Church saw the Africanization moves as a return to heathen practices which the church

¹⁵⁵ Dzobo, K. Nwab. "Melagbe" Theology. M.A. Thesis.

¹⁶⁰ Dzobo, K. Nwab, 1986, op.cit, p.1

and Bible frowned upon. This doctrinal issue formed part of the complaint a section of the E. P. Church lodged against Rev. Dzobo at Trinity College on the 25th of June, 1988. It was mentioned earlier that some members of the clergy, including Rev. Dzobo were against the acceptance of the B.S.P.F. by the Church's Synod as its organ. One can infer that the antagonism between Dzobo and the B.S.P.F. started from that incident. The group thus developed a distrust for him even when he became the Moderator of the Church.

Normally, mankind does not easily welcome a change, especially, a sudden change that he feels will disturb his normal lifestyle. People who have seen too many negative aspects of traditional practices before becoming Christians may not be well disposed towards Dzobo's indigenisation moves.

Dzobo was not the first to attempt indigenization in the E. P. Church. His predecessor the Rt. Rev. C. K. Dovo was the first as discussed earlier but his indigenization moves did not cause a stir nor conflict in the Church because he involved experts in the areas concerned and sought approval of Synod.

Dzobo on the other hand did not involve experts; theologians in this case, nor did he seek the mandate of Synod. In 1984, during the Church service at the 44th Synod at Ho, he decided to put his "Melagbe theology" into practice. As preacher for the day, he wore the Melagbe symbol on his clerical robe and was led by Dumedefor, the model choir of the E. P. Church. Leading them was a leader with a linguist staff. Scripture reading and preaching were heralded with

talking drums. This way of worship, among others, is the form Rev. Dzobo felt the E. P. Church, as an African Church, should adopt.¹⁶¹

The move generated a lot of controversy in the E. P. Church championed by the B. S. P. F., which felt they were unscriptural. The B.S.P.F. and other church members accused Dzobo of introducing African Traditional Practices into the Church. On the other hand, Dzobo was also accused by the B.S.P.F. of practising African practices in the church. From a certain perspective, it was Christianity against African traditionalism and from another it was Charismatism against Reformed tradition. In either case the B.S.P.F. championed the campaigns against Dzobo's indigenisation and upheld the tenets of the Church's Reformed tradition. Dzobo as the head of the E.P. Church faced the double attacks.

The main issue that brought the conflict to a climax was the purported constitutional amendment. In 1983 Rev. Dzobo was alleged to have caused the printing and circulating of a new constitution he alleged to have been promulgated by the Joint Synod at Botania in Togo in 1980. This new constitution contained a controversial Article 31, which provided that "a Moderator or Synod Clerk can be elected as long as he is capable". This was at variance with the 1979 Constitution, which was on three years trial from 1980. The B. S. P. F. contended that there was no evidence in the minutes of the Joint Synod of Botania in 1980 to support the amendment on the tenure of office of the two principal officers of the Church.

The West Volta Presbytery recommended that the proposal that the Moderator should stay in office only for two terms of four years and no more be placed on the agenda of the 44th Synod (September 1985). The request never came up for discussion. A similar request by the Southern Presbytery to Synod was also ignored.

In June, 1984, the Pastor's Association disagreed with the clause on tenure of office as in the 1980 Constitution. They passed on their resolution to the Executive for inclusion on Synod Agenda but it neither came up nor was ever placed on any agenda of Synod for discussion.

¹⁶¹ Amadi, E. K., op. cit. p.28.

The Constitutional amendment issue became explosive. In January 1988 the Pastor's Association invoked the provision of Article 31 of the 1980 Constitution and elected Rev. (Prof.) N. K. Dzobo as the Moderator of the Church for a third term of four years with effect from January, 1989.¹⁶² The B. S. P. F. felt the election was in breach of the 1979 constitution which limits the tenure to two terms.

There were two reactions to the purported amendment and the evocation of the Article 31. These were the meeting that took place at Trinity College and the Ho demonstration on June 25th and 29th respectively as mentioned above. The first was a polite reaction where the concerned members thought, they could convince the Moderator about the fact that the "majority" of members of the E. P. Church were not happy about his administration and re-election but when their persuasion failed, the reaction assumed a violent nature in the form of a demonstration expressing their disagreement and displeasure. The demonstrators publicized the evils of the amendment and election by displaying their feelings and thought on placards. The demonstration ended up at the Church's Headquarters where they presented their resolutions and statement of position to the Executive of the E. P. Church. They later presented these resolutions and statement of position to the media houses at Ho.

The Synod of the Church, in complete disregard to the trouble brewing in the Church over this issue and in defiance of the reactions of a section of the Church, and a restraining order instituted at the Accra High Court on 14th July 1988, went ahead and endorsed the alleged unconstitutional election of Rev. Prof. N. K. Dzobo as the Moderator of the E. P. Church for a third term of four years tenure effective January, 1989. This action of the Church made some six members of the Church to adopt another form of action, a civil suit, against the Church at Accra High Court.

¹⁶² B.S.P.F. to Newsworthy Network Programme and History, 1988-BSPF Publications, p.7

Below are six of the concerned members:

1. James Kwesi Agbeblewu
2. Hope Yomekpe
3. Togbe Gebu-Mensa
4. Benjamin Komla Debra
5. Woedem Fianyo Kwami Adzraku and
6. Frank Fugar.

They instituted a substantive action at Accra High Court challenging (a) the authenticity of the 1983 Constitution, (b) the validity of the nomination and election of Rev. Prof. N. K. Dzobo by the Pastors' Association of the Church for a third term of office notwithstanding the fact that the association had no authority under any of the constitutions to nominate and elect a Moderator¹¹

Attempts to solve the conflict:

There were attempts to solve the constitutional conflict out of court. The first was by the Annie Jagge Committee and the second was by a committee of the Volta Regional House of Chiefs.

Annie Jagge Committee:

The Pastor's Association on the basis of their training and education sensed the danger the litigation entailed, its aftermath and tried an amicable solution of the conflict between the Church and concerned members. In a letter dated 6th January, 1989, the Association at Ho invited the following six people to settle the matter out of court and bring peace and harmony into the Church. Their appointment was confirmed by the Synod Clerk in a letter dated 24th January, 1989.

1. Rev. (Prof.) C. E. Baeta (Emeritus)
2. Rev. E. M. Y. Tawiah

¹¹ H&P 199 Anniversary-ep-04.pdf

3. Rev. (Prof.) G. K. Ansre
4. Mrs. Justice Annie Jagge
5. Mr. Justice I. N. K. Wuaku and
6. Mr. C. K. Dewornu (Former Inspector General of Police)

They were to settle the matter out of Court and “bring peace and harmony into the Church”.

The terms of reference were:¹⁶⁴

- a. That the Committee does all it can to get the parties concerned to agree to withdraw the present issue in the E. P. Church from Court.
- b. That the Committee resolves the issue out of Court amicably and in a manner that brings peace and harmony to the E. P. Church.
- c. The Action before the Court has the following litigants:
 1. James Kwasi Agbeblewu
 2. Hope Yomekpe
 3. Togbur Gebu-Mensah
 4. Benjamin kobla Debra
 5. Woedem Fianyo Kwami Adraku
 6. Frank Fugar

They initiated action against:

1. The Rt. Rev. Noah Dzobo, Moderator and Rev. G. K. Atimpo, for and on behalf of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana.
2. The Rt. Rev. Noah K. Dzobo.

Plaintiffs claim jointly and severally against that defendants for

¹⁶⁴ Report of the Ann Jagge Committee Appointed to settle the E. P. Church Case out of Court (1987) 21.

3. Declaration that the purported amendment, the 1979 Constitution of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ghana is illegal, null and void and of no effect whatever.
4. Declaration that the nomination and election of the second defendant by the clergy of the Church in January, 1988 for a third term commencing January 1989 is in breach of the Constitution of the Church therefore null and void.
5. Perpetual injunction to restrain the second defendant from amending or changing or endorsing the purported amendment of the Constitution without due compliance with the 1979 Constitution on amendment.
6. Perpetual injunction to restrain defendant from holding himself out as the duly nominated and elected candidate for endorsement by Synod of the Church for another term commencing January 1989.
7. Perpetual injunction to restrain the defendant from endorsing second defendant as the duly nominated and elected candidate and flagrant abuses of the Constitution of the Church.

Thus, the first defendant in the case is the E. P. Church itself and the second defendant the Rt. Rev. Prof. N. K. Dzobo.

The Committee met on 17th January, 1989 and sought clarification of the terms of reference and requested the Synod Committee which acts for Synod during the interval between Synod meetings to confirm or endorse and mandate its appointment by the Pastors' Association.

By a letter of 24th January, 1989, the Synod Clerk, in effect, enlarged the mandate of the Committee to cover the contempt of court case as well as the substantive case which was partly heard at the time and was adjourned to the 31st of January, 1989. The same letter from the

Synod Clerk increased the membership of the Committee by three persons from the Eglise Evangelique du Togo. These were Pastor Ahiagba, Pastor Tuleasi and Mr. Yiga.

The Committee first obtained an adjournment from the Court to attempt settlement of the issues out of court. It met over the issues eight times, heard from the parties, researched into the Minutes of Synod meetings from 1971 and other relevant documents and pamphlets made available to them.

It found that Synod, for 16 years, (that is, since 1974) had adopted practices which were unconstitutional (for example, allowing the Pastor's Association to nominate the two top officers of Moderator and Synod Clerk for the Church for election at Synod; and the Church electing some of these officers for a third term of office). It also found out that these practices existed before the incumbent Moderator and Synod Clerk were elected and had continued during their tenure. The committee found no mala fides on the part of Synod. Synod acted in good faith but in error. The Committee however, found no conclusive evidence that, at the Joint Synod at Betania, Togo, in 1980, any amendment to the provisions on tenure of office of the Moderator and the Synod Clerk in the Hamedodo reprinted in 1979 was made.

It recommended that the Constitutional amendment issue be placed on the Agenda for the next Synod meeting. It also recommended that Rt. Rev. Noah Dzobo should complete his 3rd term of office. It explained that "it was not in the interest of the Church to create a vacuum in the Administration and Leadership of the Church. The Synod gave the nod to the Moderator to serve another term of 4 years. This was communicated to the International partners of the Church, the World Council of Churches. All African Conference of Churches, the civil authorities in Ghana and all friends and co-workers of the Church both inside and outside Ghana. Many of these various organs so informed had been transacting business with Professor N. K. Dzobo as the Moderator of the E. P. Church. It would not be in the best interest of the Church then to inform all these bodies and individuals that in confirming Prof. Dzobo as

Moderator, the Synod acted in good faith but in error. The image and the credibility of the Church must be protected and preserved within and without Ghana”.

The Committee also dealt with the following complaints

Melagbe Theology

This was a theological exercise by the Rt. Rev. Dzobo in his effort to express the Christian experience in Traditional African concepts and symbols. The Melagbe issue was treated under the B. S P F accusations of the Church Leadership stated in the early part of this chapter

This Committee was of the opinion that this theological exercise is fraught with the seeds of conflict and division which will in time, adversely affect the welfare of the E. P. Church. The Committee found it ill-advised for the Moderator to propound a controversial theology contrary to the provisions of Article 5 of the Hamadodo reprinted in 1979 (paragraph 2, last 2 lines) which states:

Ewe: Amea deke mekpo mo ahe nufafia kple wona bubuwo ava Hame,
ne Sinod melo de edzi o

English: it shall be unlawful for anyone to introduce any extraneous doctrines or practices unless Synod so approves of them

The Committee also noted that the Moderator wore a cross with the 'Gye Nyame' symbol embossed on it. Although the 'Gye Nyame' or 'Mawu ko' sign is in itself a laudable affirmation of the Christian faith and is a symbol worth wearing on its own, the empty Cross has a special significance for Protestants. It is the Victory symbol of the Resurrection. Christ is risen from the dead - the Cross is empty - Death is conquered. To add something to the Empty Cross is seen as introducing a new doctrine without the consent of Synod, contrary to Article 5 of the 1979 Hamadodo as quoted above.

The Committee recommended that as a matter of urgency, Rt. Rev. Dzobo should desist from propagating the Melagbe Theology and the wearing of the said Cross as long as he held

office. He was, however, free after his tenure of office to propound the Melagbe theology if he thought it fit and to wear the symbol and the cross in a fashion that pleased him.

Charismatic Movements and Intolerance:

It was evident that a new religious wave was sweeping through the E. P. Church. As it expressed itself, some welcomed it as a "rebirth" and others saw it as a springboard for "undesirable human pride and exhibitionism".¹⁶⁵ The Committee noted, however, that the new religious experience was not peculiar to the E. P. Church. It was a worldwide phenomenon and was studied in 1980 by the World Council of Churches (WCC). As a result of that study it came out with a document entitled, The Church is Charismatic. The Committee warned the Church to note that the Charismatic movement within it is potentially beneficial but also potentially divisive and the Church, including its leadership and adherents of the movement, should be wary of becoming guilty of religious intolerance.

It recommended the creation of a schedule within the administration of the Church to be responsible for supervision, guidance and furtherance of the movement's activities.

Guidelines Committee:

It came to the notice of the Committee that a number of people had expressed great resentment and concern on account of the fact that the Guideline Committee had been made the final authority on Synod Agenda.

The Committee noted that the content of Synod Agenda was an important function that should not be delegated to a committee and thus recommended that the issue of the position of the Guidelines Committee be placed on the Agenda of the next Synod.

Finance:

The Committee, in view of the various complaints it received on financial administration, including the use of foreign exchange, recommended that the audited accounts of the previous

¹⁶⁵ WCC Inq. Report, 1980, p. 18

year, including the utilization of foreign exchange, be circulated to members of Synod at least 24 hours before the debate at Synod on finance.

Nepotism and Victimization:

The Committee considered complaints and allegations of Nepotism

- a) that only favourites were granted scholarships to study in the local institutions of higher education,
- b) that some postings were made to victimize those who point out irregularities in the Church or criticize the leaders
- c) that the composition of the Synod Committee was not in accordance with the provision of Article 41 of the reprinted 1979 Hamedodo.

Complaints had also been made about sycophancy of the clergy and other Church officials and their fear of victimization. The Committee could not investigate these allegations due to time constraints. It however, recommended that the Executive Council take note of the complaints and allegations and act in such a manner as would place them clearly above suspicion. It also recommended that Synod, the highest organ of the Church should itself comply with the provisions of the Hamedodo and set a good example.

Conflicts between Church Groups and Church Authorities

The fear had been expressed before the Committee that the B.S.P.F., the Bible Class and the Choirs have all emerged as power blocs in the Church. The Synod Clerk informed the Committee that a separate committee had been set up to deal with the relationship between the Church Administration and the leaders of the B. S. P. F. The Committee exhorted the Church groups to return to Christian discipline, recognize and accept the authority and leadership of the Church's administrators. The Church administration, on its part, should endeavour to be true

shepherds of the flock and refrain from indulging in what may be seen as arbitrary and oppressive use of power.

Ethnic Differences:

The Committee drew the Church's attention to complaints of "intensity of the Ewe speaking section of the Church to other linguistic groups such as Akan, Krachi, Dagbani, Konkomba and Chokosi".⁶⁶ The Church was alleged to have been insensitive to the feelings of others and the old rivalry between Ewedome and Anlo were symptoms of the need for repentance.

The mention of the above factors at the Annie Jiagge Committee affirmed the contention of the study that many factors came into play to cause division in the Church in any single instance. In the case of the B. S. P. F., although the Constitutional issue was predominant and was the issue because of which they went to the courts, there were underlying issues like doctrinal and personality issues that were equally significant recipes for the conflicts and the eventual division.

The Annie Jiagge Committee concluded its settlement effort by recommending that the Rt. Rev. Dzobo should complete his third term of office. It made the recommendation in view of the fact that Rt. Rev. Dzobo was confirmed by Synod and the confirmation was communicated to the International Christian Community and the Civil Authorities in Ghana. It felt the E. P. Church's image and credibility would be eroded if the Church withdrew the confirmation of Dzobo's moderatorship even though the Church was in error. Thus the committee sought to protect the image and credibility of the E. P. Church. However, this recommendation of the committee that Rev. Dzobo should stay in office because he had already started the third term of office was found by some, especially the six "concerned members", to

⁶⁶ Annie Jiagge Report at p.21



be irregular. The committee was found to be condoning a crime committed in the Church. The plaintiffs thus rejected the recommendation.

Efforts by the Volta Regional House of Chiefs:

The Volta Regional House of Chiefs also tried to reconcile the two "factions of the E. P. Church when the Annie Jigge Committee failed.

