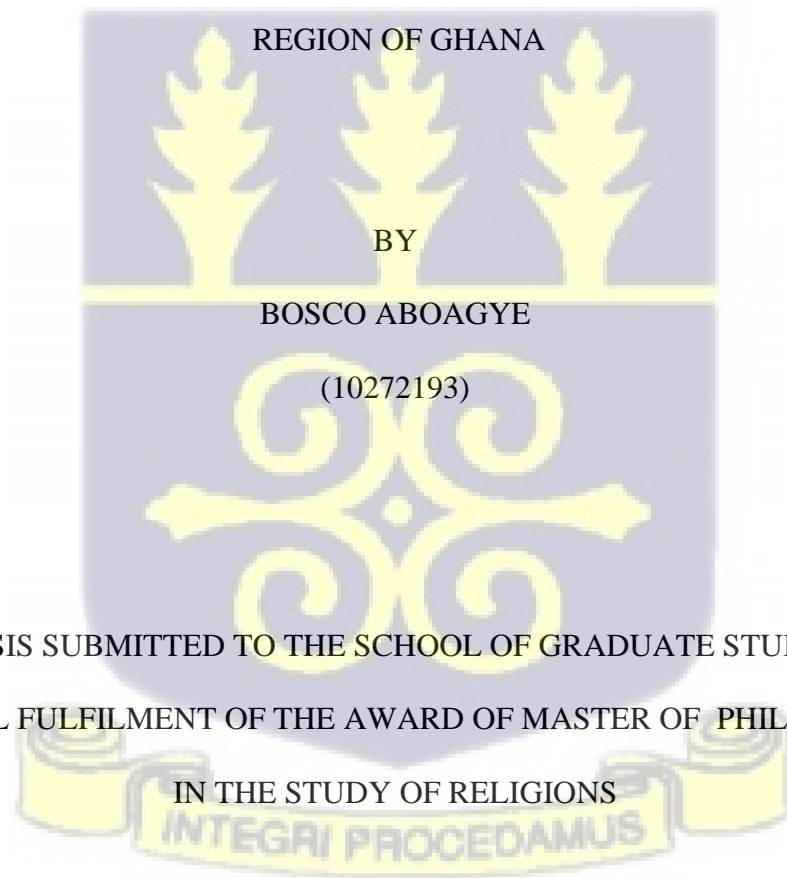


UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

PROPHETIC MINISTRY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF GHANAISANS:
A CASE STUDY OF NEO-PROPHETIC CHURCHES IN THE ASHANTI



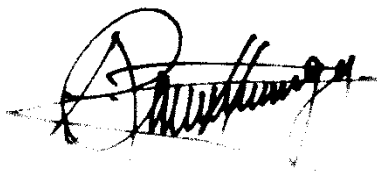
A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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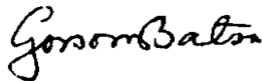
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is the result of my research work carried out in the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, (Legon) under the supervision of Rev. Prof. George Ossom-Batsa and Dr. Harry L. K. Agbanu



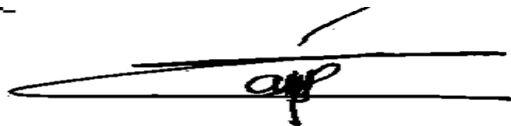
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ABSTRACT

Pentecostal / Charismatic Christianity in Ghana ‘gives birth’ to new prophets every passing moment, and consequently, new prophetic ministries. One of the most intriguing beliefs of the twenty-first century Christianity is that the Neo-Prophetic churches can influence the socio-economic life of believers. Many believers think that the words of the ‘neo-prophets’ can change their fortunes. This work explores how the activities and messages of the Neo-Prophetic churches influence the socio-economic life of Ghanaians. It examined the activities and messages of the prophetic churches of Ebenezer Miracle Worship Center and Go Ye Harvesters International church, both in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. In carrying out this objective, the study employs Georg Fohrer’s typology of prophecy in Ancient Israel. Methodologically, the study used historical, theological, and phenomenological approaches. It relied on participant observation, focus group discussions, interviews, and electronic media to solicit the views of respondents on issues that remained central to this study. The study argues that ‘spiritual causality’ may explain the attempt to solicit the help of prophets to better economic fortunes of people. Thus, in the broader context of prayer, divine direction (akwankyere), offering, and seed sowing, an individual is sure to overcome the barriers of socio-economic problems. This study found out that though prophecies are generally accepted and believed by most Ghanaian Christians, they do not influence the socio-economic life of the Ghanaians. Instead, hard work enhances their socio-economic standing. The study recommends education to improve the issues of socio-economic status of such people. People are supposed to be responsible, hard-working, and discipline in their field of work to enhance their socio-economic status. Thus, they should not waste their much energies and resources on prophets who rather enrich themselves at the expense of the congregants.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is a dream come through to get to this level in life. I am grateful to God Almighty for how far He has brought me on the academic Journey. I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to my Supervisors Rev. Fr. Prof. George Ossom-Batsa and Dr. Harry L. K. Agbanu. This work could never have seen the light of day without their support and encouragement. I must say the pressure from them always kept me on my toes to work harder. God richly bless you Prof. and Dr. I am grateful to Prof. Nicoletta Gatti for the time she spent in reading through my work. I am equally thankful to Prof. Rosemary Amenga-Etego and all the Senior members of the Department for the diverse ways they supported me in this research. I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to Mad. Rita, the Administrative Secretary of the Department for the Study of Religions for her support. I am also grateful to Mr. Kwaku Owusu Agyeman, the Acting Principal of St. Monica's College of Education, for his financial support and encouragement. I am most grateful to Mr. Simon Boateng, (HOD Social Sciences, St. Monica's College of Education) for taking time out of his busy schedules to read through the work and make the necessary corrections. Kwaku God richly blesses you. I am also grateful to my colleagues Mr. Charles Kwame Bandoh of the Science department, Mr. Isaac Oduro (HOD, Languages Department, St. Monica's College of Education) Mr. Eric Ening of the English Unit of the Languages Department for reading through the work and for their encouragement.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my life partner, Mavis Oforiwaa, for her understanding, financial and spiritual support and agreeing to single-handedly take care of our children in my absence. I also dedicate it to my children Jayden Bosco A., Ephraim Bosco A., and Lady Bosco A.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACI	Action Chapel International
AIC's	African Independent/indigenous/Initiated Churches
BELAM	Bethlehem Evangelistic Ministry
COP	Church of Pentecost
EMWC	Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre
HMC's	Historic Mission Churches
ICGC	International Central Gospel Church
PNDC	Provisional National Defense Council
REPEM	Resurrection Power Evangelistic Ministry