In June 1989, a few chiefs of the Volta Region who were also members of the E. P. Church felt that it would be disgraceful to allow affairs of the Region's premier church to be tried in court. In addition, they felt that the Church was the unifying factor of the Ewes and the Region; the disintegration of this vital factor, they felt, would not only divide the Church but would divide the people and the Region as well. They felt it, therefore, a duty to keep the E. P. Church intact by helping to settle the problems that threatened its unity.

The Standing Committee of the Volta Regional House of Chiefs (hereafter VRHC) took the initiative and formed a Three-Man Committee made up of:

1. Togbe Adza Tekpor VI, Osie of Avatime and the then President of the VRHC.
2. Togbe Adladza II, Awomefia of Anlo and the Chairman of the Research Committee of the VRHC.
3. Togbe Kwadzo Dei XI, Deiga of Peki and the then member of the Standing Committee

The Committee first studied the Annie Jigge Report, and Togbe Adza Tekpor VI and Togbe Kpei II, the Registrar of the VRHC on 5th July, 1989, submitted an application to the Ho High Court, where the case was pending, for withdrawal and settlement out of court. The application was granted

The Committee had its first meeting on 14th July, 1989 and both parties, the E. P. Church administration and the 'concerned members' agreed that the Committee of the VRHC should settle the case.

Mr. Fiagbedzi was counsel for the Plaintiffs while Prof. A. C. Kuma represented the Defendants and each addressed the Committee.

On 9th July, 1989, which turned out to be the last meeting of the Committee, it was decided that a sub-committee made up of the two factions be set up to settle the constitutional matter. In view of time constraints, the Committee informed the parties that by 31st July, 1989, it would apply to the Court for extension of time to allow the proposed sub-committee to work on the Constitutional problem as mentioned earlier under this section.

However, the Committee had it on its record that on Monday, 31st July, 1989, when the Registrar of VRHC went to the Court as agreed upon, plaintiffs served him with a letter of withdrawal from the settlement. When he, the Registrar, still appeared in court and tendered the application for extension, counsel for the plaintiffs formally declared his client's withdrawal from the settlement of the case by the VRHC. Thus the conflict between the B. S. P. F. and the E. P. Church had to be decided by the Civil Courts.

The author can only say that the "concerned members" did not have confidence in the Committee of the VRHC. The traditional mechanism of arbitration that used dialogue as a means of conflict resolution was not successful for the second time.

Proceedings at Ho High Court

Following the failures of the meeting at Trinity College, the Annie Jagge Committee and the Volta Regional House of Chiefs, the six "concerned members" turned once again to the courts. They felt that such a matter of a constitutional nature deserved the courts' ultimate authority to decide the truth without fear or favour, since by the nation's constitution, the courts are the only authorized organ that should deal with constitutional matters.

Agbenyenu in his work An Appraisal of the Conflict in the E. P. Church, A Long Essay, University of Ghana (UG), Legon, 1994 writes, "to some, it was a hasty decision by the plaintiffs to take the matter to court; more so against Paul's Biblical exhortation that disputes be settled among brethren without going to court."¹⁶ This is the ideal Christian principle but in the plaintiffs case two such attempts failed. Above all it was a case involving the executive and the Church therefore the courts had become the "necessary evil"; they had experts for that purpose.

In the suit the E. P. Church was first defendant and Rev. Dzobo as the second defendant. He was charged for unconstitutional annulment of the 1979 constitution during his tenure of office as the moderator.

On 18th of December, 1989, the Ho High Court presided over by Justice Isaac Amuah gave judgment in favour of the plaintiffs against defendants jointly and severally for:

1. Declaration that the purported amendment of the 1979 constitution of the E. P Church, Ghana, is illegal, null and void and of no effect.
2. Declaration that the nomination and selection of the 2nd defendant by the Clergy of the Church in January, 1989, for a third term commencing January, 1989, is in breach of the constitution and, therefore, null and void.
3. Perpetual injunction to restrain the defendants from amending or changing or endorsing the constitution without due compliance with the 1979 constitutional provision on amendments
4. Perpetual injunction to restrain the second defendant holding himself as a duly nominated and elected candidate for endorsement by the Synod of the church for another term, commencing January, 1989.

¹⁶Interview with Justice Apollis Registrar of the High Court, 2nd August, 1997

5. Perpetual injunction to restrain the defendants from endorsing the second defendant as a duly nominated and selected candidate in clear and fragrant abuse of the constitution of the church.

6. ₵50,000.00 cost in favour of the plaintiffs.¹⁹⁴

The defendants were dissatisfied with the judgment. Rev. Dzobo, the second defendant appealed against the judgment and asked for a “stay of execution” of the earlier decision. On 21st February, 1990, Mr. Justice Acquah refused the second defendant’s application for “stay of execution” and awarded a cost of ₵10,000.00 in favour of the plaintiffs.

The second defendant appealed to the Court of Appeal. Three judges, Messrs. Justice Ampiah presiding judge, Justice Lamptey and Justice Adjabeng heard the appeal. Justices Ampiah and Lamptey agreed that the application for stay of execution be granted while Justice Adjabeng ruled that the application should be dismissed. Majority decision of 2:1 held and Rev. Dzobo remained in office.

The main appeal filed on the 30th December 1989 by Rev. Dzobo, the second defendant, was heard by a panel of three Appeal Court Judges presided over by Justice J. A. Essiem and supported by Judges Ofori-Boateng and J. Armah.

On Thursday, 23 May, the Court gave its ruling. The presiding Appeal Court Judge Justice J. A. Essiem came to the conclusion, that “since the respondents failed to prove their case that as at January 1988, the constitutional document of 1979 was the valid and binding constitution of the E. P. Church, the trial judge (Ho High Court) ought to have dismissed their action. Accordingly, I will allow the appeal and dismiss the plaintiffs’ action”.

The above ruling was unanimously supported by Messrs. Ofori-Boateng, J. A. and Amoah J. (supporting judges), that, gathering from the pieces of evidence available, there was a

¹⁹⁴ *Wahneema Lubiano v. P. P.*

reasonable doubt and some confusion as to the binding effect of the 1979 constitution even if it was promulgated, as contended on behalf of the plaintiffs.¹⁶⁹

The Appeal Court's decision had very serious legal implication on the Church. First, it implied that the E. P. Church in Ghana had been without a valid constitution since 1978, when the three-year trial period of the constitutional proposal accepted by the joint synod in 1975 elapsed.

On Friday, the 24 of May, 1991 a day after the Appeal Court ruling, a press conference was held in South Labadi E. P. Church by a cross-section of the Church. The meeting was to expound the implication of the Court of Appeal judgment. The spokesman, Mr. Dan Amlalo of the Nungua E. P. Church and a member of the B. S. P. F., called on all congregations to declare autonomy until a constitution acceptable to all was written and promulgated.¹⁷⁰ He also declared, among other things, that in order to avoid a constitutional vacuum and lawless Church, the constitution referred to in the E. P. Church as the 1979 constitution be adopted, to regulate the affairs of the Church. These were the official reasons Mr. Amlalo gave for calling out for the autonomy of all congregations. I however, think that the concerned members were fed up with Dzobo and his administration and wanted him out at all cost. This declaration by Mr. Amlalo marked the beginning of the 1991 schism. On 18th June, 1991, another meeting was held at Nungua E. P. Church. It was attended by delegates of many congregations from six of the seven Presbyteries of the Church (Upper North was the only . Presbytery that was absent). It is believed that the majority of the delegates that attended the Nungua meeting were members of the B. S. P. F. and the "Revolutionary Guards" in sympathy with the "concerned members." They were members of the congregations, who had declared autonomy in response to Mr. Amlalo's press release of 24th May, 1991.¹⁷¹ Members of these congregations according

¹⁶⁹ The Seventh Court of Appeal (Court of Appeal No. 12/90) of 23rd May, 1990 p.13.

¹⁷⁰ <http://www.bsc.org.gh>, p.2

¹⁷¹ <http://www.bsc.org.gh>

to Agbenyenu were members of the B. S. P. F. who felt "prejudiced" by Rev. (Prof.) Dzobo's dislike for their charisma in the Church.

At a press conference that followed the Nungua meeting that day, Dr. Moses Adibo, then Director of Medical Services and a member of the B. S. P. F. was the spokesman. He repeated the declaration of the autonomy of the congregations in conformity with Article 29 of the 1979 constitution they had adopted on May 24th. Dr. Adibo announced a Church administration, which was regarded as the legitimate continuation of the old Church. They were Reverends E. K. Amenyedu, Acting Moderator and V. E. Otiaku as Acting Synod Clerk with Mr. E. K. Gbordzoe as the Inter-Church Relations Secretary. Church Elders Mr. M. K. Obiri and Mrs. C. A. Gane were appointed to join the three officers to form the Executive Council. The Headquarters of the "new administration" was sited in Accra, thus giving birth to a "rival" church, the E. P. Church of Ghana.

A large section was against the "break". While agreeing that a lot had gone wrong in the church, they did not think that division was a way of solving the problems facing the Church. On 10th June, 1991, this group led by Rev. G. W. K. Dei, the West Volta Presbytery Chairman affirmed the leadership of Rev. Dzobo's administration at Ho. He made it clear that those who had given the press conference of May 24th had no constitutional right nor mandate to declare congregations independent. Moreover, the 1979 constitution which they claimed to be their operative document had no article or clauses empowering ordinary members of the Church to declare congregations autonomous.

In a disciplinary measure, seventeen Pastors who had officially renounced their membership of the "E. P. Church, Ghana" under Dzobo's administration, and twenty-three persons from the laity including all the executives of B. S. P. F. were ex-communicated for aiding and abetting, the "concerned members" of the "E. P. Church of Ghana". Their

excommunication, according to the Ho Administration, was in consonance with Article 209 of the 1979 constitution, which states, among other things, in Ewe:

Dede blibo tso Hame la me kenken, esi woɔde gbe fae
na Hame la godoo la, woawo tohehe seseto sia nu do
le amesiwo nu wodze agbagba ledo kpoe la gbo.

(Excommunication, the severest punishment in the church which is also to be announced throughout in the Church is applicable to offenders who refused previous warnings and stuck to their offence).

Their excommunication was officially confirmed in August, 1991, at the 50th Synod in Ho.

Effects of the Court Rulings on the E. P. Church:

Rivalry and intimidation was ushered into the E. P. Church, Ghana, when the Ho High Court gave its judgment. The Church divided into two factions of Pro and anti-Dzobo as manifested in the formation of "Defenders of the faith" with majority of its members from the Christian Youth Builders, the Youth Wing of the E. P. Church, Ghana. They were the counterparts of the Revolutionary guards that sympathized with the course of the concerned members and the B. S. P. F. The "Defenders of faith" were to defend the E. P. Church Headquarters and its executive in the case of any eventual attack. At that stage there were only exchanges of "bitter words" from both "factions"

But after the Appeal Court's ruling of 23rd May, 1991, spates of violence erupted in some areas throughout the country. There were violent clashes over ownership of Church property like chapels, vehicles, pastors' residences and other assets of the Church. Where the B. S. P. F. dominated the population of the congregation, it assumed ownership and control over these assets. This violence, inevitably, brought in the law enforcement agents. The High Courts placed interim injunctions on these controversial assets. Places such as Kumasi Amakom, North and South Labadi Churches were examples of violent clashes.

The violence brought in its wake lost of property and threat to human lives. Dzelukofe, [redacted] Ghana were some of such instances. The Church thus lost a considerable number

of its active congregations, property and revenue. The B. S. P. F. was banned in the E. P. Church, Ghana, because of its role in the schism.

The greatest effect of this schism was the fact that the advancement of the E. P. Church as one of the leading denominations was retarded and its activities and projects suffered a temporary setback.

Constitutionally, the two E. P. Churches had adopted and promulgated past constitutions. The E. P. Church of Ghana adopted the 1979 constitution while the E. P. Church, Ghana, in collaboration with its sister church in Togo, on the 11th of December 1992 adopted the 1931 constitution after a Joint Synod in Togo.

The financial strain of the conflict necessitated an "economic reform" in the E. P. Church, Ghana. Hence, a Five-Year Endowment fund named "the Foundation Fund". It aimed at making the Church financially sound and self-supporting.

The crisis and its resultant schism had jolted the E. P. Church, Ghana, from its complacency and "foot-dragging". The Synod assisted by both foreign and local experts overhauled the church's administration. An evaluation exercise took place between 1993 and 1994. The exercise resulted in the restructuring of the Ho Headquarters, administration and personnel to bring about efficiency.

Reconciliation effort of the Christian Council of Ghana:

The E. P. Church, Ghana, is a founding member of the Christian Council of Ghana. Thus the schism in the Church became the concern of the council. One of the eight aims for the establishment of the Council as stipulated in its constitution states that:

To give guidance and counsel to Member-Churches, Government, Chiefs and people of Ghana whenever necessary, so that the Church's Prophetic Voice is heard in the promotion of peace, justice, unity and reconciliation.¹⁷²

¹⁷² E. P. Church, 1992, Synod Documents p

It was the above aim of the Council that enjoined the Council to invite the two factions of the E. P. Church to a forum in order to facilitate dialogue between them.

The Council's aims of facilitating dialogue between the two factions were:

- a. clarifying for themselves, areas of disagreement,
- b. search for ways and means by which the disagreements could be effectively handled to facilitate the unity of the Church,
- c. to help deal with any other relevant issues needed for the settlement of the conflicts.¹⁷¹

The Council, however, sought the consent of the E. P. Churches to allow the Council to mediate in their internal affairs and to attend the sittings. It did these through consultations with the disagreeing parties between November and December, 1991.

It started the reconciliation efforts in January, 1992. The Council appointed a Sub-Committee made up of the following, to act as mediators:

1. Rt. Rev. Prof. K. A. Dickson, Chairman Christian Council of Ghana as the Committee Chairman,
2. Rt. Rev. F. W. B. Thompson, Anglican Bishop of Accra - Member,
3. Rt. Rev. D. A. Koranteng, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Ghana - Member,
4. Col. M. Y. Obiri, Vice Chairman, Christian Council of Ghana - Member,
5. Mr. David A. Acquah - Member,
6. Mr. Justice J. Kingsley Nyinah - Member,
7. Mrs. Comfort Engmann - Member,

¹⁷¹ *Agenda, Issues Together We Stand and Hope* (The Christian Council of Ghana, 1929-79, Accra, Asarequah Publishers, 1979) p1

8. Rev. David Dartey, General Secretary, Christian Council of Ghana - Member.

9. Mr. Seth A. Quao - Recorder.

The Council asked each party to nominate five (5) representatives and the following were the representatives:

a) E. P. Church, Ghana

1. Rev. Seth K. Asamoah
2. Rev. C. F. K. Kakotse
3. Rev. J. Y. Ledo
4. Rev. O. K. Klu
5. Rev. Mrs. Dinah Abbey-Mensah

b) E. P. Church of Ghana

1. Rev. F. A. M. Dade
2. Rev. G. K. Agama
3. Rev. Commodore (retired), P. F. Quaye
4. Dr. Elom Dovo
5. Dr. N. Fiadzigbe

The Council also allowed the option of co-opting other members whenever necessary. The Bremen Mission, the Mission Board of the E. P. Church supported the Committee financially during its work and was represented whenever it was necessary.

Two issues were identified and these were departures and infringements on doctrinal and liturgical practices of the E. P. Church.

At the end of the Committee's 1st Round of Meetings, 15th February, 1992, it arrived at the following:

1 Both sides admitted that,

- a) there is a split in the E. P. Church.

- b) there had been physical violence.

That schism is seriously hurting the Church of Christ in Ghana.

2. In consideration of positive measures that both sides could take to ease the peace process being brokered by the Council it was agreed that,

- a. letters be written by both administrations to their Presbytery sessions, etc., urging a positive effort towards peace and reconciliation in furtherance of the reconciliation process already underway.
- b. There should be no issuing of statements to the press, which has not been previously agreed upon. Every statement must be issued through the Council.
- c. Each side must articulate in writing, all the issues that irk and bother them in true Christian frankness so that the beginnings of a true Agenda would emerge.¹⁷⁴

On April, 1993, at Grisfarm Hotel, Accra, the Committee brokered a reconciliation. It was found out that there had been certain actions taken by some congregations and persons of both parties contrary to earlier agreements like those arrived at on 15th February, 1992 mentioned above.

It was recognized that those actions have adversely affected the reconciliation process and thus have again resolved that,

- a. Each party shall urge its followers to desist from any acts that will lead to the closure of a church building or disruption of a church service and to work towards getting all chapels now closed open for church worship.
- b. Both parties should work towards the common use of church cemeteries.

¹⁷⁴ Christian Council Committee's Report, E. P. Church Reconciliation Feb 15 1992 Memorandum of Understanding between the two E. P. Churches.

c. Each party shall educate its members regarding the importance of living in peace and in harmony as a Christian community should.

d. The leadership of both parties shall not under any circumstances when provoked, instigate their members to resort to any unlawful actions.

The two parties recognised that they had many disagreements yet had committed themselves to work amicably until mutually acceptable solutions to the problems they face are found.

To achieve the above goal, the two churches committed themselves to:

1. the continuation of the process of reconciliation,
2. set up a sub-committee to critically examine the issues that are hindering the path to peace, reconciliation and unity. Such issues may have theological, liturgical and constitutional implications
3. work together toward the establishment of one local Synod for the purpose of electing a single leadership for the Church,
4. that immediate steps be taken to withdraw all court cases.

The following were signatories for and on behalf of the E. P. Church, Ghana:

1. Rt. Rev. Japhet Yawo Ledo
2. Rev. Lordson Joseph Kwadzo Dzakupasu
3. Rev. Seth Kwame Asamoah
4. Very Rev. Prof. N. K. Dzobo
5. Rev. G. K. Atimpo
6. Rev. Mrs. Dinah Abbey-Mensah

b) For, and on behalf of E. P. Church of Ghana

1. Rev. P. F. Quaye
2. Rt. Rev. E. K. Amenyedu

3. Rev. V. E. Otiaku

4. Rev. G. K. Agama

5. Rev. W. K. Senya

It was witnessed by the following:

1. Rt. Rev. Prof. K. A. Dickson

2. Rev. D. A. Dartey

3. Mrs. Comfort Engmann

4. Rev. E. Mische

5. Angelika Viddeler

6. Mr. David A. Acquah

The meetings of the Committee were suspended after it became clear that the Memorandum of understanding mentioned above was not being adhered to in full and that it looked as if both sides needed time to re-assess and re-appraise their positions.

The current feelings of the Council is that the express wish to both sides to resume negotiations needs to be carefully assessed in the light of past experience and appropriate measures put in place to ensure a move ahead in the negotiation process.

Although the Council has reached an impasse, it succeeded in starting another dialogue over the disagreements in the E. P. Church. At the Committee's meetings the two disagreeing parties realised that they have areas of disagreements and these disagreements have brought a division of the Church. The two parties also see the need for peace and reconciliation even though they have not found means and ways of coming to peaceful terms. A step towards reconciliation has been brokered and time will eventually heal the wounds.

The B. S. P. F. conflict with the E.P. Church and its consequent establishment of a new church, the E. P. Church of Ghana needs some evaluation.

It is a conflict that differs greatly from the four preceding conflicts of Wovenu, Doh, Amedzro and Ategar. First it was not a conflict between the E. P. Church and a particular individual but between the church and its own accepted group. It was a conflict between the Church and an organized group. Furthermore, the B. S. P. F. conflict had both internal and external dimension. While the four preceding conflicts involved individual single congregations, the B. S. P. F. conflict involved the entire E. P. Church and all her overseas partners. These features gave it the widest coverage and intensity.

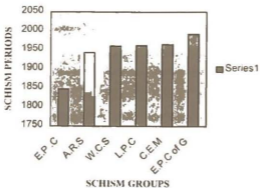
Another feature of the B. S. P. F. conflict is that its effect on the parties involved is greater than any of the four, even when put together. The E. P. Church lost more members including the clergy than ever before. Both parties in the conflict lost valuable time, money and materials like building and other properties.

Another mark of difference between the B. S. P. F. conflict and that of the previous ones is that both parties in the conflict attacked the weaknesses of the other. The Church administration started it in 1988 when it accused the B.S.P.F. of financial misappropriation. It then tried to curtail the activities of the group. The fellowship in turn attacked the mal-administration and doctrinal innovations of the executive. In these counter attacks, the B. S. P. F. was the more aggressive side than the Church. However, in its aggressiveness it must be known that it is not the B. S. P. F. that took the E. P. Church to court but the six "concerned members". They might have shown sympathy in the court cases and have joined the E. P. Church of Ghana. Although the bulk of the B. S. P. F. joined the E. P. Church of Ghana, it is not the entire Fellowship that left the E. P. Church, Ghana. It is also a fact that not all the members of the E. P. Church of Ghana were members of the B. S. P. F. The six complainants were not even executives of the B. S. P. F. It is they who announced the establishment of E. P. Church of Ghana on 18th June, 1991 in a bid to isolate Dzobo's administration.

The common denomination for all the five conflicts is that it was a conflict between the E. P. Church and its Prayer Groups. The factors that contributed to these conflicts were many and are part of the discussion of the next chapter.

Figure 3

BAR CHART SHOWING PERIOD OF EXISTENCE OF THE SPLINTERGROUPS OF THE
E.P. CHURCH 1847 - 1991



LEGEND

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| A. R. S. | - | Apostles Revelation Society |
| W. C. S. | - | The White Cross Society |
| L. P. C. | - | The Lord's Pentecostal Church |
| P. E. C. | - | Presbyterian Evangelical Church |
| C. E. M. | - | Christ Evangelical Mission |
| B. S. P. F. | - | The Bible Study and Prayer Fellowship |

CHAPTER FIVE

APPRAISAL

A Church is the Spiritual Body (Of Christ) comprising human beings with human weaknesses, strength and differences in environmental, physiological, mental and social backgrounds. Once human beings vary, then conflicts are natural phenomena in societies no matter their levels of development. The E. P. Church is one such human institution and thus had its share of conflicts.

The E. P. Church, Ghana, was established at Blengo-Peki on November 14th, 1847 by Lawrence Wolf of the North Germany Missionary Society.¹⁷⁵ Since that time to the 1960's, it went through the superintendency of the United Free Church of Scotland (1923-1946) and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches (United Church of Christ) of U. S. A. Between 1939 and 1991, a period of fifty-two years, the E. P. Church had experienced five major schisms that resulted in the establishment of five independent Churches; these are:

1. the Apostles Revelation Society (A. R. S.) 1943;
2. the White Cross Society, 1960;
3. the Lord's Pentecostal Church (Agbelengor) 1961;
4. Christ Evangelical Mission (Evangelical Protestant Reformed Church), 1964;
5. E. P. Church of Ghana, 1991.¹⁷⁶

The five schisms that occurred in the E.P. Church from 1930 to 1991 can be attributed to some of the teachings of the E.P. Church, her polity, interpersonal relationships and her Pre-Christian worldview. This chapter makes an appraisal of the findings in previous chapters that point to the above contentions.

¹⁷⁵ The history and activities of the German Mission, the United Free Church of Scotland and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches were treated in chapters two.

¹⁷⁶ The Churches that were established as a result of the schisms in the E. P. C. were treated under chapters three to five.

The chart in Figure 2 above shows the five schisms that occurred in the E. P. Church, and it reveals the following

The first major schism occurred in the E. P. Church ninety-five years after its establishment. The peaceful existence of the Church for almost a century was due to the type of Christians that constituted the Church of those years. The study demonstrated that the missionaries and their immediate predecessors took time to give an exhaustive teaching before baptizing their converts. It showed that the converts of the Bremen Mission accepted as Christians took not less than three years to become Christians. This made them have a firm grip of Christian commitments and responsibilities. They had a high level of Christian Education, which made them in Paul's words... "matured in the faith."¹⁷³ Being matured Christians in the faith, these early Christians subjected themselves to the teachings of the Church. They exercised extreme humility and revered the authority of the Church.

The same could be said about the Pastors of the period under review (1880s to 1950s). The study showed that the first native pastor, Rev. Rudolf Mallet was ordained in 1882, thirty-five years after the establishment of the Church at Peki and eighteen years after the establishment of a Seminary (1864). The practice of the Missionary era was a long and thorough training of pastors. Andreas Aku was sent to Germany with two others for training in 1884. It was not until 1910, twenty-six years after, that he was ordained. Zahn, the Mission inspector until 1900, was skeptical about the ordination of native workers. He laid down conditions that should be fulfilled before one could be considered a fit person for Holy Orders.¹⁷⁴ For example, one must be thoroughly trained, must have worked as a Church Assistant for not less than ten

¹⁷³ Timothy 3:6-8: "He must be sober, blameless, who he will not wed up with pride and consider that he has won."

¹⁷⁴ Agbot, J.S. *Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana 1847-1992*, 1991, Ministry of Education, Ghana, p.57

years. He or she must also be of good character. These conditions were based on 1 Timothy 3:2-7¹⁷⁹ and Titus 1:5-9.¹⁸⁰

Rev. C. K. Akatu quoted earlier, in chapter two asserted that the practice gave pastors the experience, knowledge and skill of pastoring and handling of problems. Long and exhaustive training for quality was the order of those days. Finally, it is on record that the Moderators of the E. P. Church from 1923, Revs. Bensah and Awuma had a good background of German training.¹⁸¹ They were leaders who kept faithfully to the teachings of the missionaries.¹⁸²

The chart also revealed that there was a period of eighteen years between the first and the second schism. The study affirmed in chapter two that the Second World War had forced independence on the E. P. Church. Independence came because the Church was suddenly left without the German Missionaries, its founders, who were deported. The leadership of the Church thus became the responsibility of the few ordained natives. The high rate of church growth immediately after the war necessitated the ordination of more ministers to take charge of the congregations. This was a factor in the diminishing of the thorough and quality of training of the lay and ordained agents of the E. P. Church and quality of Christians the church produced. Thus the behaviour and attitude of the new generation of Christians changed with the quality of training and teaching the Church gave them. Evidence of relaxation of the missionary policies was glaring during the moderatorship of Rev. Galevo (1957-1968). Amedzo wrote that he had different missionary views.¹⁸³ Amedzo also wrote "He was more or less confused by different missionary personnel" No wonder three of the schisms occurred during his tenure of office.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ 1 Tim 3:2-7 "A church leader must be a good talker, he must have only one wife, be sober, self-controlled, and orderly.

¹⁸⁰ Titus 1:6 "An elder must be blameless, he must be only one wife.

¹⁸¹ Agutu, K., 1950 Op. Cit. P. 27.

¹⁸² Amedzo, I. K., Op. Cit. P. 21.

¹⁸³ Ibid. P. 21.

¹⁸⁴ The schisms of the White Church of the Lord's Pentecostal Church 1961 and that of Accra New Town, 1968 all occurred during the moderatorship of Rev. E. K. Galevo.

Galevo was a native of Akpafu missionary station, and had thus had a German training. He was assertive but during his tenure of moderatorship, American mission provided personnel and funds. They promoted liberal views such as freedom of expression and Galevo had no choice but to follow the policies of the Americans. The chart also showed that three schisms occurred in close succession in the 1960's, that is, the White Cross, 1960, the Lord's Pentecostal Church, 1961 and Christ Evangelical Mission, 1964. The major factors that accounted for three incessant schisms within a decade were the unsatisfied need of the people such as spiritual healing and the inability of the Church to provide that need as well as containing the situation. We could lump the schisms of the White Cross Society and the Lord's Pentecostal together under a "necessity that generated the formation of the prayer and healing groups that brought friction in the E. P. Church",¹⁸⁵ friction that ended up in secessions. The need for good health, life, freedom from ailments and evil spirits was the moving force that promoted the formation of Prayer and Healing groups. In Baeta's conclusion of his work: Prophetism in Ghana, he wrote the following that underscores my argument.

African life, chronically conscious of enfeeblement, of some ill-defined, but vicious anaemia making the blood pulse less vigorous than it ought, and man's total power just miss their grasp of full vitality, constantly yearns and gropes for health and fitness.¹⁸⁶

He went on further that

natural disasters and the fear of spiritual being's negative roles in human life made the African's basic aspirations to obtain, preserve and increase that which has been called life-force, that is, potency, vitality clan; more vigorous pulsating profile life.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Baeta C. G. Op. Cit. P. 134

¹⁸⁶ Ibid

¹⁸⁷ Ibid

Thus it is clear that the healing art and its practitioners are very important institutions and personnel respectively in the African society and concept. It is true that the E. P. Church from the missionary era up to date, has tried to provide hospitals and doctors purported to provide the health needs of its members; the E. P. Church Hospital, Worawora, (1951), the E. P. Church Hospital, Adidome, (1955), the E. P. Church Clinic, Wapuli, (1971), the E. P. Church Clinic, Ho, (1974) the E. P. Church Mobile Clinic, Ho, (1974) Dan Moser Memorial Clinic, Dambai, (1984), the E. P. Church Clinic, Hatorgodo, (1988) Nonetheless the African prefers the Traditional healing methods and its practitioners to the Western substitutes. The former heals the whole man, that is spirit and body, while the latter heals only the body. Illness is one thing that makes it difficult and even impossible to keep people in the Historic Churches. Satan's words to God, in Job, "A man will give away all he has to save his life"¹⁴⁴ underscores man's desperation for life.

The author has found out that Christians, not only of the E. P. Church but also from the family of the Historic Churches, go secretly to traditional healers in the quest of good health and protection from evil forces that plague their lives.¹⁴⁵ Thus the Prayer and Healing groups were Christian answers to the health needs of the majority of the members of the E. P. Church.

Taking the first three groups Tadzewu, Etordome and Blengo-Peki into consideration, their locations were significant, that is, among rural people who could not afford the high hospital and clinical bills. They were healed through prayers and the administration of herbs. The highest price that they paid was to be faithful members of their benefactor prayer groups and serve in them. Other prices were packets of candles and olive oil. On the contrary, the Church hospitals do not accept personal services nor payment in kind from their patients but demand full payment in cash for expenses involved.

¹⁴⁴ Job 13:15

¹⁴⁵ *Protestantism in Ghana*, p. 112

Secondly, the African believes that malevolent spirits are responsible for physical illness and one can only be healed when the power of these spirits is removed through rituals. This aspect of healing is absent in the hospitals and Western scientific healing. The Prayer and Healing groups at Tadzewu, Etordome and Tokokoe Healing Centres provided this important means of what is now termed healing and deliverance. Abamfo Atiemo in his work defines deliverance as "helping people to break free from the influences of Satan and demons or evil spirits that cause bad habits, suffering, sickness and failure in life".¹⁴⁰ In the quest for life as a primary need of the African he makes it clear that no Church prohibitions nor sanctions can stop members of the Historic Churches from seeking spiritual healing from Prayer and Healing Groups. The fact that many of the clergy of the E. P. Church were members of the B. S. P. F and joined the secession attested to this contention. The Church needs to identify the priority needs of its members and address them accordingly.

The study has also shown in Chapter Two that the Bremen Missionaries were pietistic (moralists). The Church's Constitution of rules and regulations is a testimony of the moralistic nature of the Church.

The second stanza of the Ewe Hymn 166 underscores my contention. It states:

Ewe:	"Nu nyuie gedewo so gbo Le nuto mawome Anyigba ya nyo nuto Gake ameawo gble..."
English:	(There are many good things that abound in those regions Although the land is good the people are bad...)

Right from the inception of the formation of the Mission in Bremen in 1836, both the founders and their Missionary agents looked down upon Africa as the land of Satan. No wonder



¹⁴⁰ Momo, Deliverance in the Home of the Churches of Ghana in *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, vol. IV, (2002), 1996-1999.

their compatriots, the political administrators, called Africa a Dark Continent. The Missionaries called Africans heathens and their culture heathenism. They represented the Ewe traditional religion as the worship of the Devil. Thus the devil scored highly in the range of preaching topics. They contrasted Jesus with the Devil. The missionaries diabolized their Ewe converts and their culture. They taught their converts to discard everything African and adopt their Western culture.

In accordance with their missionary calling they had to fight against Satan and his vassals and destroy the old Ewe religion. One way they adopted to achieve that objective was the conduct of Open-Air Preaching sermons that characterized missionary evangelization in the early life of the Church (up to the 1950s). Its mentors (the missionaries) passed on this concept of the Ewe and its culture as evil, satanic or devilish to the Church. The Ewe Christians were made to believe that they were living in darkness and were agents of the Devil and their culture was devilish. To be a secured man, and a member of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Ewe convert had to discard everything African. Some of the converts in their desire to avoid future contacts with the life style of their fellow non-Christians, voluntarily isolated themselves and formed purely Christian communities like "Mission Kpodzi" in Ho. This mission teaching of diabolization had planted doubt and conflict in the Ewe Christian, who was never sure of what the Church would call in his or her life and action as satanic. He has a diabolised idea as a second rate human.