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The prophetic phenomenon is not unique to the history and religion of Africa or particularly Ghana. According to Bruce Vawter, “most religions, if not all, have produced the phenomenon of prophecy either continuously or at some stage in their development.”¹ Prophetism in Ghana dated around the 19th century when individual African prophets who traced the source of their ministry to divine revelation established what was known as “African Independent/Indigenous or Initiated churches (AIC’s)”². These churches developed into Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, and in recent years into Neo-Prophetic churches. According to Kalu Ogbu, the absorption of the spirituality of the AIC’s and Pentecostal movements by the Historic Mission Churches (HMCs), helped to keep the African Christian fervency alive in the times when Africans were discontent towards missionary indigenisation process.³

The 21st century has experienced an unprecedented upsurge of Christianity in south Saharan Africa, in the history of its existence; and it seems irresistible.⁴ It has made Africa the centre of Christianity in the world, and this is a compliment to the African people. Interestingly, recent research shows that much of this development is taking

¹ Cited by Vawter Bruce, *Introduction to Prophetic Literature*, in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, et al. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 187.

² Cf. Cephas N. Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2006), 67.

³ Ogbu U. Kalu, *African Christianity: From the World Wars to Decolonization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); J. Quayesi-Amakye, “Prophetism and Development? Past and Present of a Ghanaian Phenomenon,” in *Religion and Sustainable Development: Ghanaian Perspective*, eds. G. Ossom-Batsa, N. Gatti and R.D. Ammah (Vatican City: Urbaniana University Press, 2018): 260.

⁴ James N. Amanze, “The Role of Prophecy in the Growth and Expansion of The Synagogue Church of All Nations,” *Scriptura* 112, no. 1 (2013), 1-14.

place in the New Religious Movements, especially in the new Pentecostal-Charismatic and Prophetic churches rather than in the Historic Mission Churches (HMC)⁵. This may be attributed to their ability to perform miracles, signs and also predict future events, which come to pass⁶.

The concept of Prophecy is at the root of religious practices⁷. Prophets straddle two worlds, and they make daring claims to be speaking for God. Thus, they think of themselves and are mostly perceived by others as persons sent from God with a message for God's people. As messengers of God, they claim entree to a world not generally accessible to other men and women. Prophets sometimes seem to peer into the portals of heaven and observe the proceedings of the heavenly court, where God is enthroned as king and is attended to by the heavenly host⁸. Prophets are entirely humans, who are shaped by their world and bound by their time and culture. As human mediators of God, their worldview, words, style of speaking, ways of acting, their place in society, and their understanding of national and international politics are all inspired by their time and place in the world. They claim to receive messages from God and have access to divine commands and instructions (cf. 1 Kings 22:19, Isaiah 6:1).

These two verses and many more in the Bible indicate how prophets of God are privy to the heavenly hosts. It is imperative to note that the existence of certain social, economic, and moral conditions requires the services of intermediaries. When society experiences sudden deaths, strange diseases like Corona Virus, HIV/AIDS, Ebola, and

⁵ Amanze, "The Role of Prophecy," 12.

⁶ Amanze, "The Role of Prophecy," 1-14.