Another effect of this teaching is conflict between Ewe Christians and their non-Christian counterparts. Christians consider themselves as people of high moral standing because of their being Christians. They look down upon Ewe culture as satanic because the missionaries said so. They prefer to dress and speak like the missionaries as marks of superiority. The late post-missionary Christians however, developed a new form of behaviour. They turned their evangelistic moves from the non-Christian to their fellow Christians. They accused one another

of satanic life styles. Some practices in the E. P. Church were looked upon as heathen and devilish. For example, the use of certain types of drums associated with African Traditional worship and the state sword and certain traditional symbols. The B. S. P. F. saw some of these African beliefs and practices as "pagan" so they should not be incorporated into the Church. Some of the members of the Church on the other hand, also accused the prayer groups of introducing traditional beliefs and practices into the Church. These were members who had the German Missionary teachings that explained away the fact that Satan can harm the Christians. Naturally, they would not be well disposed towards these beliefs. Wovenu apart from his practice of the sex taboos was also accused of practising pagan ritual sacrifices. All the groups except, Atiegari's New Town Church were accused of clapping, drumming and dancing, practices the E. P. Church felt did not conform to the Church's inherited tradition. The groups on their part asserted that their practices are based on the scriptural authority of the Old Testament rather than the fact that the practices were African.¹⁹¹ Diabolization became the major factor of conflict in the E. P. Church. The Church accused the prayer groups of heathen practices of loud praying, falling into trance and exorcism. The prayer groups on their part accused the Church of becoming agents of the devil as regards its love for money and power. Thus some members of the B. S. P. F. felt they were superior to their non-member compatriots of the E. P. Church morally and spiritually. The B. S. P. F. accused the Rt. Rev. Dzobo of failures in financial, ecclesiastical and general administration. His "Melagbe" theology and symbols of Gye Nyame and a snake on a cross were seen as bringing back into the Church traditional religious elements. To the B. S. P. F. the artefacts of the state sword, and Ewe drums were equal to idolatry. Their view of Dzobo's Melagbe Theology as an incorporation of aspects of African culture, which some felt were evil or satanic stems from the missionary view of the

¹⁹¹ Cf. Baeta's observation that the African Independent Churches sought Old Testament scriptural support as basis of their practices. See Baeta's *Prophets in Ghana*, p. 133

African culture as evil or satanic. This concept was passed on to the Ewe Christians and is in turn used as a weapon in the E. P. Church; one group against the other.

Some leaders of the E. P. Church, like Dzobo, started an indigenisation programme, that is, the integration of the Christian experience into the culture of the Ewe people. But they did not educate the Church on what it is and its importance to the effectiveness of Christianity before starting the programme. Dovo (1973-1980) was the first to consciously embark on the indigenization exercise in the E. P. Church.¹⁹² Special books of songs were published under the direction of Mr. N. Z. Nayo, Director of the National Academy of Music. During Dovo's time drumming, clapping and dancing were introduced into the Church's style of worship. But he did this first with the consent of Synod. Dzobo on the other hand made a unilateral attempt at indigenization in the church; an act that was in conflict with Article 5 of the 1979 constitution which states among others that;

Ewe: Amea deke mekpo mo ahe nufafia kple wona
bubuwo ava Hame la me, ne Sinod me lo de edzi o.

English: No one, whatsoever, has the right to introduce a new teaching or any other doctrine into the Church without the approval of Synod.

The B. S. P. F. therefore based its opposition to Dzobo's indigenization on doctrinal and constitutional grounds, which I think was quite legitimate.

Another finding of the study is that men of strong charisma formed the Prayer and Healing under review. Except the B. S. P. F., which was a fellowship, the other four groups pivoted on the personalities of their leaders. They directed and controlled their groups. You cannot obtain any information or services from either the ARS, or the White Cross Society without the permission of their leaders. Baeta in his book, Prophetism in Ghana, said this about them, which supports the vital role of the personality of leaders. "The prophetic churches

¹⁹² Ametah, J.K. op. cit. p.72



followed the basic pattern of organization of African communities".¹⁴³ They were "like kings with absolute authority, ruling over the entire group but through the help of councils and chiefs"¹⁴⁴

The first four founders, Wovenu, Doh, Amedzro and Atiega, leaders of Independent African Churches, fitted into the above description of African rulers but their absolutism varies in degrees. Wovenu and Atiegar have the degree of absolute authority where nothing is done without their consultation and approval.

Doh and Amedzro followed the order of absolute authority in a lesser degree. They delegated some roles to their assistants but they held the highest authority. The trend was reversed in the Lord's Pentecostal after Amedzro's death when the Church followed the Pentecostal Council's policy of democracy. The absolutism of Wovenu, Doh and Amedzro was, however, based on the fact that they were individually called by God to perform a service to people of their area as the judges and prophets of the Old Testament were given a charisma - the power and authority of God, to deliver God's people. They see themselves, therefore, as captains of God's army out to overcome an enemy, Satan, and deliver the people of God. It would be a failure if they showed weakness in character and purpose or delegate their roles to people who were not empowered by God for the particular task. The Church has the problem of incorporating charismata within it with a clear line of authority.

Their attractiveness was the result of their sensitivity to the needs and aspirations of their people and their ability to meet these needs and aspirations. The first and foremost need of good health was met by the healing powers of these leaders. They were able to heal ailments that the hospitals were unable to diagnose and heal. Furthermore, they provided the basic social needs of their respective localities in the form of good drinking water, schools, and accessible roads

143. *Ibid.*, p. 128

144. *Ibid.*, p. 128

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and thus raised their morale. Naturally, their followers were greatly attracted to them as a matter of gratitude because, as an Ewe proverb states, "Avekoe si xo ame de agbe la, ave ko woyona ne" (The shrub that has given you cover is regarded as a forest). The good works of these leaders inevitably made them popular especially their healing powers. It is alleged that the successes of these leaders and their popularity in the E. P. Church made the Church find fault with them, discredit them and finally slap the sanction of excommunication on them. No matter what the EP Church said or did the founders of the Prayer and Healing Groups felt called and empowered by God, to serve and save, and that duty was paramount to them. All these leaders, except Atiegar, established healing centres. The New Town E. P. Church recorded that Atiegar too established a prayer group. In the case of B. S. P. F., they had healing and deliverance sessions. The leaders under review thus met the four expectations of the ordinary man of religion as identified by Debrunner as follows:

- a. Social fellowship
- b. Emotional experiences
- c. Healing
- d. Security against real or imagined evil forces.¹⁴⁴

The research revealed that formal education played a vital role in the schisms especially as related to their intensity and popularity. It is found out that the educational level of the schismatic leaders and their members affected the intensity of each conflict and the spread of its resultant secession.

All the leaders of the five Prayer and Healing groups were educated at different levels. While some were educated only to Standard Five (Gold Coast era) others had University education. These levels of education affected the way the leaders organised the affairs of their groups during their conflicts with the E.P. Church.

Wovenu was the least educated among the leaders of the five groups under review. He was educated up to Standard Five (Gold Coast era). He worked as a Post Office Clerk, a Warder and a Mine's Clerk. He demonstrated his organizational abilities in the establishment of Christian communities at all the places he worked. While a Warder at Akuse, His Majesty's Prisons (1931-34), he was a lay evangelist and preached in and around Akuse. At Akwatia from 1935-1939 he established an E.P. Church with a singing band. His Christian Community at Tadzewu overhauled the Old Tadzewu into a vibrant self-supporting community with good water, a school, better roads and practical Christian life. And he worked among people with little or no education. Thus at the height of the conflict with the E. P. Church, apart from the social support, Wovenu's supporters were not vocal. He broke away quietly with his group and there was no physical clash with the Church. Wovenu's conflict occurred under the moderatorship of Rev. Amegashie (1940-1951). Rev. Amegashie was a disciplinarian who maintained rigidly the Christian tradition of the Missionaries. His discipline and policy might also account for the quiet nature of Wovenu's conflict.

Doh's secession followed Wovenu's pattern of quiet exit. Although there was eighteen years between Wovenu and Doh's secession, their structures and practices were more in common unlike the other three. Doh had completed Primary Level education in Togo and was an apprentice in missionary work for three and a half years. He is therefore a little higher in education than Wovenu but like him, Doh worked among rural illiterate people. Like Wovenu, Doh's support from his followers during the conflict with the E. P. Church was neither backed with individual or group action from members of his Prayer Group nor did he, (Doh) resort to any court action; thus their secession was also quiet. The two groups of Wovenu and Doh established good relationships with the E. P. Church a few years after they broke away and maintained the relationships since then.

Amedzro had a commercial education, in Accra, in addition to his Primary Level education. Thus he was higher in educational level than his two schismatic predecessors, Wovenu and Doh. He also found his Prayer and Healing group at Blengo-Peki, an area, which has an established educational tradition dating back to 1848. His Assistants Messrs. Emmanuel Wuaku and B. A. Y. Menka were also as educated as Amedzro was. A good number of his followers, especially from the Peki Valley had a working education. He and his followers posed a stiffer resistance to the E. P. Church at Blengo. They had verbal open confrontations with the local E. P. Church. They reacted to accusations by the Church by preaching against the weaknesses of the Church. They confronted the E. P. Church Executive at Ho against their accusations. Their doctrinal break with the E. P. Church Tradition was radical. In addition to the adoption of Immersion as a mode of baptism instead of the traditional sprinkling, they changed from following the polity of the first two schismatic churches of Wovenu and Doh to the polity of the classical Pentecostals. They joined the Ghana Pentecostal Council of Ghana in 1985, an act that underscored their quest to identify the Lord's Church with the Pentecostals, and thus gaining external recognition. This conflict occurred under the moderatorship of Rev. E. K. Galevo (1957-1968). He was said to be subject to a different missionary view.¹⁹⁰ He was German trained and assertive. In the light of this, Amedzro was able to challenge the E.P. Church to a point because of the liberal atmosphere exercised by the superintending American mission.

The schism of Ategar attracted more public attention within and without the E. P. Church, Ghana than the first three groups that preceded him. This can be attributed partly to his high level of education that enabled him to associate with foreign Christian groups and secular organizations. Ategar was a graduate of the University of Ghana and holds a B. Sc. Degree in Economics. His employment by the British Overseas Airways Company (B. O. A. C.) afforded

¹⁹⁰ Interview with the author, 1990, p. 27.

him the means and opportunity to interact with foreign cultures. He was in Britain and Germany, the homes of the first two missionary groups of the E. P. Church. It was alleged that Ategar nearly won the support of the Bremen Mission during his conflict with the E. P. Church. With his high level of education and association with people in high places he nearly went away with the properties of the Accra New Town E. P. Church. He put up a good fight at the courts during his legal battle with the Church. Ategar demonstrated his quality of education by literally fighting a war with the E. P. Church when he published allegations against it in his widely circulated pamphlet: Anomalies and Evil Practices in the E. P. Church. Its wide circulation gave his schism popularity and earned him some public sympathy. His schism set the precedence for taking Church cases to court. Again, this was the superintendency of the American Mission where they took a liberal stance and were not bent on making the African Church adhere to missionary teachings against African tradition.^{19*}

The schism of the B. S. P. F. was an International affair that involved all the partners of the E. P. Church outside Ghana and the role of high level of literacy in the E. P. Church and Ghana during the conflict period could not be underrated. The B.SPF started in the Kumasi Metropolis and its executive and a good number of its members were learned members of the E. P. Church in Kumasi holding responsible social positions. For example, Dr. N. D. Sodji, a founding member of the B. S. P. F. was a lecturer at the Kumasi University of Science and Technology. Mr. Albert Fiazigbe, who became one of the counsels of the B. S. P. F. was a legal Consultant and Dr. Adibo, another prominent member of the B. S. P. F., was then the Director of Medical Services, Ministry of Health, Ghana. These and others of high academic

^{19*} Agherona, Gordon, 1994, p.21 states that Rev. Calvin, Minister of the E. P. Church (1957-1960) was subjected to different missionary views. This is not surprising since the missionaries had different views. While the three missions aimed at creating an authentic African Church they had different approaches. The American Mission was more liberal in its approach while the British and German missions were more conservative. This is why the American Mission was the first to be established in Ghana when it suited the occasion and the liberal approach of the Americans at that time.

achievements fought for the B. S. P. F. cause as individuals and in organized groups. Naturally, they knew their right, where to get redress and how to get it. Using its high level human resource and social positions as well as fertile educational climate of the nation, it adopted varied means to achieve its goal of redress. The B. S. P. F. first used dialogue that aimed at amicable solution of its conflict with the Church when a section of the group met the Rt. Rev. Dzobo at Trinity College on June 25th, 1988. When persuasion seemed to fail, it adopted a revolutionary method of demonstration and the presentation of resolutions on the 29th of June, 1988. Six of the "concerned members", as a last resort, instituted a substantive legal action at an Accra High Court for a redress in January 1989. Except Ategar, the other three groups did not contest their rights as the B. S. P. F. had done and I attributed their inability or unwillingness to adopt such methods partly to their level of education. I however do not rule out the effect of the strong and strict missionary presence of their time on their inability, and the prompting liberal government policies that were prevailing in the case of the B. S. P. F.

The court cases were of great embarrassment to the E. P. Church. The effects in my opinion have both negative and positive sides to it. Positively the Courts have unearthed the deficiencies in the E. P. Church's Constitution. This was an opportunity for the Church to correct the shortcomings in the Constitution and update it to meet the needs of the Twenty-first century members of the Church. It would have taken a long time for a self-realization of these deficiencies.

The courts have also shown that the majority of members of the Church do not know the Constitution of the Church. The study has shown that even those who were defending it as plaintiffs were ignorant about its evolution. It has, therefore, made it obligatory on the Church to embark on education of its members thoroughly, not only on its Constitution, but also on all other aspects of the Church including its history and mission to the World at large.

Another positive effect of the court cases was that it has put the Executive, Clergy and Laity on the alert to work and act according to the laid down policies of the Church as in the Constitution. It has thus preserved the Church and its members from perversion and misapplication.

Again the need for money during and after the major court cases has revitalized the free giving spirit of the members of both factions. The need for financial sufficiency has been justified.

The immediate result of the court cases was the alienation that resulted from the judgments. The Appeal Court gave its judgment in favour of the E. P. Church, Ghana against the "six concerned members." Predominantly members of the B.S.P.F. supporters became the aggrieved party. The majority of them broke away from the mother Church. The E. P. Church, Ghana has lost much of its valuable human resource. It has also used millions of cedis in the court cases; and during the conflict valuable resources that could otherwise have been used in the development of the Church and its members. It has also lost irreplaceable man-hours in trying to solve the conflict, in attending courts, arbitration and planning how to protect itself from its opposers.

There were allegations of tribalism or ethnicity as one of the factors of schisms in the Church. The allegations concerned Atiegar and the B. S. P. F.'s schism more than the other three. Atiegar was alleged to have said that he had not established an Anlo¹⁹⁸ Church, an allegation that he however denied. Mrs. Alifo, a founding member of the Christ Evangelical Mission, contended that the Southern Ewes in the Accra New Town E. P. Church were those who set a section of the youth against Atiegar. It was alleged that there was an undercurrent of tribalism in the accusations levelled against him. Mrs. Alifo asserted that some southerners in the Church were behind the youth that stood against Atiegar. This is an indication that the New

¹⁹⁸ The Anlo are the Southern Ewes during the colonial period.

Town Church membership was made up of people from southern and northern Volta Region. The allegation against Mr. Atiegar inferred that he was discriminated against by those from the south. This incident might be the reason why Mrs. Alifo being a "northerner" felt the southerners in the Church were against Mr. Atiegar for his alleged past pronouncements against the Amos. The accusations of a section of the C.Y.B. against Atiegar were then the immediate cause of the Accra New Town conflict. There were underlying causes that could be traced to the ethnic differences between the northerners and the southerners of the church.

The B. S. P. F. also alleged that Rt. Rev. Dzobo exhibited nepotism and tribalism during his tenure of office. It was alleged that because he comes from the north or "Ewedome", he selected his officers and aides from among his people. It was alleged that he discriminated against people from other tribes when he selected candidates for ministerial training and vacancies for overseas trainings. Whether these were true or not, it was an indication that ethnicity or tribalism was an issue of a remote and hidden nature which contributes to conflicts in the church. The existence of about one hundred and twenty sub-tribes in the Volta Region is an indication of tribal affiliation in the Region and the church.

This tribal affiliation among the Ewes as a result of the numerous sub-tribal groupings is opposed to the Christian principle of "That all may be one". The Akans and their allied tribes have large tribal groupings which limit divisive tendencies with leadership structures that have control over large geographical areas. For instance, the Asantehene, and the Okyehene control all the Asantes and Akyems respectively. On the other hand, the Ewes since their migration from Notsie in Benin, settled in their present homes in small groups as independent tribes without a unified government as obtained elsewhere in other language groupings. In addition each group resents being ruled by the other. This fact is a clear indication that tribalism is a real problem in the E.P. Church, and should be resolved permanently. The near break-off, of the Buem-Krachi congregations from the E. P. Church in 1954-64 illustrates my contention.

It is again an open secret that unchristian intrigues take place before and during election of officers to the executive posts of Moderator and the Synod Clerk. It is alleged that it was the avoidance of these tribal intrigues during elections, especially the near explosion that occurred at the Jasikan Synod of 1964 that made the late Rt. Rev. C. K. Dovlo, then an M. P. in the First Republic, to suggest that in future the Pastors' Association, who knew their members better should elect three of its members in each case for Synod to elect a Moderator and Synod Clerk. Since then, the E. P. Church, Ghana allows the Pastor's Association to elect three of its members in each case for each post for Synod to elect its two top officials. These ethnic tendencies in the E. P. Church are potential for ethnic loyalties, which could degenerate into divisiveness in the Church. The truthfulness of my contention that tribalism (Ethnicity) is also a contributing factor to the schisms in the E. P. Church, Ghana is supported by D. E. K. Amenumey in his book: The Unification Movement, a Political History, when he wrote this about the Ewes:

In their new homeland, the Ewe did not form a single political entity but split into a number of sub-tribes.....
At the turn of the century, there were about 120 of the Ewe sub-tribes.

This is an evidence of subgroups of the Ewe. This has the potentiality of causing negative division. Underneath the Christian virtue of oneness lie the social and cultural divisions in the E. P. Church.

The E. P. Church's relationships, at local and executive levels, with the schismatic leaders and their members is worthy of note. The Ewes form the majority of the Church's population and the fact that the Ewes were made up of as much as 120 sub-tribes, is a strong indication of varied backgrounds, conceptions, views, needs and aspirations. These differences point to conflict. It is clear therefore that conflicts are unavoidable social phenomena and when used positively lead to growth. Conflict management is thus a necessary recipe of good governance. But some of the Executives and Clergy of the E. P. Church throughout the years under review (1939-1991) did not manage the conflicts of their time well enough; hence the

divisions. This poor human relationship between the Church and some individuals or groups of people in the E. P. Church had resulted in these breaks.

It was shown that at the early stages of Wovenu's work at Tadzewu, there was peace and cordiality between him and the Abor District head of the E. P. Church. But two years later, when a new head took over, trouble started. The change can be attributed to poor human relationship and management culture. Poor relationship again showed in the later part of Doh's membership of the E. P. Church. It is alleged that Rev. Buatsi, then Synod Clerk of the E. P. Church announced the expulsion of the White Cross Society from the E. P. Church, Ghana at an anniversary of the Church at Agate. The same pattern of treatment was meted out to the Blengo Prayer Group at Tsame Peki as cited earlier, reference Appendix 13. The conflicts and their resultant breaks were clear indications of the EP Church's inability to integrate or manage the charismatic phenomenon that emerged within its framework. The charismatic phenomenon has appeared in all the Historic churches but the problem is how to incorporate it; and the E.P. Church is the worse off in this aspect.

The divisions would have been averted had there been a more cordial relationship between the Church leadership and its members. The leaders involved were concerned more of technicalities than considering their consequent moral and pastoral implications. The success of an organization depends not only on its resources but more so on the resourcefulness of its leadership. Where there is good rapport between leadership and those being led, leadership will notice potential talents and put them to productive use. But more often than not, lack of good human relationship, an essential managerial quality had cost the E. P. Church valuable human resources, rare services and embarrassments.

The summary of the study's findings is as follows:

1. The pietist Bremen Missionary teachings impressed it on its Ewe converts that they and their culture were devilish, and that the Ewes were agents of Satan and

could only be freed when they denounce their culture and become Christians according to the blue-print of the missionaries. The Ewe converts of the E. P. Church have learnt to denounce their Eweness. This concept of a diabolized Ewe had become a factor of conflicts in the E. P. Church

2. Some individuals from time to time emerged in the E. P. Church with Charisma to deliver their compatriots from the chains of the Devil and its agents and the sufferings they inflict on their victims; a service they felt, the E. P. Church has failed to offer. Their claim as being called to duty by God made them resolute and in some cases revolutionary in their quest to obey God and save their fellow humankind as well as revitalized the Church.

3. There have been poor relationships between the leadership and members of the E. P. Church as in the case of Wovenu, Doh and Amedzro and in the B. S. P. F. from time to time when some members felt they had the charisma of God to serve the church. The church with its structured line of authority on its part has no room for charismatics to operate and thus expels them from the church.

4. There is evidence of ignorance in the E. P. Church of its history, doctrines and practices and its Constitution. Lack of knowledge of these aspects of the Church's life accounted for misconceptions, mistrust, and lack of cooperation, misbehaviour and strife in the E. P. Church. This weakness runs through the rank and file of the Church.

5. The study found out that the leaders of the E. P. Church during the periods under review differed in opinions and actions and did not handle the conflicts tactfully and allowed them to get out of hand.

6. It is also recognized that the fragmented nature of the Ewes into as many as 120 sub-tribes encouraged tribal affiliations and ethnic sentiments (tribalism): a factor that partly contributed to conflicts and break ups in the E. P. Church.

7. It is found out that the first four schisms happened in single congregations with individual leaders but the 1991 schism was all over the E. P. Church and under a well organized group headed by a powerful executive.

The above-mentioned factors partly contributed to the schisms of the E. P. Church from 1939 to 1991. The factors were hydra-headed, including doctrine, constitution, administration and relationship. In the next chapter, the author will make suggestions based on his findings for the benefit of the E. P. Church in particular and other Historical Churches liable to suffer similar fates so as to help them prevent their occurrences.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The E. P. Church, established at Blengo Peki by the Bremen Missionaries in 1847, currently has a record of five major schisms with one minor one. Although schism is a common phenomenon in the history of Christianity, the current record of five major schisms in a church, which is one hundred and fifty years old, is quite a serious problem. An average of one schism per decade between 1939 and 1991, a period of fifty-two years, is an alarming division in the church. This trend may continue if nothing is done to resolve the factors that cause divisions in the Church.

This study was undertaken first and foremost, to find out the factors that contributed to these conflicts with the resultant divisions in the Church. The author at the end suggests ways and means of controlling and resolving future conflicts in the Church, so as to reduce the occurrences of divisions.

The Bremen Missionaries taught their converts that Traditional Religious beliefs and practices were satanic, which will eventually destroy its practitioners. Africans, their converts, could only be saved from "Hellfire" by doing away with the pagan African Culture. Some of these practices are drumming and dancing dedicated to pagan gods; puberty rites; human sacrifice and ancestral worship.

The attitude of the Bremen Mission towards the Ewe culture, this study contends, sowed the seed of conflict among the converts of the Bremen Mission. At the beginning, the early Christians of the Ewe Mission converts looked down upon their non-Christian Ewes as "Children of the devil"; a carryover of the nineteenth century missionary concept of the world as

illustrated by the Ewe Hymn 166 written in 1867 by Bishop Reginald Heber. The second stanza which is quoted below illustrates my argument.¹⁹⁶

Nu nyuie gedewo so gbo
Le nuto mawo me.
Anyigba ya nyo nuto,
Gake ameawo gble.
Mawu je domenyonyo
Gba go de wodzi dzro;
Afi kple kpe wosubo,
Womanya Mawu o¹⁹⁷.

Literally meaning:

Many good things abound
in those regions.
The land is very good,
yet the people are sinful.
The Lord's kindness is wasted on them;
They worship idols, oblivious of the Almighty.

Meyer's quotation of Rev. Mallet's sermon in Bremen in 1854 on the eve of missionaries going out to Africa also supports my contention. Part of it states:

...Among them the Devil had had his unlimited kingdom for such a long time that they have become his slaves and have sunk into bestial and demonic condition ...¹⁹⁸

The first generation Christians of the E. P. Church were forbidden to take part in Traditional African Cultural Activities including drumming and dancing. There are sections in the Constitution that forbid Christians from participating in cultural activities that were termed, "trosobolawo je fefewo, wufoko kple heduduwo..."¹⁹⁹ (heathen entertainments, drumming and

¹⁹⁶ It is strange that this derogative stanza in Ewe is not included in the Methodist Hymnbook. The author therefore has no option than to provide the English meaning as above.

¹⁹⁷ Meyer *Bergit Op. Cit.* P. 45

¹⁹⁸ Ewe-Kroto-Hame si woyona be EWE-PRESBITERIA-HAME LA FE HAMI DOIDO. Traktatus-Aghaletale, Bremen, 1931, Section 6.3b p. 58.

dancing). It is interesting to note that the missionaries did not allow their converts to indulge also in western ballroom dancing and magical displays. These were also heathen and immoral practices. These prohibitions became areas of conflict in the Church and all the schismatic groups under review except Christ Evangelical Mission were accused of practices akin to African Traditional Religion.

The Church's main activity between 1847 and 1914 was the evangelism of non-Christians and teaching its members what the missionaries believed were Christian ways of life. There were books on church History and Life for its members to reinforce its preaching and teaching. Converts, confirmation candidates, lay and ordained agents of the church were given long and thorough training, education and in-service training. The long and thorough training of the Bremen Mission had left an indelible impression of the Reformed tradition on the E. P. Church. Some examples of these are faith and not works, the Bible and not tradition and no mediator except Christ. The E.P. Church complains about practices that they have not inherited from the Bremen Mission. The leaders of the various Presbyteries and Local Sessions deemed it their duty to protect this Reformed tradition through the years.

The first Joint Synod of the Church at Kpalime in 1922 promulgated a constitution for the two churches in 1931. This constitution was to guide both the executive and the general Church. However, from 1964, the E.P. Church, Ghana departed from the constitutional procedure of nominating its officers. It is on record that after the Jasikan Synod, the Church allowed the Pastors' Association to nominate Moderators and Synod Clerks instead of Synod doing so. This constitutional deviation was in contrast to the 1931 Constitution Article 23.3. It states, "Ne sinod la kpe ta la, woatia wofe nunola alo tato (Moderator) deka kple dowoawobokpola alo aghalenola (Synod Clerk) deka..." (During Synod, it should elect its leader or head (Moderator and a Synod Clerk). On the tenure of these officers, the article states;

Fwe: Ele be ame eve siawo nawo wofe dosiawo nkeke
alesi wole hamedowowo la me, dzaa wonye de
synod la va lo de wofe asidede le mebibia dzi loo alo
wokpo be ebia be woaxoe le wo si

English: (The two shall remain at post as long as they remain in active service except when synod agreed on their resignation or deemed it fit to terminate their appointments).

In 1967, at a Joint Synod at Ho, the Churches in Ghana and Togo commissioned a committee to review the constitution including the mode of election of the executive and its tenure of office by 1969. The Committee did not complete its work when Rev. Dzobo was elected to a third term. Six members of the Church took this action of the church to court as unconstitutional and the Church had to defend its position. The mismanagement of this conflict partly accounted for the 1991 division, which resulted in the existence of the present two E. P. Churches.

Higher Academic Qualification as a Factor in the 1991 Conflict

An important contribution of the Scottish Mission was in the field of Basic Education. One of their missionary Policies was "An efficient Primary Education". They felt that a sound primary foundation was the necessary basis for high education to be useful and effective.²⁰² The efficient primary education built up by the Scottish Mission had provided both the Church and the Nation with many elites and personnel. Products of the E. P. Church Schools became prominent men and women who held high professional and social positions. Many of such elites were also members of the Church and opinion leaders. Some of these elites were the products of the then efficient primary schools and higher institutions of the Americans.

The study found out that the educational level of leaders and members of the Church as a whole affected the intensity of each conflict. The higher the educational level of the leader and

²⁰² Anue G. Op. Cit. P. 69

the membership, the more intense the conflict. The higher they were educated the more they were informed about new insights into issues. In addition to the educational level of the leaders, was the increase of literates in the Church as the years roled by. The increase in the literate population had its corresponding increase in the number of people who were more sensitive to issues in the Church. There were therefore more people who were equally acquainted with new insights and thus could sensitize their fellow illiterate members. The study has noted that the increase of the above category of people partly accounted for the spread and intensity of conflicts in the E. P. Church. It is noted that literate supports progressed from the first schism of Wovenu upwards to the B. S. P. F. conflict in 1991 which had not only a large number of students and middle-level personnel but a large number of highly educated men and women like Dr. Sodzi, Dr. Moses Adibo, A. W. Fadzigbe, Dr. Kpodo Professors Kuma and Dzobo.

This study recognized the vital role education (established by the missionaries) has played in the growth of the Church in particular and the Region and Nation in general. Church education had provided personnel for the church and nation. It had also improved the income and the living conditions of the people.

On the other hand, the author feels that the free and compulsory education policy of the 1960's had narrowed the educational gap between the clergy and the laity. A large percentage of the laity of the Christian community in Ghana became literate, some reaching the top. Although they were members of the Church, they were not given positions of trust and administration at the top levels in the church. Until 1994, the E.P. Church did not allow lay participation in the church executive. This was in contrast with the Reformed Tradition's Principle of the Priesthood of all believers, as explained in page twenty-two of this work. By not allowing the full participation of the laity at all levels of the Church's activity, the church has created a gap. High level of education among the laity has brought the awareness of this vacuum in the church's tradition. The 1991 conflict, championed by the B.S.P.F. exhibited issues of high

education and the exercise of authority between the laity and the clergy. Dr. Sodzi, then President of the B.S.P.F., a predominantly lay group, supported by some elites of the laity, felt that the church and some of the clergy were holding them in bondage and denying them of their full participation in the decision making process of the church. They therefore sought to free themselves and the others. I think the ability of critical thinking which is a mark of high education has made the elites of the laity to be critical of the decisions and governing ability of the clergy in the E.P. Church.

They felt marginalized in issues directly affecting them. No wonder, the B S P F leadership was critical of the clergy in areas of polity, ethics and liturgy. They asked for better explanations for various policies and transparency in general administration where they have equally technical and expert knowledge as the administering clergy. The church had grown from a mere religious organization to a big industry in which all the stakeholders wanted to have a say. The political, economic and democratic waves nationwide have clearly influenced the church.

This assertion does not mean that the uneducated are insensitive to issues and their rights but rather sensitivity to issues and rights were heightened by the literate members. Thus the study attempts to show that the missionary heritage of education played an active role in the schism that occurred in the Church.

Some Outstanding Missionary Features that Influence Church Unity

The Missionary Era had some outstanding features, which according to this study kept the unity of the Church up to the 1960's. The author found out that the conflicts that occurred were partly as a result of the break down of these features.

The first was the vigorous Church planting policy of the Bremen Mission. The Missionaries groomed teachers and evangelists and sent them to the field to carry out evangelism throughout Eweland²⁰¹. The methods generally employed by the missions of those days were the establishment of a central station, daily morning worship services, Sunday services, baptismal instructions, street, market and palace preaching, visitations in homes and evangelistic tours for the establishing of outstations, regular visits and teachings in the schools²⁰². The E.P. Church claimed ownership of all churches because they bore its name. All congregations and agents were therefore expected to be loyal and faithful to the Church.

Secondly, evangelization of the non-Christians is the enterprise of the whole tradition of the Priesthood of all believers. Individuals or groups establish churches and invite the church to take over making it a church enterprise. The result was that no individual or groups lay claim to any neither church nor church property.

But after Ghana's independence when many of the E. P. Church members were scattered all over the country as government or self-employed workers, the urge to worship comfortably and meaningfully in ones own language, led to the formation of the E. P. Church in municipalities outside the Volta Region²⁰³. Mostly individuals and groups rather than the Church as a corporate institution did this. Groups like Christian Youth Builders (C. Y. B.) and the Church Choir began to lay claims to being the founders of particular congregations. The result was that the people who were converted, owe allegiance not to the Church but to groups and individuals. Although this development increased the church's membership, individuals and groups started exercising some influence on the church.

²⁰¹ Osei, E. (1984), op. cit. p. 108

The third feature was the E.P. Church's policy of long and thorough education and training of would be converts. Members of the laity therefore had a firm grip on Christian practices practices and responsibilities. During the Missionary era and up to the 1950's, would-be converts were given very thorough and long education in history, Church Order, Hymnology and its theologies, the liturgy and biblical teachings on Satan, death, and life after death, among others. One could only be a teacher in the Church Schools or be a Church agent only if he or she attended the Church's Seminary. Students for the Seminary were the best from the Church's Senior Schools. The Church's Catechists were chosen from the best long serving teachers in the Church Schools. During that period only the matured and long serving Catechists were recommended by Synod to be Ordained. There was enough literature to supplement their Christian education. The Church at that time did not sacrifice quality for quantity. Members both laity and clergy lived by their Christian calling.