⁷ Jim R. Thompson, *Prophecy Today; A Further Word from God* (Faverdale North: Evangelical Press, 2010), 2-6

⁸ Thomas L. Leclere, *Introduction to the Prophets: Their Stories, Sayings and Scrolls* (New York: Paulist Press, 2007), 27.

others, famine, economic hardships, rapid social changes, political turmoil, and traumatic conditions, they turn to the supernatural realm to seek social, economic and moral equilibrium.⁹

Again, prophets and prophecies were part of the life of the Israelites from the Ancient Near Eastern times, through to the New Testament Era. David L. Petersen identified that both early Jewish and Christian traditions attest to a tripartite understanding of the divisions of the Hebrew Bible, which is ‘The Torah’, ‘The Prophets (*Nebi'im*) and ‘The Writings’ (*Ketubi'im*)¹⁰. The second part of the division identifies some major and minor prophetic books, though not all prophets were included in the list. Thus, prophets in the Hebrew Bible were of different forms and had different roles to play in their time for their people.

Prophecy has different forms, especially in the days of the Israelites, the book of Numbers outlines three means (dreams, visions, and face to face) by which God revealed himself to his prophets (Num. 12:6-8)¹¹.

Prophetism is not a new phenomenon in Ghana, but neo-prophetism is a new wave of Ghanaian Christianity. It emerged around the early years of 1990 as a movement in Pentecostal Christianity¹². According to Cephas and Atiemo, this new Pentecostal Christianity emerged to serve the needs of those whose orientation to issues of life was ingrained in the *primaeval* world. It was also to serve the interest of persons with low

⁹ Emmanuel K. Asante, *The Prophetic and Apocalyptic Phenomena in Israel: A Theological Introduction*. (Accra: SonLife Press, 2011), xiii.

¹⁰ David L. Petersen, *Introduction to Prophetic Literature*, NIB VI (CD Version): 1169.

¹¹ Thompson, *Prophecy Today*, 2.

¹² C.N. Omenyo and A.O. Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Prophetic Churches in Ghana,” *Ghana Bulletin of Theology* 1 (2006): 55-68.

socio-economic status, who do not suit into the rather elite Charismatic Churches¹³. For this reason, many 21st century Ghanaian Christians think that a person's social, economic, health, and moral life correlates with the person's religiosity. That is, many people are of the view that prophecy has the potency of influencing their socio-economic status and moral life.

Additionally, Paul Gifford opined that these new religious movements in Ghana flourish because they claim to possess answers to the most pressing existential problems and economic survival¹⁴. Despite these claims, several practitioners are yet to experience socio-economic emancipation in their lives.

The average Ghanaian considers prophecy as supernatural and conceives it the surest way of attaining quick responses to life requests. Thus, almost all classes of people; rich or poor, educated or illiterate, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, African Indigenous Religious practitioner as well as students, politicians, business executives, and professionals of all categories of life consult prophets at all times freely. The importance of the prophetic ministry in the social, Economic, Moral, and Health of the nation, Ghana, cannot be overlooked.¹⁵ Most Ghanaians in their quest to improve their social, economic, moral, and health status, seek prophetic inclinations through renowned prophets of God, to improve their lot.

It is worthy to note that the prophetic ministry has gained popularity among Ghanaians because they claim to guarantee financial prosperity to obedient believers and also solve

¹³ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space," 57.

¹⁴ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in Globalizing African Economy* (London: Hust & Co., 2004), ix; Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space," 55-68.

¹⁵ Thompson, *Prophecy Today*. 3.

their pressing problems of life'¹⁶. These contemporary prophecies seem to take a look at the wealth and health conditions of the citizenry, at the neglect of the salvific and redemptive message, for which Christ died and which to me was the core mandate of the Old Testament Prophets.

Even though there is a clear difference between Pentecostals and neo-prophetic ministries, prophecies are mainly the activities of the Pentecostal/Charismatic and the Neo prophetic movements/churches. Thus, Historic Mission Churches (HMCs) do not involve themselves in prophetic activities; the few strands of prophetic activities among the HMC's are the prayer groups in the churches. This research seeks to examine the activities of prophets and their churches, specifically among the Neo-Prophetic Churches. It also aims to understand the activities of Neo-Prophetic ministries and compare them with some Biblical prophecies to find out if they are in line with the word of God. Finally to identify whether these prophecies influence the socio-economic life of the members in the church.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The latest additions or new wave of Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal movement in Ghana is a group of churches that are classified as 'Neo-Prophetic Churches.' It is a phenomenon that involves prophets whose method of operation is quite synonymous with that of the earlier prophets studied by C. G. Baeta between 1914 and 1960.¹⁷ Though the beliefs and practices of these contemporary prophets are significantly similar to those of the prophets studied by Baeta, they can best be placed in the neo-

¹⁶ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space," 59.

¹⁷ C.G. Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana: A Study of some Spiritual Churches* (Accra: Africa Christian Press, 2004).

prophetic movement due to a divergence of their messages and activities from both the AIC's and the Charismatic/Pentecostal movements. Thus, whereas the Charismatic/Pentecostal churches have highly educated leaders and mostly use the English language for their messages, most of the neo-prophetic church leaders have lower educational standards and usually use the local language to deliver their messages to their congregants. The AIC's also use the local language in their messages. Most of the AIC's use different colours of candles and Florida water as prayer aid, but neo-prophetic churches do not use these prayer aids. They in-turn use anointing oil just as the charismatic/Pentecostal churches do.