The above mentioned missionary policies kept the E. P. Church together as one and a growing Church. The members knew what was expected of them and did that. They also knew their identity as Presbyterians and kept to it. During the First World War, when the Bremen Missionaries were deported the Ewe Mission had a set back in personnel as earlier discussed. From 1921 in the bid to match the expansion programme of the Church, there was some relaxation of the policies of the Bremen Mission, for example the Kpalime Synod proposed that Catechists Theodore Anku, Herman Nyalemegbe and Benjamin Amegashie be ordained. They were long serving catechists and deserved to be ordained. The study used them to show that from their time, the years of service before ordination started declining. In its bid to get more

agents for Church work, and after the First World War, the E. P. Church started to relax its policy of long and very rigorous training of its agents. By the end of the 80's training duration of some agents such as catechists and pastors was as short as nine months. The unity of the Church was somehow maintained until 1939 when the first major schism occurred²⁶. From then up to 1991, the Church experienced five major schisms.

This study has identified three other factors that generated the conflicts, which eventually resulted in the five schisms. These were ownership of properties (land and building), liturgical practices and personality conflicts. Each of these factors produced a pattern as shown in page 155, into which the various schisms fit. Some of the schisms like that of E.P. Church of Ghana fit into the pattern but with a difference. The study also found out that all the cases had more than one factor, some of which were linked to the missionary heritage of liturgy, theological position and church governance.

Conflicts Over Property.

This study had pointed out above that the Missionary era and the early part of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana, took the evangelization of the non-Christian and the planting of congregations upon itself but there were instances when groups and individuals evangelized and planted congregations of their own accord. One such instance that became a conflict area and resulted into a schism was the Tadzewu congregation established wholly by Womevu as described in Chapter Three. The important aspects that need mentioning here are the ones of the Ownership factor.

²⁶ Rev. Andreas Adu, one of the students of the Western School in Germany was chosen by Rev. Burg as his successor and head of the congregation in 1921 in French mandated Togo.

These are:

- a) The Church as wholly established by an individual effort.
- b) It was established without the support of Headquarters.
- c) Founder being a member of the Ewe Presbyterian Church organized it along E. P. Church lines and voluntarily put it under the guidance and supervision of the Church.
- d) Founder wielded greater influence over the said congregation.
- e) As the congregation grew, the Church tried to supervise and control it.
- f) Conflict resulted over how much influence the founder should exercise, his accountability to the Church and how he organized the congregation in consonance with the Church's tradition and policies.
- g) Since the establishment of congregation was due to the founder's sole effort and under his control, the founder became independent of the mother Church by changing the name of the congregation involved and started an independent church when there was a conflict between him and the mother church.

Using the above features as a measure, Wovenu's Iadzewu, Doh's Etordome, Amedzro's Blengo Prayer Groups and Ateigar's New Town Congregation fall under this category and pattern. Each however, had some variations. Each of the above groups was not started solely by individual efforts without the support of the E. P. Church Headquarters, nor were they commissioned by the Church to do it. However, it was only Iadzewu and Accra New Town, which were established from the onset as churches in line with E. P. Church traditions. Doh and Amedzro established prayer groups within an existing E. P. Church congregation. The four founders again fell under the above description in the control of the groups. The Church's attempt to control them at a point in time created a controversy over conformity with the Church's tradition and policies and they went away with sections of what they had established. There was no compromise in these conflicts.

Wovenu and Atiegar started their respective Churches all by themselves without help from the Central Church. Both had problems with the Church and broke away from the E.P. Church to form their present churches. The results of their break, however, differed. While Wovenu won the claim to the Tadzewu Church he started and its property, Atiegar lost his claim to the Accra New Town Church and its property. Wovenu won his claim because he had legal documents supporting his claim but Atiegar lost his for he could not support his claim in the court of law with legal documents of ownership. This should be a lesson to all the congregations, (not only of the E.P. Church) to acquire legal documents on all their property in the name of the Central Church.

Liturgical Practices

The second factor that contributed to the conflicts in the Church resulting in schisms was liturgical practices of the groups and the Church. The fact that the E. P. Church belongs to the Presbyterian family of the Reformed tradition gives it an identity. Its hymns and hymn singing, liturgy and way of worship and its administrative structure identify the Church.

The study found out that the Church had conflicts with the first four groups over their doctrinal practices in the areas of mode or the way they prayed, and some religious observances they practised. Concerning this factor, it was the Church that attacked the doctrinal practices of these groups that it felt were not in consonance with the Reformed beliefs as mentioned in Chapter Two. For example, observance of food and sexual taboos. The Church, in each instance, was opposed to innovation in hymnology and way of praying so as to preserve the status quo of the Reformed Tradition. The groups, on the other hand, felt the need for a change in the liturgical practices of the Church so as to meet the spiritual needs of its members. The groups, except Atiegar's, were accused by the Church of the following:



- a) loud group praying;
- b) practices of religious taboos that were similar to African traditional taboos such as sex and food prohibitions
- c) the use of religious artifacts like holy water , special candles for ritual purposes; materials that the Reform Tradition does not approve of.
- d) the practice of exorcism (deliverance).

Again, except Atiegar, the leaders of the accused groups defied the church's threats and continued with the said practices since they believed they were biblically based. The Church reacted to their actions as acts that were contrary to the traditions of the Church. In each case the Church issued Pastoral letters excommunicating the leaders and their followers. The affected leaders reacted to their expulsions by declaring their independence of the Church, adopted new names and adjusted their doctrines and polity to suit their new identities. Some later came to friendly terms with the E. P. Church as in the case of Wovenu, while some were on casual and friendly terms; that is, they co-existed with the E. P. Church as in the case of the White Cross Society and the Lord's Pentecostal Church. However, Christ Evangelical Mission and the E. P. Church of Ghana are still at variance with the E. P. Church.

The B. S. P. F. fell under the doctrinal Factor as the others but in a different way. While it was the Church that accused the other groups of controversial doctrinal practices, the B. S. P. F. was the first to accuse the Church and its leaders of doctrinal practices that contradict the Reformed tradition that it was purported to be upholding; practices that they felt were unscriptural and untraditional. Although they used (and still use) African drums, they accused Rev. Dzobo of introducing drum forms, like "Gabada," which are associated with African Traditional worship.

The B. S. P. F. felt a strong need for deeper spirituality and devotional life and worship. It therefore saw the inculturation policies of Rev. Dzobo, the then Moderator, as, going back to heathen practices that both the missionaries and the Bible advised against. Another section of the Church, however, believed that a genuine effort to interpret the gospel in traditional molds was being thwarted. Then still another group especially in Germany, which had experienced the excessive nationalism which was manifested in the Nazi period, feared that an extremist nationalistic Christianity might emerge. The "Melegbe" theology of Dzobo was the prominent feature in this doctrinal controversy.

In his theological declaration, Dzobo sought to establish that authentic traditional African beliefs and practices were not opposed to the basic tenets of the Christian faith. It attempted to distinguish between genuine African world views and beliefs and European "diabolization" of these, and advocated the prediabolized ideals reflected in great moral and religious values which were at par with the truly Christian ideals. With the above axiom, Dzobo sought to link the Christian Gospel to African indigenous ideals. He was of the view that some African proverbs and symbolization were appropriate for portraying African Christian viewpoints, and in combination with traditional Christian symbols, they portrayed a true African expression of the Christian faith. One such symbol was the "Mele agbe" ("I am alive) which consisted of the Christian cross with the "Gye Nyame" (Except God or Only God) embossed on it. According to Dzobo this symbol represents "Affirmative African Christianity". The other symbol, which was more controversial, was the cross with a snake encircling the intersecting section of the two bars. The snake had its tail in its mouth. According to Dzobo, this symbol is called 'Mefo hee' (I have resurrected!). He claims that the snake is a rejuvenation symbol, especially among the Fon in Benin.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Dzobo, N.K., *Op. Cit.*, p. 9

To him the Ewe tradition and culture contained many positive elements that must be incorporated in the Christian worship. While the "melagbe theology" embraced the theology of the Godhead and resurrection, it denied the existence of the Devil as pietistic superstition.

Most communicants of the E. P. Church at the local level share with the B. S. P. F., the belief that traditional religion is the realm of Satan. (This was the pietistic teaching discussed in chapter 2). The group thus opposed Dzobo's integration of traditional elements as diabolical. It therefore took it upon itself, as a revival group, to protect the Church from sliding back into traditional practices. As discussed earlier, they taught at Bible Study Classes, crusades and conventions against the practices. Some members of the E. P. Church, in the West Volta Presbytery had a meeting with the Moderator, Rev. Dzobo at the Trinity College, on 24th June 1988 on the "Melagbe" and other doctrinal issues like the concept of the existence of demons. He explained that his "Melagbe" theology was not, "a confession theology" but only academic and denied making pronouncements of sin and demons being unreal.

That forum was an attempt by a section of the E. P. Church to use dialogue, a traditional African mechanism of conflict resolution. They met the Rt. Rev. Dzobo, on a neutral ground, to find solutions to the problems facing the E. P. Church, Ghana. The attempt failed to achieve the result the said group desired but they all the time conveyed their feelings and desires to the then Moderator.

Constitutional Factor

The constitutional issue as a factor of conflict in the E. P. Church exacerbated only the B. S. P. F. conflict with the Church Executive. While they were hoping that Dzobo and his "Melagbe" and other doctrinal issues would come to an end with the end of his tenure of office, a purported amended constitution was published and distributed in the E. P. Church. It contained a clause, which had to do with the tenure of office of the Moderator and the Synod

Clerk. Whereas the 1975 draft constitution had stipulated that a person could be eligible for re-election for another term of four years only, the 1980 version stated that a person could be eligible for re-election as long as he was capable of holding office. Many felt that this change was made without the authorization of neither the National Synod of the church nor the Joint Synod of Ghana and Togo. They felt that it was wrong for the same person to perpetuate himself in Church leadership and that two terms of office were enough. Several attempts have been made by individuals, Presbyteries and the Pastors' Association, to the Synod Committee to remove this controversial clause in Article 30, but to no avail.

In January, 1984, the Pastors' Association disagreed with this clause on the tenure of office as in the 1980 Constitution and resolved that the Moderator and Synod Clerk should hold office for at most, two terms, that is, at most eight year's duration.²⁴⁸ This resolution was passed on to the Executive for inclusion on Synod Agenda. But it never came up. The failure of the resolution of the Pastor's Association at Synod confirmed the B. S. P. F's fear that there was a collusion to sidetrack the constitution. The Church executive by its act of overlooking the resolution of the Clergy, the association of the Church's "teaching elders," had undermined the importance of the issue. It had thus contributed to the actions that followed.

It is not unconvincing to accept the assertion of the B S P F that there was a collusion by Rev. Dzobo to sidetrack the constitution in order to serve a third term of office as the Moderator. They could even assert that the Moderator manipulated the process of the earlier amendment. Even if the church leaders claim that the Executives of the church constitute the legitimate body to make policies for the church, they cannot be insulated from manipulation by the Moderator. There was a clear indication of lack of trust and faith in the executive by a section of the church membership, championed by the six "concerned members" supported by the B S P F.

²⁴⁸ Pastors' Association Minutes, January 1984

At the June 1988 meeting with Dzobo some members of the West Volta Presbytery of the F.P. Church attempted to resolve the constitutional crisis through dialogue but failed. In another attempt at the use of dialogue they asked for the appointment of an independent investigation committee, which the Moderator felt was unnecessary. In reaction to the Church's alleged unconstitutional actions a group, called the "Revolutionary Guards," demonstrated against the Church and its executive at Ho, on 30th June. They presented a Resolution to the Executive asking them to resign their posts of office. It was alleged that it was the B.S.P.F. that organized the Ho demonstration, based on the fact that all the laity who met the Moderator at Trinity College were members of the Fellowship. It was clear from then, the 30th June, 1988, that the Executive and the B. S. P. F. were opposed to each other over religious values. In the 10th Anniversary souvenir of the B. S. P. F. 1988, it was stated, "He (Satan) has so far been successful to set some of the Clergy against the Lay Organizers of the group."²⁰⁹ The two parties engaged in verbal arguments using the media as a tool to lash at each other about what each group felt was right and wrong in the Church. The involvement of the media in the conflict cost both parties because their accounts were exaggerated to attract market for the media houses. Six members of the B. S. P. F. called the "concerned members" turned to the courts as the last resort for getting a fair redress. This reaction to their alleged marginalization by the executive and its misapplication of the constitution was to seek redress at the Law Courts. This action demonstrated the determination and confidence of the "concerned members". They were determined to seek the court's help in restraining the Church from recognizing Dzobo as the Moderator and again from holding office as the duly-elected Moderator.

The search by a section of the Church for appropriate application of the Church Order became a factor of conflict between the concerned group and the Church's leadership. This conflict eventually led to a split in the Church in 1991.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*

Personality Factor:

Another factor that led to conflicts that consequently resulted into the split of the Church at various periods was the personalities of some individuals who became influential from time to time. In the life of the Church at various locations, were men and women of special qualities, people who played influential roles in their various communities, people who exercised commanding power over seemingly hopeless situations. These special acts made them prominent and out-standing, people who attracted following. Their dreams, goals, and reactions to issues and people made them controversial. They naturally came into conflict with existing authorities, orders and/or individuals or groups. They were thus looked upon as innovative because of their special contributions. The study has noted that the personalities of the leaders of the Church during the conflict periods and the local leaders of the involved locations equally precipitated the various conflicts.

The first conflict of Tadzewu occurred in 1942 when Rev. B. S. Amegashie was Moderator and Rev. C. G. Baeta was Synod Clerk. Wovenu worked within the period under Reverends E. W. Tamakloe and D. K. Ametefe who were then District Pastors at Abor. Wovenu was endowed with organizational and leadership abilities. His experiences as a Postal Agent, a prison warden and a mines clerk had no doubt re-enforced these potentials in him. He knew his goals and worked hard to achieve them. In Chapter three, it was shown how he came and transformed the Old Tadzewu with poor social amenities into a vibrant, self supporting community with amenities that made life pleasant and provided more enjoyment. He was sensitive to the needs of his people and found ways of supplying them. His training as a warden and a miner no doubt fortified his sense of discipline. His life was regarded as a model to follow and it naturally won him his followers' respect and devotion. His 'dream' and great foresight made him to legally acquire the land on which he established his community. On the other hand it showed that right from the beginning, Wovenu was not establishing an E. P. Church but a

community for himself. If he intended to acquire the property for the Church he would have acquired it in the Church's name, instead he acquired it in his name. During the conflict as described in Chapter three, he showed his opponents that he was well informed and knew his rights. After his break, he was not resentful but soon made friends with the mother church. For the fact that his break was not retaliatory could also be attributed to the attitude of the leadership of the Church towards him and his followers. There were no records of ugly reactions of Amegashie and Baeta towards Wovenu during the conflict and after the division. This conflict was viewed officially under liturgical differences. From the author's point of view however, Wovenu left the E. P. Church because he felt he had the gift of healing. The Church did not worry about his split because of his endorsement of polygamy and ritual sacrificing but, all the same, the church had failed to deal with the emerging issue of Pentecostalism. This issue came up in the other conflicts in varied forms and intensities.

The conflicts of Doh, Amedzro and Atiegar occurred under the Moderatorship of Rev. E. K. Galevo, who was a typical German-trained with its characteristic assertiveness. Using the German rule of law, his administration used the order of excommunication to silence the separatists. He sent Atiegar to court at Hohoe for distributing publication that he felt was a threat to the peace and unity of the Church. Apart from the gifts of healing possessed by Doh and Amedzro there was no record that they displayed any peculiar gifts that would attract a large following. The two groups did not expand beyond their local boundaries. The two founding fathers died and their places taken up by more enterprising leaders. Atiegar differed from the other leaders who led splits in his resilience. He has a high organizational ability taking into account his ability to establish an urban church as the Accra New Town E. P. Church. He controlled the Church single-handedly from 1955 to 1964. He displayed a high sense of judgment when he purchased a site for a permanent building and the establishment of a school. He made good use of his trip to Britain to visit Bremen. He was an astute scholar as displayed in

his literary reaction to his expulsion by the Church. These qualities endeared him to some of his members but he was said to be also very assertive by others. A section of the youth in the church accused him of being bossy. This characteristic made him to take the law into his own hands as he displayed during his conflict with the New Town Church and the E. P. Church as a whole. At one time he locked the members out claiming ownership of the Church building. In 1964, he distributed anti-E. P. Church literature all over Ghana. His actions and counter actions of the church executive of that time generated conflict in the Church.

At the beginning of Chapter Three it was asserted that conflicts are normal human phenomenon because of differences in biological inheritance, learned behaviour, and the physical environment. Conflicts, however, become problems when they generate divisions. During the conflict period some events or factors were responsible for a division to occur. Solomon in his wisdom foresaw the need for gentle reaction in times of misunderstanding when he said in Proverbs 15:1 "A gentle answer quietens anger, but a harsh one stirs it up"

In all the conflicts, the Church Executive has been accused of not demonstrating a high sense of diplomacy. The A. R. S. felt the Church should have used dialogue to resolve that conflict but instead it adopted the policy of intimidation, which is undiplomatic. The A. R. S. leadership contended that the Church Executive in 1942, after the school grant affair, tried to transfer Wovenu from Tadzewu and when that failed they imposed some conditions on him. He refused to comply and left the Church. The Church on its part said Wovenu's liturgical practices and theological teachings were at variance with that of the E. P. Church. The E. P. Church feared that if Wovenu's practices were not stopped they would spread throughout the entire Church and would eventually make the E. P. Church lose its Presbyterian and Reformed identity.

The reasons of the two sides were the immediate causes: The author found out that Wovenu would on no account hand over his Tadzewu property to the Church anyway. From the day he purchased the Tadzewu land, in my view, he envisioned his ownership of a new and

prosperous Christian community of his making. He could have bought the land in the name of the Church if he meant to establish an E. P. Church. He started it all alone and according to his own setting. Rev. E. W. Tamakloe of Abor District invited him into the E. P. Church. When Rev. D. K. Ametete, Tamakloe's successor, would not see things Wovenu's way, trouble started and he withdrew from the Church with his property.

The Church on its part believed Wovenu was using some hidden powers, which were anti-Christ. The Church also did not accept Wovenu's endorsement of polygamy. The author found out in the field that the immediate cause of the Tadzewu conflict was Wovenu's practices, which were similar to African Traditional practices. The Church executive did not change their approach in the conflicts that followed the Tadzewu one but continued the policy of threats; and that is, the use of the policy of excommunication and intimidation. They used the expulsion from communion as a weapon to subject members who disagreed with them, to submission, as the last resort. The isolations and threats, instead of bringing the desired submission rather "hardened" those involved and they often did what the Church intended to prevent. In the case of the B. S. P. F., the Church used restrictions, prohibition and finally ex-communication to stop them from their practices but each threat strengthened rather than weakened them and eventually the inevitable, a schism, occurred.

In instances where individuals or members of the conflict groups tried to approach the executive for dialogue on the issues, they were not taken seriously. It is asserted in Chapter Three that Abokuma and Amedzro accompanied by their assistants went to the Church Headquarters at Ho for verification on practices that were undesirable to the Church. They returned not satisfied with the explanations given. Amedzro and his followers therefore decided to break away from the E. P. Church. Similar treatment was given to the "concerned members" when they met Rev. Dzobo, the Moderator, on issues bothering them. If they were treated more humanely, and if their values were considered, the affairs would have taken a milder turn

It is alleged that the June 30th, 1988 demonstration at Ho was to register the dis-satisfaction of the "silent majority". The Church again did not use diplomacy and dialogue but sought the help of the police and later the "defenders of faith". The use of force to meet force made the conflict to intensify and this resulted in the eventual schism. If gentle answers and reactions were used in dialogues the history of the E. P. Church would have differed from what had been written today.

Pastors and Conflict in the Church

The last causative factor that encouraged the split in the B. S. P. F. conflict was the partisan role of the Clergy. The study showed in Chapter Two that in accordance with the Reformed Tradition, the pastor is a "teaching elder". By his call and training, his primary duty was to teach and preach Christ so that members who were not educated nor trained in Christian practices would learn the right things from him. Members of the congregation look upon pastors as role models as pupils look to their teachers. First, the Pastors' Association failed to follow up their resolution sent to the Church Executive to be brought up during the 1984 Synod. From January when they sent the Resolution, and up to August when Synod took place, was enough time to pursue their case. If it had come up at Synod as asked for, the problem would have been solved and the crisis averted. Again, the very association that resolved that the Moderator and Synod Clerk hold office for at most two terms of eight years duration, side stepped their very resolution and voted Dzobo for a third term. Their inconsistency as "teaching elders" had cost the Church and their vocation.

It is reported that thirteen pastors who attended the B. S. P. F. Rally at Anloga signed a memorandum addressed to the Moderator requesting him to step down. By that memorandum, the thirteen pastors had taken sides, and had affiliated themselves with the B. S. P. F. The Fellowship therefore had a support from a section of the Clergy. The action naturally boosted

the confidence of the fellowship as mentioned above. The partisan role of the Clergy, both ways, had encouraged the split because each side would not lose the vital services of the Clergy in case of an eventual split, which eventually happened. If the fellowship had no support from the Clergy, the split even if it occurred would not have been as popular as in the present case. The preceding four splits did not have the popularity the B. S. P. F. split had because of lack of this important support that carried along its concomitant followers of the supporting pastors.

emanating from the foregoing, it is evident that the conflicts and their resultant splits were caused not by a single factor but by interplay of factors: remote and immediate. The following paragraphs would explain this contention further. We could relate the various issues of the conflicts in the E. P. Church to the context within which the church operates. All the Missionary established churches have to grapple with the new wave of Pentecostal and charismatic enthusiasms.

The E P Church has her share of what the orthodox churches are facing. The issues of conflict fell under the following broad labels:

- a. Liturgy: Mostly related to immediate causes
 - Healing
 - Taboos
 - Prayers
- b. Polity Mostly relating to underlying causes
 - Organisation
 - Administration
 - Constitution
 - Education
 - Ethnicity
 - Founders of Congregations

- Charismatic Leadership
- Notions of power and authority

c. **Doctrinal:** Ideological Bedrock Reformed Tradition against Pentecostalism/Charismatism.

Table 3: Table of Groups involved in the issues of the conflict

Groups	Liturgy	Ethics	Polity	Doctrinal
A. R. S.	X	X	X	X
W. C. S.	X		X	X
I. P. C.	X	X	X	X
P. E. C.		X	X	
C. E. M.	X	X	X	X
B. S. P. F.	X	X	X	X

LEGEND

- A R S - Apostles Revelation Society
- W C S - The White Cross Society
- I P C - The Lord's Pentecostal Church
- P E C - Presbyterian Evangelical Church
- C E M - Christ Evangelical Mission
- B S P F - The Bible Study and Prayer Fellowship



A look at the issues of the conflicts in the E.P. Church and the groups involved in the conflicts shows following features:

- a. Core issues of the conflict reveal the nature of charismatic spirituality in a Reformed Church. One would think that the Evangelical and pietistic character of Reformed Tradition and the open polity of Presbyterianism would be hospitable to charismatic flares. Contrawise, the magisterium and closed polity in Roman Catholic Tradition should be enigmatic pretensions. In real life, however things work out differently. The Reformed Tradition with its open polity was rather unaccommodative to charismatic enthusiasts while the Roman Catholic Tradition is more open to charismatism.
- b. It is logical, from the events described in the study, to say that doctrinal factors contributed in a great measure to four of the identified conflicts involving Wovenu, Doh, Amedzro and the B. S. P. F. It even showed slightly in the conflict involving Atiegar. This factor therefore is a prominent causative factor in addition to its prominence as an issue of conflict, doctrinal reasons made the conflicts unresolvable. The parties involved in the conflicts could not compromise their doctrinal beliefs and practices pushing their proponents into fanaticism.
- c. Evidences in the events also showed that issues of polity were involved in all the conflicts described. It is therefore clear that good governance is not important only in the political field but in the religious field as well. It showed that church governance has moved away from a mere religious organization to a big industry. Disagreement came when the laity felt the clergy and the administrators were not transparent in their administration. Conflicts arose when the laity felt they were not involved in decision-making, policies that affect them directly. Atiegar's administration was challenged. The six "concerned members" challenged Rev. Dzobo's administration of the E. P. Church as a whole.

- d. Except Doh's White Cross Society, the issue of ethics featured in the conflicts of Wovenu, Amedzro, Atiegar and Dzobo's administration. There were issues of financial accountability, moral degeneration and personality clashes
- e. The study also found out that except the P. E. C. of Buem Krachi, liturgical, and pastoral issues such as healing, taboos and loud praying featured as factors of conflict and are the immediate causes of the conflict.

A critical look at the issues of the conflicts shows that no one issue could be identified as the main cause of a conflict nor the resultant split of the church at any one time but a number of issues, some acting as immediate, others as underlying causes; one leading to the other.

SUGGESTIONS

In order to avoid future divisions in the Church as a result of mismanagements of conflicts, which are bound to occur, any way, I wish to humbly suggest the following:

There is the need for intensive teaching and learning in the Church. The study has found out that although the Church can boast of a large Christian membership, the quality of Christian life of the members is far below real Christian standard. This was demonstrated by the actions of members of the two parties in the 1991 conflict where there were violent clashes in some congregations. It is clear that a large number of today's members of the E. P. Church are ignorant about the constitution of the church. Furthermore many do not know what it means to be a member of the Reformed family as well as being a member of the E.P. Church.

This trend, I believe, could be attributed to either lack of effective teaching in the Church by the pastors or unwillingness of members to learn. Pastors and Catechists are trained at Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon and E.P. Seminary, Peki. I suggest that the Church should devote more attention to the teaching of her pastors than what is going on now. A lecturer responsible for studies in the Reformed Traditional and the Practices of the E.P. Church should

be attached to the Trinity Seminary. This will ensure that the pastors of the E.P. Church are well equipped with the necessary knowledge of the Church and her practices. The curriculum of the Peki Seminary should also give adequate space and time to teaching about the Church and her tradition. I believe once the pastors and Catechists are well equipped with knowledge about the Church and her traditions, they will be able to pass the knowledge on to their members.

The Christian Education Department should undertake serious teaching campaigns throughout the Church. The Catholic Church, Ghana, dubbed such a programme "The Biblical Apostolate"²⁰⁷ (Teaching the scriptures). St. Jerome was quoted to affirm that, "Ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ".²¹¹ The ignorance of the characteristics of Christ, such as love, brotherhood and forgiveness in my opinion, is the result of members' lack of thorough knowledge of the Bible. Even though the B. S. P. F. had revived Bible Study in the E. P. Church it must be vigorously and systematically encouraged and sustained from the Sunday Schools to all the Adult groups.

There should be frequent workshops, debates and symposia on the History and Constitution of the E. P. Church to ensure the mastering of the former and a clearer understanding of the latter.

The study noted that prayer groups established in the Church, as in all the mainline churches among others, aimed at revitalising the spirituality of the members of the entire church - an internal renewal. The E.P. Church as at the close of 1999 has an adult membership of ninety-two thousand, seven hundred and fifty-nine. From my ten years experience as a pastor of the Church, this number is made up of a large number of people who, I may say, are not committed to Christ: people who take the Church as a "social club." A large number are people who bear Christian names through baptism and come to church when they please. I suggest the Church should embark on a vigorous evangelisation programme. In 1990, the E.P. Church

²⁰⁷ *Evangelical Church of Ghana*, 1991, Op. Cit. p. 27:57)

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

established an Evangelism Committee. This committee should come out with a pragmatic evangelistic programme for the entire Church. The Presbyteries, Districts and congregations should form Evangelism Committees to effect the national programme. There should be regular appraisal and updating of meetings of these committees. The author has noted that until the establishment of the B. S. P. F. the E.P. Church became very complacent; it was content with its Sunday Chapel preachings as a means of reaching members and non-members. The Church should encourage the Christian Youth Builders and the E.P. Students Union to embark on outreach programmes to complement the teachings in the church. The groups mentioned above should visit truant members in their homes, pray and read the Bible with them. They should visit the sick often than they do to make them feel loved and accepted.

To complement the evangelization drive, I also suggest that the church prepare a policy for evangelism. The proposed policy will ensure relative uniformity of what is taught and guide pastors on how long this should be taught. Presently each congregation decides the content and duration of training for confirmands and would be Presbyters. In this process these congregations sacrifice quality for quantity, for example, in preparing for confirmation some congregations are often more interested in increasing their members numerically rather than producing quality Christians; and the result partly accounts for the conflicts in the Church, misunderstanding of issues and mis-application of procedures.

The Twenty-first century E. P. Church should strive more for quality rather than quantity. The Church should embark on a very thorough education and training of both the Clergy and Laity as during the missionary era. People may argue that times have changed but the word of God remains the same. The old religious literature on the history of the Church and Christian life should be updated and reprinted to supplement the educational drive.

Conflicts are natural human phenomena because humankind is an aggregate of people of varied background, mentality and emotion. One way of conflict management is a good

communication medium. The conflicts and divisions experienced in the Church were partly the result of lack of or inefficiency of communication mediums in the church. Either of these produces distrusts, speculations, rumour mongering, exaggeration and agitations. There is now a Publication Desk at the Headquarters under a Communication Officer (C. O.). This officer is charged to undertake the publication of the church's monthly magazines. These are good avenues of informing and educating members of the church and the public at large about church policies, directives, projects and events. It is also a platform for expressing views, criticizing, analysing and suggesting. But publications of papers are not enough means of passing on information or educating.

I suggest that the church make adequate provisions to sustain its Information Desk because it is the mouthpiece of the church and a channel of receiving information from members and the general public. It would then serve as a vital link between the Executive and the entire church and the public.

I suggest that the information Desk at the Head Office should have local, district and Presbytery Officers thus establishing a complete information network in the church. This network, the "Information Clearing House" of the Church, should sensitize its members and the general public on church polity, policies, directives, projects, events, proposals and the movement of the leaders. This role makes the Church and its activities transparent, removing mistrust and establishing confidence and co-operation. The Communication Officer should be the Public Relations Officer, the information broker of the Church. He should be in a position to know which information to pass on to the Media Houses, in view of the role they played in the 1988 to 1991 conflict, their exaggeration and sensationalism and the effects on the conflicts and the factions involved.

To complete the effectiveness of the Information Desk in conflict management, I suggest that the Executive should not shy away from problems that face the church but should confront

them in an open manner. Many times, it is evident that they shy away from the Church's problems delaying their action to the problems when they should have acted promptly and decisively. This practice gives room for rumours and deterioration of relationships. They must avoid resorting to strategies of solving problems rather than tackling them in their initial stages. They should admit their failures and accept advice and criticisms in good faith. Leadership should practice the habit of interaction more with members at casual or social gatherings rather than always at official functions. Members will express their views and sentiments better on such occasions and leaders would hear more about themselves and the Church than they do know.

To avoid future strife in ownership of Church property and assets as in Wovenu, Atlegar and BSPF cases, all congregations must document all their property in the name of the Church.

Prayer and Fasting

I suggest that the E. P. Church, Ghana embark upon a serious prayer and fasting programmes twice a year, at the beginning and at the end of each year and ask for spiritual guidance and empowerment. The Church is a spiritual institution and it cannot do without prayer and fasting. I need not cite instances of the effectiveness of prayer and fasting in human endeavours not to mention the struggle against powers stronger than humankind. The whole Church should pray and fast before synods, elections and important gatherings.

Prayer and fasting should always precede elections for God's Spirit to select leaders for His Church as He did in the Apostolic Era. Who leads the Church must be taken seriously because the effect of leadership on the ruled is as great as illustrated in Proverbs 9: 2 which states, "when the righteous are in authority the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people mourn". In my opinion, the power of God is taken for granted in the E. P. Church. The Church is His, therefore, He will take care of it. Thus we neglect the human role as, "channels

of God's power". The Church should avail itself to the power of the Holy Spirit. It should be willing to recognize the presence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and to encourage members who have these gifts to use them

The E. P. Church is putting in place policies and structures that would enable it to implement Decentralization in the Church polity. It has appointed Presbytery Chairpersons who are to fully supervise the Presbyteries. Each Presbytery is to build offices and residences to accommodate the presbytery personnel and equipment for the decentralization policy to fully take off. I suggest that the presbyteries encourage their respective congregations to pool their resources and put up the structures that will facilitate the fast implementation of decentralization in the Church. This suggestion is based on the fact that too much work is laid on the Church executive and the full implementation of decentralization will ensure power sharing and efficiency in the administrative machinery of the Church. This will enable Presbytery Chairpersons to deal promptly and effectively with problems and conflicts rather than waiting for the Executive to solve them. The decentralization policy would also involve many experts who hitherto were not being used in the Church.