Even though there are prophets in the AIC's and the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches, the emergence of the Neo-Prophetic Churches since the 1990s has been rapid in Ghana. A careful reflection of their prophetic assemblies reveals that most of their prophecies focus on the socio-economic needs of their clients– material prosperity (abundant riches), marriage, childbirth, the concept of Otamfo, and how you need to be delivered from one's enemy. It is interesting to note that most of the members in these prophetic churches are people who believe that seeking a better life outside the country is the only solution to their social and economic challenges. This reflects in the high percentage of members who carry their passports with them for prayers, in the hope of acquiring visas quickly.

Against this background, this thesis explores the activities and messages of the Neo-Prophetic ministries in Ghana and their influence on the socio-economic life of people.

1.3 Research Questions

The research is guided by two questions:

- a) What are the main activities and messages of the Neo-Prophets in Ghana?
- b) How do the activities and messages influence the social and economic life of the Ghanaian?

1.4 Aims and objectives

The main aim of this study is to assess the influence of the prophetic ministry in Ghanaian Neo-Prophetic churches. The researcher aims to achieve this by undertaking the following:

1. Examine the activities and messages of some selected prophetic ministries in Ghana.
2. Explore the perception of participants, whether the prophetic ministry influences the social and economic life of Ghanaians.
3. Assess how these prophetic ministrations affect the social and economic life of Ghanaians.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The researcher adopted Georg Fohrer's¹⁸ theory on prophecy in Ancient Israel "History of Israelite Religion" as a theoretical framework for the thesis. This typology was used because it helps to explain better our data for the thesis.¹⁹

Georg Fohrer observed that there were two forms of prophecies in ancient Israel, corresponding to two types of religious backgrounds: the nomadic religion and religion

¹⁸ Georg Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion* (London: SPCK, 1972), 224.

¹⁹ Amanze, "The Role of Prophecy," 1-14.

of the settled area²⁰. The corresponding prophets, he explained, were the ‘seer’ and the *nabhi*. Further, Fohrer noted that in the life of nomads of the Ancient Near East, the character of the seer played a significant role. According to him, people who operated as ‘seers’ declared divine instructions basically on visions and premonitions²¹. In the early life of nomads, the activities of the seer corresponded to a certain extent, with that of a magician, priest, and clan head, and was generally held to be inspired by God. The seer’s prime contact with the other higher world, was through the sense of vision, in this case, hearing played a slighter role²². Oracles were usually based on what came into view and what the seer experienced (Numbers 22-24). For the seer to function, he was supposed to open both his soul and spirit to obtain the first impressions given to him by external appearances.²³

This gives the impression that, in the history of the Israelites, the 9th century BCE prophets, that is, Elijah and Elisha embodied, to a large extent, this class of prophets.²⁴ The above-mentioned two prophets, apart from their principal duty of defending God in opposition to religious apostasy, and to the authority of monarchs who failed to uphold the cause of God, or defied his ethical demands, also performed several miracles which seem to have made them rather popular.²⁵ Though the miracles that are associated with them may sound fable, they appear to characterize popular opinions of the prophets of their period.²⁶

²⁰ Amanze, “The Role of Prophecy,” 1-14.

²¹ Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, 224.

²² Amanze, “The Role of Prophecy,” 7.

²³ Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, 224.

²⁴ Amanze, “The Role of Prophecy,” 8.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Whybray, “Prophets,” 621.

Fohrer has specified that another category of prophecy had its origins in the settled area of the Ancient Near East. These types of prophets are associated with ecstatic prophets at sanctuaries or imperial courts and were referred to as *nabhis*. He believed that Jewish prophecy reached its pinnacle in the prophetic acts of the 8th-century prophets such as Amos, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Hosea, and others.²⁷ According to S.H. Hooke, the autobiographical elements which were conserved among their oracles confirm that all these men went through a reflective experience of God. This equipped them with a sense of mission and set them differently apart from the certified class of prophets of their time.²⁸

Hooke noted further that these men did not repute themselves as innovators but as reminding Israel to the ideals of private and public comportment which reached back to the time of the covenant, interceded by Moses. One of their chief features is that they constituted the most trenchant critics of the religious organizations and the people of their days such as priests, princes, and other prophets.²⁹ Numerous accounts show that these prophets did not emphasize so much on the performance of miracles or predicting the future, but denouncing the public standards and ethics of their people.³⁰

Whybray has suggested that even though the 7th and 8th centuries BCE prophets stood for similar philosophies as their predecessors, their prophecy was utterly diverse from that of 9th century BCE prophets in two distinct ways. In the first place, the 7th and 8th century BCE prophets addressed themselves not only to rulers, other individuals,

²⁷ Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, 224.

²⁸ S.H. Hooke, "The Religious Institutions of Israel," in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, eds. Matthew Black and HH Rowley (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1962), 148.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 148.

³⁰ S.H. Hooke, "The Religious Institutions of Israel," 148.

and particular assemblies but also to the whole people. Secondly, they were the first to prophesy the annihilation of the whole nation as a punishment for their evil deeds. Whybray intimated that this prophecy of the nationwide disaster was the core feature of the message of the prophets of the 8th century BCE such as Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, and it was offered as preventable only through repentance of sins. It should be noted that prophets who delivered foul-tasting messages like this, faced great challenges not only in terms of getting approval as authentic messengers of God, but they were also liable to suffer dishonor and even intimidations to their lives (cf. Amos 7:10-13; Jer. 26:7-9)³¹.

This study contends that the prophetic phenomenon in the 21st Century Ghana has some similarities with that of the 9th century BCE prophets in ancient Israel, particularly that of prophets Elijah and Elisha. As we shall identify later, the prophecies of Elijah and Elisha were filled with miracles of different kinds. They were also full of predictions about various issues that were fulfilled during their ministries. The phenomenon of prediction and accomplishment tended to make the people believe that they were truly men of God. And it made them popular among the people of their time. Neo-Prophetic prophets in Ghana are also popular for their magic-like miracles of healing, prosperity prophecies, prophecies of delivering people from the torment of witches and wizards, to mention but a few.

1.6 Literature review

In reviewing pertinent literature for the study, the researcher employed the thematic approach, because it allowed the researcher to examine already existing works that have

³¹ Whybray, "Prophets," 621.

contributed to the subject matter under discussion. Three thematic areas were considered: contemporary Pentecostal Christianity, Emergence of Early prophetic movements in Ghana, and teachings and practices of Neo-Prophetic movements in Ghana.

1.6.1 Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity

In his book '*Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context*' Asamoah-Gyadu offers a description of African Pentecostalism from within.³²

It is an undeniable fact that the Pentecostal movement underscores the work of the Holy Spirit in the church, especially through the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit. Throughout his book, Asamoah-Gyadu, one of the greatest Scholars of African Pentecostalism, demonstrates that the particularities of the Pentecostal movement worldwide are also present in the case of African Pentecostalism. He identifies four major themes that run across the Pentecostal movements;³³

- a) The authority of the Bible
- b) The centrality of the cross.
- c) Regeneration as the way to Christian salvation.
- d) A call to holiness.

Asamoah-Gyadu succeeds in integrating the African Pentecostal movement into the universal movement of contemporary Pentecostalism. At the same time, the author, being conscious of the contribution the African understanding of Pentecostalism, that could bring to the wider Pentecostal community, insists on the specificities of the

³² J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2013), 1.

³³ Ibid.

African Pentecostal movement. These particularities are developed throughout the nine chapters of the book.³⁴

In his opening chapter of the book, '*Clothed with Power: Spirit-Inspired Renewal and Christianity in Africa*' Asamoah-Gyadu establishes one of the most significant contributions of African Pentecostalism, particularly to the contemporary European context. He introduces the notion of 'pneumatic Christianity:' "I use the expression "pneumatic Christianity" to refer to any form of Christianity which values, affirms, and consciously promotes the experiences of the Spirit as part of normal Christian life and worship".³⁵

To speak of the "pneumatic existence" of the African Pentecostal church as "an existential reality with eschatological implications," he refers specifically to three main features of African Pentecostalism: 'the accent on personal transformation', 'the experience of the Holy Spirit in worship, that is; both body-felt and heartfelt', and 'the interventionist character of the charismatic theology through prayer, healing, and deliverance'.

This pneumatic expression of the Pentecostal movement, comes as an answer to the problem of traditional devotion that no longer meets the wishes of the people. The author gives an instance of this reality in the movement of people from traditional churches in Ghana. Thus, the African Pentecostal movement is needs-oriented; one that

³⁴ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

pursues God's continuing presence in the world and does that by seeking the Spirit's activity.³⁶

In the preceding chapters, "Signs of the spirit: worship as experience (chapter two). The pneumatic focus of African Pentecostalism finds its distinct demonstration. The understanding of worship, its character, and its manifestation is greatly fashioned by the pneumatic factor³⁷. Consequently, worship is not understood and practised as merely an inner experience of God or as something static. Rather, worship is "an encounter with the living and transforming God". Because of this encounter between the divine and the human, worship bears with it "signs of the Spirit": speaking in tongues and the manifestation of the spiritual gifts. Once the divine encounters the human in worship, something supernatural must happen; *prophecies, glossolalia, healing, deliverance, glory to the needy, etc.* Hence, in the understanding of the author, the key factor of the incredible development of African Pentecostalism is precisely the charismatic nature of Pentecostal worship. People do not need parched and emotionless denominationalism. Rather, they need a movement that can meet their desires, and that is the movement of the Spirit. Thus, Pentecostalism is "a protest movement against parched denominationalism".³⁸

One aspect of worship is prayer, which was discussed in the third chapter of the book. As expected, the pneumatic feature is a decisive one in the African Pentecostal understanding of prayer. The writer uses the example of a weekly prayer service called "Jericho Hour", "a place where giant solutions await your giant problems". The titles

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 6.

³⁸ Ibid.

of the books published on the theme of prayer offer an indication concerning the African Pentecostal understanding of prayer: “Goliath Can Fall,”³⁹ “Goliath Killing Prayers,” “How to Overcome Every Giant of Your Life” or “Victory despite Opposition.”⁴⁰

Again, one of the prayers mentioned in the book says, “Lord, expose the Goliath of my life and prepare me for battle against him in the name of Jesus; Holy Ghost, show me clearly the weapon in my hand for slaying my Goliath in the name of Jesus”⁴¹. The author calls this strategy ‘Goliath hermeneutics.’

The assumption behind this strategy is that, in the African traditional culture, things do not happen coincidentally. Rather, there is a complete system of evil influences in one’s life. Consequently, true prayer needs to pay attention to the warfare in which it is spoken: “Prayer is understood to have the power to stir the supernatural by decimating or limiting the powers of evil and releasing the anointing of the Spirit.” Hence, African Pentecostal prayer meets the destitute in his/her realm, concentrating on the whole of life, to spiritual warfare, and being uttered in this realm as an interventionist strategy.⁴²

The Author starts a discussion on Christianity. From the beginning, the author wanted to make the reader mindful of the African sub-culture that is present within contemporary Pentecostalism in Africa. This sub-culture is based on the principle of sowing and reaping. It is generally believed that the act of giving inspires a divine

³⁹ Daniel and Barbara Ahia-Armah, *Goliath Can Fall: Victory in Spite of Opposition* (Accra: Honeycomb Publications, 2005). Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 45.

⁴⁰ Leke Sanusi, *Goliath Killing Prayers: How to Overcome Every Giant of Your Life* (London: Oraword Publishers, 2003); Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 45.

⁴¹ Ibid, 46

⁴² Sanusi, *Goliath Killing Prayers*; Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*.

response to human desire – called “transactional giving”. The issue is so grave that the non-fulfillment of this, provokes generational curses: “...non-tithing Christians are worse than armed robbers. Armed robbers steal from human beings, but non-tithers steal from God”. It is believed that the theology and practice of tithing, determine God to a specific kind of relationship towards the one who tithes: generosity, benevolence, etc. Thus, the theology of tithing is linked directly to the theology of success⁴³. Asamoah-Gyadu carefully balances the African Pentecostal understanding of tithing using the “Christological hermeneutics” in giving: “the fulfillment of our obligations to God must not be made conditional upon whether or not he acts in our favour”. There is a risk of seeing the blessing in terms of material only or of treating God like a “customer service point”.⁴⁴

The author devotes all of the sixth chapter to the theme of prosperity. At the end of the chapter, he briefly mentions several features of the “African revolution”: “the authority of the Word of God”, “the weightiness of sin”, “the graciousness of Christ”, “and the vitality of faith”, and “the spiritual nature of the church”.⁴⁵

The seventh chapter addresses “the theology of anointing as a sacrament in Pentecostalism”. Again, the titles of the books published by Eastwood Anaba are suggestive: *The Oil of Influence* and *Extra Oil*. The interventionist strategy from the understanding of prayer is an important factor in the understanding of the sacrament of anointing.⁴⁶ There is a threefold usage of anointing: “For healing the sick person, for

⁴³ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 64.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Sanusi, *Goliath Killing Prayers*; Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 75.

fortification against evil, and effective ministry and for success and prosperity to be realized”.

The theology of anointing goes hand in hand with prosperity and is directed towards the needs of the people.

1.6.2 Early Prophetic Movements in Ghana.

Several reasons are given to explain the emergence of Neo-Prophetic movements. According to Peel, “these movements emerged as a result of social deprivation and the felt lack of desired economic or social goods”. Others also suggest that they emerged from *anomie*, that is, “disorientation caused by the “absence of stable social relations and authority, which is the result of enforced and abrupt social change.”⁴⁷

Even though the above factors contribute to the start of new religious movements in Ghana, C. G. Baeta, has also shown that the emergence of Ghanaian Pentecostalism was due to religious pragmatism. A search for answers to life issues from the realm of the supernatural, where both traditional resources and the western form of Christianity had proven inadequate.⁴⁸ According to Baeta, it is possible to see the advent of Pentecostalism as a quest for abundant life, in which material blessings, health, and protection from malevolent powers are significant⁴⁹. Certainly, few individuals will deny the fact that the persistent socio-economic despairs of the nation have largely influenced the message of the Neo-Prophetic and Pentecostal/charismatic preachers.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ J.D.Y. Peel Aladura, *A Religious Movement Among the Yoruba*; quoted in E. Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Study in Pentecostal Christianity, 1; Accra: CPCS, 1968), 17.

⁴⁸ Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁰ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 12.

Yet Omenyo and Atiemo maintain that one of the core reasons for the emergence of this new religious movement (Neo-Prophetism) is the pursuit to find space when newer leaders and movements fail to fit into the sophisticated and elitist structures and style of the ministry of existing established movements⁵¹.

A significant feature of the nineteenth century was that “as missionaries sowed the seed of the gospel, Africans appropriated it from a primal, charismatic world-view and read the translated scriptures in that light”. Indigenous agencies recovered the spiritual resources of the gospel and confronted missionary Christianity to be entirely Biblical. This paved the way for the decolonization process that followed the world wars. New forces including the implosion of the state challenged the heritage of African Christianity; and the collapse of the authoritarian states and associated poverty, probed the tensile strength of the church’s stewardship.⁵² Inexplicably, Charismatic and Pentecostal spirituality resurfaced to provide the energy for growth and sustainability amid hostile circumstances⁵³.

Prophetism in Ghana dates back to around the 19th century when individual African prophets who traced the source of their ministry to divine revelation established what was known as “African Independent/Indigenous/Initiated Churches (AIC’s)⁵⁴. These churches developed into Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, and in recent years into Neo-Prophetic churches. According to Kalu Ogbu, the absorption of the spirituality of the AIC’s and Pentecostal movements by the Historic Mission Churches (HMC),

⁵¹ Omenyo and Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space.”

⁵² O. Kalu, “Africa Christianity,” in, *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. John Bowden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 11.

⁵³ Kalu, “Africa Christianity,” 11.

⁵⁴ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*.

helped to keep the African Christian fervency alive in the times when Africans were discontent towards missionary indigenisation process.⁵⁵

Since the 1990s the Ghanaian religious setting has seen the development and steady growth of what may be appropriately labeled as Neo-Propheticism. This development calls for a reconsideration of the explanations for the occurrence of new religious movements of the Pentecostal type. The phenomenon of ‘Neo-Propheticism’ include churches such as the Alive Chapel International of Prophet Salifu Amoako, King Jesus Evangelistic Ministry of the late Prophet Emmanuel Kwaku Apraku, (popularly known in public life as Apraku my daughter), Great Light Worship Centre of Prophet Toner Asamoah Boateng (Apae Live), Owusu Bempa’s End Time Power Ministry⁵⁶, and in recent times, Moments of Glory Prayer Ministry (MOGPA) by Rev. Isaac Osei Bonsu, International God’s Way Church by Daniel Obinim (Angel Obinim), Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre by Prophet Ebenezer Adarkwa Yiadom (The Nations Prophet 1), Rev. Obofour’s Anointed Palace Chapel (APC), Prophet. Mafred Acheampong’s Fruit of Christ International Ministries and a host of others.

1.6.3 Teachings, and Practices of Neo-Prophetic Movements.

Hans Debrunner observed that “the ordinary person in the street and the bush anticipated four things from religion; Social fellowship, emotional experiences, healing and security from real or imagined malevolent forces. Whether these expectations are limited to the “person in the street and the bush” or are the expectations of mankind in

⁵⁵ Ogbu U. Kalu, “African Christianity: From the World Wars to Decolonization,” in *African Christianity: An African Story*, ed. Ogbu U. Kalu (Pretoria: Department of Church History, University of Pretoria, 2005), 333–360; Quayesi-Amakye, “Propheticism and Development?”

⁵⁶ Omenyo and Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space.”

general is an issue that must be left open.⁵⁷ This observation by Debrunner informs the emphases, teachings, and practices of Neo-Prophetic Movements in Ghana. The objectives of the new sects in Ghana is to prove the reality of spiritual matters and to obtain a response from the supernatural, particularly in the form of miracles. They seem to have concern and concentration on man's earthly needs.

The specific teachings and practices of Neo-Prophetic ministries include the idea of *otamfo* (enemy), the practice of *akwankyere* (guidance), and the various aspects of exorcism and healing. The role of evil spirits in the Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal churches in Ghana has been extensively noted. Evil spirits include witches, wizards, marine spirit (maame water), and other supposed malevolent spirits that are associated with one another in complex ways.⁵⁸ In the teaching and practices of these prophets, the annexation of the traditional phenomenon of *otamfo* (enemy) seems to include not only evil spirits and witches but also other humans that believers have cause to suspect of envy or jealousy.⁵⁹ *otamfo*, (enemy) in traditional Akan setting, is usually one that is surmised of undermining other people's honour, wealth, health, or socio-economic status through witchcraft enchantment, evil juju, or the spread of malevolent gossip. The *otamfo* (enemy) includes actual humans and not just spiritual beings.

Among the Akans, it is believed that witches can attack and harm an individual, only if he/she is related by blood to them, or if such a relative who is a witch connives with other witches.⁶⁰ This belief has been responsible for distrust, suspicion, and tension in

⁵⁷ Hans W. Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana* (Accra: Waterville, 1967), 325; Larbi, *Pentecostalism*.

⁵⁸ Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, 322.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space."

extended families. Akan maxims that express this belief make every relative a potential enemy of a person. *otan firi fie* (source of adversity is a persons' own family); *otamfo benya wo a na efiri wo ankasa wo fie* (an enemy cannot get at you unless they are assisted by someone from your family) *aboa bi beka wo a na efiri wo ntama mu* (the ant that bites you is hidden in your cloth). In the minds of worshippers in the churches under reference, the 'enemy' is a concept in the Bible, which for them, is the same as 'powers and principalities', and includes their human enemies.⁶¹

Some of the signs of these Neo-Prophetic ministries include; rhythmic swaying of the body and stamping of the feet, hand clippings, distressing cries and prayer, leaping, dancing, and countless motor reactions. They make extensive use of religious items like Florida water, colored eggs, porridge, wrist bands, etc. Many scholars have done extensive work on the phenomenon of prophecy across the globe from various angles, this research diverges from the works done and differs because the interest of the work is found in how these prophetic ministries activities influence the social and economic life of the Ghanaians.⁶²

1.7. Methodology

The researcher employed the historical, theological, and phenomenological approaches to the study. The historical analysis was used because the contemporary prophetic phenomenon was compared with the older prophetic phenomenon; it also examined the differences and similarities between the two eras, the old prophets, and the contemporary prophets in Ghanaian Christianity..

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*.

The theological analysis was used because the group under discussion is a Christian group whose beliefs and practices ought to be analyzed. The interpretation given of certain biblical texts has resulted in the way they perform certain activities and practices. Finally, the phenomenological approach was used because the phenomenon under investigation, though historical, is contemporary, and requires the researcher to enter people's experience to give an objective description of it.

Phenomenology is understood as the thoughtful description of experiences in a way in which they are experienced by the subject it proposes to study. In Husserl's arguments, the whole of our life of consciousness⁶³ includes not just clear mental states and acts, such as judgments, but all the various acts and states of consciousness such as sensory awareness, perception, memory, imagination, feeling, emotion, temperament, free will, time-consciousness, perceptive, symbolic thought, self-conscious, awareness, as well as subconscious drives and wishes.⁶⁴

Phenomenology, in its pure form, pursues a description of the experience, as it presents itself to subjective consciousness.⁶⁵ Thus, it is distinct from and conceptually before a subject clarifies that experience, though experiences and interpretations unavoidably collide. Mindful bracketing allows at least a partial separation, which permits experience-near descriptions of religious phenomena to emerge.

This technique does not permit someone to weigh the 'truth' of such experiences, much less gauge their 'real' referent. In substitution, it allows one to enter into an aspect of

⁶³ Dermot Moran, "Edmund Husserl and Phenomenology;" <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269696567>retrieved 20th November 2019

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

the informants' religious world as it presents itself to their consciousness. From this, one may have conclusions about their religion as it is lived — what some scholars refer to as 'lived religion'.⁶⁶

From the above, it is clear that phenomenology is a method of studying religion, which requires that the researcher of religion suspends all judgments about the phenomenon being studied. It is to bracket any possibly distorting conjectures that stem from both confessional Christian Theology and from positivistic science, such that, by using empathetic approaches, the researcher or scholar could arrive at the experiences of the adherents to accomplish understanding.⁶⁷

1.7.1 Sources of data

This research used both primary and secondary sources of data.

A. Primary Sources

The methods for gathering the primary data include participant observation, structured and unstructured interview guide, and focus group discussion. The interview included personal interviews between the researcher and respondents. The personal interviews consisted of personal interaction that is 'one on one', with the informants and phone interviews with those who were not available personally because of the Corona Virus Pandemic and the problem of the lockdown in parts of greater Kumasi. This approach allowed the researcher and the respondents to develop a rapport,⁶⁸ which created a

⁶⁶ James V. Spickard, "Phenomenology," in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (London and New York; Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2011): 333-344.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Tom K.B. Kumekpor, *Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research* (Accra: SonLife Press & Services, 2002), 189.

conducive atmosphere for the researcher to meet some of the respondents face to face and some on the phone conversation, to elicit relevant information. Better still, the researcher by this method interacted and sought further clarification to authenticate the information already gathered about the topic.

During the interviews, permission was sought from the informants to record pertinent parts of the interview. It offered the researcher an opportunity to seek clarification on some of the complex issues that evolved during the study. Besides, informal conversations, which in the context of the study, took the form of an unstructured interview, though sometimes “time-consuming”⁶⁹, was employed as one of the convenient methods to access relevant information which otherwise would have been difficult to attain, in a much more relaxed way.

B. Secondary Sources

Considering the focus and scope of this study, the researcher made extensive use of different secondary sources, for example, journal articles, books and other sources.

1.7.2 Sample and Sampling Procedure

This research employed purposive sampling and simple random sampling procedures. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the various Neo-Prophetic Churches and their Ministers. The simple random sampling procedure was employed to select some of the church leaders and members; the simple random sample gave all the respondents equal and independent chance of being selected.

⁶⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 5.

In all, the researcher was envisaging to interview about twenty-five (25