Another important area of education that the Church must seriously research into and effect its findings to improve the quality of its worship of God as Africans, is inculturation. Inculturation can be defined as, "the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people in the church in such a way that this experience will not only express itself in elements of this culture so as to create new unity and communion within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal."²²

The process of inculturation is seen as a two-way process. First, the way in which the Christian life and message influence the cultural context of a particular church as has been referred to as

²² 212 Eccles. in Ghana, Op. Cit. P. 47

inculturation ad extra.²¹³ Secondly, the impact of a given culture on the way the Christian life and message are articulated, lived and passed on has been called inculturation ad intra.²¹⁴

Worship and liturgy are special fields for Inculturation. The E. P. Church is alleged to be "dull and unspiritual." Dullness and unspirituality are alien to the African because every aspect of the African's life involves active religious expressions in the fields, at home and at worship.²¹⁵ The African thus feels alien at worships that exclude drumming, dancing, clapping and rhythmic expressions of the body. Since Africans are "notoriously religious" they will naturally protest against dull religious worship sessions that do not allow them the chance to express their Africanness. In the inculturation process, however, great care must be taken so as to let the Christian message influence the cultural elements and practices. Above all the Holy Spirit should be behind all that the Church does. One area of the conflicts in the E. P. Church was worship and liturgy. The missionary concept of the African and his culture as agents and practices of the Devil have become a legacy in the E. P. Church. Thus Wovenu, Doh, Amedzro and the B. S. P. F. were accused of drumming, dancing, clapping and loud praying. It accused them of practising "strange liturgical practices". The conflict in worship and liturgical practices in the E. P. Church was the inability of the Church to integrate fully the African culture in its Christian practices. First, as the Ewe language has been an effective tool of evangelizing the Ewes and people around them, the study suggests that the other facets of the Ewe Culture and the Ghanaian Culture in general; symbols, music, folklore, maxims and proverbs be used as vessels in carrying the Christian message to its converts in order to allow the Christians to express their religiosity as Africans within the African Culture. There should be careful adaptation and thorough teaching of members before effecting the adaptation.

²¹³ Ibid
²¹⁴ Ibid

²¹⁵ Mbiti John S., *African Religion and Philosophy*, 1969, London Heineman Educational Books Ltd. p. 1

Since it is on trial, the workshops and symposia to be organized would help the Liturgy Committee to make the necessary corrections and to update it. In addition to its exposure, I also suggest that the Executive put the acceptance proposals up at the next Joint Synod for it to be accepted by the two Churches and to be used. I suggest that the Church Relations, Theology and Research Department help enrich the new liturgy by researching into the Ghanaian symbols and artefacts that could positively contribute to the liturgy and worship of the E. P. Church.

The study has shown that the central issue of all the conflicts under review in the E.P. Church was the issue of charismatic phenomenon and the desire for spiritual renewal by members of the E.P. Church. Wherever this need arises a movement comes up to solve the crises either in the lives of individual members or in the entire church. The breaking away of the five groups and the continuous functioning of churches formed by these groups showed that they posed positive challenges to the Church.

It is also a fact that the E.P. Church throughout the years under review - 1939 to 1991, has not made room to accommodate this phenomenon despite the recurrent desire for spiritual renewal, divine healing and deliverance. From evidence in the study, the E.P. Church through these years has countered the charismatic movements by negative opposition and suppression.²¹⁶

Abamfo Ofori Atiemo in his work, "The Road to Renewal" in Aliens At the Gate of Sodom and Other Reflections, Chapter Two page forty gave the three following reasons why mainline churches played down on Spiritual renewal:

- (a) The fear of losing her identity (In the case of the E. P. Church, her Presbyterian and Reformed identity).
- (b) The fear of losing the Churches familiar structures and ways of doing things (The E. P. Church's structured liturgy, constitution and belief systems)

²¹⁶ Ofori Atiemo, Ofori, "Charismatic Renewal in Mainline Churches: The Case of the Bible Study and Prayer Group of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana" (unpublished M. Phil. Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1994) pp. 179-180.



- (c) The fear losing the familiar roles in which she felt confident and competent. (Loss of authority and spiritual roles which were the domain of the clergy).²¹⁷

Since the charismatic phenomenon issue is a worldwide phenomenon, like the rest of her mainline neighbours of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Methodist Church of Ghana, the E.P. Church has to face this issue boldly and find a lasting solution to it. Church to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the movements as against that of the Church.

Fortunately, the Church has realised this need and has recently taken steps towards this direction. She has only to sustain it and be fully committed to following it through to a conclusion. The Church held the Fourth Theological Consultation, Togo, Germany and Ghana at Ho, from 23rd to 26th February, 1999. Its keynote address was on "God's Spirit and the Sunday Morning Worship - the challenge of the Charismatic Movements," delivered by Dr. Elom Dovlo, Head of the Department of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon. Another relevant topic of the Consultation which addressed the issue of charismaticism was "Challenge or Defiance, Charismatic Churches Do Hail Us." The consultation also treated First Corinthians Chapters Twelve to Fourteen, which deal with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and their uses. The topics of this Consultation added to other relevant materials on charismatics should be used intensively by a Study Committee, which the Church should set up. This committee should organise workshops and debates and come out with a report and recommendations to the E.P. Church to implement.

In his address, Dr. Dovlo said the quest of the consultation was the Challenge of the Charismatic Movements. He explained that a challenge means a critical examination of the E. P. Church to see the strengths and weaknesses revealed by Charismatic Movements. This is the

²¹⁷ Verrill, C. J. *Idem*, 1987, op. cit. (p.29-8)

task facing the E.P. Church and it should be taken seriously with total commitment. Referring to Atiemo's work, cited in this chapter, the E.P. Church should examine the following:

- (a) Her Christian sacraments, their strengths and weaknesses;
- (a) The effectiveness of the church's ministry of caring;
- (c) The church's approach to ministry.

The examination of the above will enable the church to take note of what have been left out and what the N.R.M.'s have which are missing in the E.P. Church that draws her members to the quest for renewals.

Atiemo stressed that revival in the church, which does not involve pastors, will remain at the margin of the church and will produce only a minimal impact. Taking this assertion seriously, I suggest that the Church and the Pastors Association should organise serious and thorough workshops, symposia and debates for the pastors on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Deliverance and Healing. In other words, the pastors, the Teaching Elders of the Church, should be educated on the challenges of charismatic to the E.P. Church. This re-education will change the pastors of the church, and echoing Atiemo again, from "Chapel priests" to "Real priests" who are prophets, leaders and healers for the Third Millennium Church.

Rev. Atiemo cited earlier in this Chapter said this about renewal within the mainline churches, which is aptly applicable to the E.P. Church, "Every genuine renewal must begin with dying to self (Matthew 10:39). And when we did we rise again in newness of life."²¹⁸ (John 12:24-25). The dying to self, he emphasised, is a must. The E.P. Church in order to ensure positive renewal must let the "oldman" (Colosians 3:9) to die; the old denominational identity, structures, routine roles, as Atiemo pointed out must die, they must undergo critical examination for renewal.

²¹⁸ See A.O. Sams, 1997, p. 267-31.

If Jesus were to be an Ewe, he would have used Ewe proverbs, stories and activities to illustrate his sermons and teachings. The Gospels would have used Ewe feasts, festivals, funerals and marriages. Jesus would have worn Ewe clothes and eaten Ewe food. Africans, the Ewes in this instance, should identify themselves with their culture in all spheres of life to the glory of God and the edification of humankind. For that matter, the Ewes have cultural contributions to make in the building up of the great Christian culture of the Universal family of God. In Acts 2, on the Day of Pentecost, it was not only Hebrew that was spoken but also all the languages of the then World. If the E. P. Church, Ghana, throws away its culture in favour of Western culture, at the final gathering of God's children as predicted by the Apostle John in Revelation 7:9:

.... There was an enormous crowd, no one can count all the people. They were from every race, tribe, nation and language....

Then the true Ewe tribe would be missing. The E. P. Church belongs to the Christian Council of Ghana, the All-African Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. It must therefore make a positive move towards contributing to these councils its rich culture in the areas of music, symbols and proverbs.

Schisms are neither new nor peculiar to the E.P. Church. But its occurrence weakens the affected Church. The Church is like the human body with the members as parts of the body. Schisms cut-off parts of the body of the Church. The five schisms of the E.P. Church have taken away many of the Church's human resources away. These have weakened the E.P. Church because the church has lost the functions of those who have left the E.P. Church.

Since the 1991 schism is the recent break, I appeal to the two E.P. Churches to open up and display a peaceful co-existence among themselves; and this will help forge peace and

development of the Volta Region in particular because the E.P. Church is traditionally linked with this region. The last prayer and desire of Our Lord Jesus Christ which states, "I pray that they may all be one" would be actualised when the two E.P. churches live in peace and love (John 17:11). They should forgive and forget.

They should forgive and forget the past and reconcile or at least live at peace with one another. They should remember this Ewe proverb and live by it, "Nuse le dekawowo me". (Unity is strength). But ideally, the two churches could unite since the problems of Dzobo and his "Melagbe" theology and the constitutional problems of tenure of office of the executive have been resolved.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview Schedule for Selected Members of the A.R.S., W.C., L.P.C., C.E.M. and the B.S.P.F.

A. General Information:

1. Age
2. Education
3. Occupation
4. Marital Status
5. Number of Wives
6. Number of Children
7. Place of residence
8. How long have you resided in this place?

B. Religious Persuasion:

9. What was your first church?
10. Did you change your church?
11. If yes, why did you change?
12. How did you get to know your present church?
13. How often do you attend this church?
14. Do you hold any leadership position in your church?
15. In your view, what important role does this church play in the lives of its members?
16. What is the belief of this church as regards to witchcraft, Satan and demons?
17. How does this church protect its members from the above spirit forces?
18. What are your views on the issues of witchcraft, Satan, demon and other evil forces?
19. Where will you seek help for yourself or your family in times of serious sickness and other misfortunes like barrenness and loss of work?

C. Church Relations:

20. How do you see your church in relationship to the E.P. Church?
21. What reasons do you attribute to the emergence of many charismatic churches since the 1980s?

D. General Comments:

22. What would you consider to be the greatest challenge the charismatic churches pose to the historic churches?
23. What would you say is the greatest challenge your church as a charismatic church face in Ghana today?

APPENDIX 2

Interview Schedule for some of the Past and Present Executive and some Selected Active and Members Retired Pastors of the E.P. Church

A. General Information:

1. Age
2. Education
3. Occupation
4. Marital Status
5. Number of Wives
6. Hometown

B. Religion Persuasion:

7. What is the religion of your father?
8. What is the religion of your mother?
9. How did you become a Christian?
10. Is this church your first?
11. If not, which was the first and why have you left the first church?
12. Mention by stages, the leadership positions you have held in this church.
13. What are the things you value most about this church?
14. In your view, what are the weaknesses of this church if any?
15. What are your church's attitude towards the belief in witchcraft, sooceros, satan, demons and other evil spirits?
16. What are your views on the above?
17. Where would you advice your members to seek help against evil spirits?
18. Is the Holy Spirit "in" or not "in" the E.P. Church? Support your answer with areas which it is present or absent.
19. What are your views as a leader about the gifts of the Holy Spirit? 1 Corinthians Chapter twelve, with special reference to speaking in tongues, prophecy, and healing?
20. Which of these gifts are given room for expression in your church?
21. In your view, which of the gifts are not given room for expression in the E.P. Church?
22. What are the effects, if any, of the inaccommodation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit on members and on the inaccommodating church?
23. What are your suggestions to correct these effects?

C. Church Relations:

24. How do you see the establishment of prayer groups in the historic churches, reference to the E.P. Church?
25. What would you say account for the emergence of many charismatic churches in Ghana in the 1980s?
26. What would you advice the E.P. Church to do so as to keep its members from going away to join charismatic churches?
27. What would you consider as the greatest challenge the charismatic phenomenon pose to the historic churches with particular reference to the E.P. Church?

APPENDIX 3

Interview Schedule for the Past and Present Leaders of the Churches which Separated from the E.P. Church, that is, the A.R.S., W.C.S., L.P.C., C.E.M. and E.P. Church of Ghana

A. General Information:

1. Age
2. Education
3. Occupation
4. Marital Status
5. Number of Wives
6. Hometown

B. Religious Persuasion:

7. What is the religion of your father?
8. What is the religion of your mother?
9. What is the religion of your spouse?
10. If you have children, do they belong to your church?
11. Did you belong to a church before this?
12. If yes, why did you change your church?
13. How did you get to know this church?
14. How did you become the leader?
15. In your view, what are the strengths of your church?
16. What do you consider as the weaknesses of your church?
17. What challenges does this church pose to the E.P. Church and other historic churches?
18. What challenges does this church face in Ghana today?
19. What is the church's attitude towards witchcraft, satan, demons and other evil forces?
20. Is this attitude in consonance with Biblical views?
21. How does this church help its members from attacks of witches, demons, satan and other evil powers?

C. Church Relations:

22. How would you on your church call or classify the E.P. Church type of churches?
23. How do you view prayer groups in the historical churches?
24. Do you think it is Biblical for your church to separate from the E.P. Church? (Support your answer with reasons)

D. Social Involvement:

25. How is your church beneficial to the Ghanaian society?

E. General Comments:

26. Suggest areas where you think your church and the historical churches, with special reference to the E.P. Church, can serve society together.
27. If there is an opportunity for your church to reunite with the E.P. Church, would you agree? (Give reasons for your answer)

Circular written by the Synod Clerk of the E.P. Church to all Pastors and Cathecists about the expulsion of members of the Etodome Prayer Group from the E.P. Church because of their doctrinal deviation. The circular is reproduced exactly as the original appears. The original could be found in the 1960 files of Blengo E.P. Church. The author has a photocopy of the original circular in his possession.

EVANGELIKA PRESBITERIA HAMA

Synod Clerk's Office,

P. O. Box 18,

Ho.

6th November, 1960.

Ref.No.CH/15/1-60.

WA OGBOPOMO KPLI

HAMEDZIKPOLAWO KATŪ.

Lolŵtewo,

ETODOME GBEDOPAHABOBO.

- - - Le Sinod Dononaha fe takpekpe si September 20 lla, 1960 na la wadoe bena wadoe Otu-Hamedoda, na nya siwo gbana la dai na niafo hametowo katŵ banar

"Evangelika Presbiteria Hama la nya Bremen Mission fe Hama si gome wodo anyi la fe 1847 na la fe tutudodzi. Hama sia fe Hama suwa katŵ-bla deka to Kristo-dzixosa deka, Kristo-dzixosa-guti-nufiafia deka, Mawasubosubo alo aalemadede-guti dode-deka kple Hamedoda deka sia kpakple Hametakpekpe ga la kple efo dononaha deka tonono na.

Hama sia si nya Kristo-Hama-si la xoxoxo na godoo la-fe akpaade la, kpo gusa be nya si Kristo guti nya-ta na la, naa se siwo ku de nufiafia, subosubo, tohaha kple Hama dzi dudu guti.

Amo deka nakpa na nua nufiafia kple wana bubawo gya Hama na na Sinod malŵ de adzi o.

Esi Etodome Gbedopahabobe manolawo la nufiafia kple wana bubawo nar va'hamea nae to la, Sinod Dononaha doe bena tao azŵ yina la, ale-be niafo hametowo katŵ-nalŵ-dononaha fe akpa si ku'pe dala guti na de sai; eye bena Hamedzikpolawo katŵ-nakpa egbo to nufiafia kple wana towa deka nagatra de Hama'ere o. Asesino katŵ malŵ be wano Hama-fe kpokple to la nufiafia kple wanao gome o la nanye bena ywode yewo'okuiwo da tao Evangelika Presbiteria Hama la na tao fe 1960-fe-quarter marloto sia na.

Mawu-guti nakpa de efa guti be si katŵ madaa gbebo fe dekananye-la de la putifafa fe nublanu la na to Gbebo deka, Afeta deka, Xode deka, Namutaidadeta deka kple Mawu deka si na si katŵ miebia deka le la lélé de sai sesie na. Afato la nana anyi kpli mi'katŵ.

1960

Handwritten signature
SYNOD CLERK.

5
is written by the Synod Clerk of the E.P. Church to all Pastors and Catechists of the Church about the expulsion of Rev. T.M. Simpri from the E.P. Church for his role in the Accra New Town E.P. Church conflict. The circular is reproduced exactly as the original appears. The original could be found in the files of the Accra New Town E.P. Church or also has a photocopy of the original circular in his possession. -

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Ref:ST/7/2-64.

TO ALL CONGREGATIONS

E.P. CHURCH

Synod Clerk's Office,

P.O. Box 18

Accra, Ghana, V.R.

25th April, 1964.

Dear Pastor/Catechist-in-Charge, MR. M.T. SIMPRI:

I have been instructed by Synod Committee to bring to your notice for announcement in your congregation that at its Emergency Meeting of 24th April, 1964, it voted that since Mr. Simpri did not comply with the request from the Executive or Synod Committee and other ministers to apologise for his part in dividing the Church of Accra New Town, and since his conscience does not allow him to work under the duly constituted authority of the Church, his name be stricken off the roll of Pastors of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church as from 1st. May, 1964.

He thereby loses all rights as an ordained minister of the Gospel.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,


E. F. BUCKEN,
Synod Clerk.

Copies to:
Mr. E.N. S. NAGAR, Accra.
Professor J.G. Bweta, Legon,
Principal of Higher Institutions, Ho, Aradigbo, Dabon, & Dabonko.
Medical Superintendents of Hospital, Womona & Aboakye.
General Secretary, Christian Council of Ghana.

Prepared by:



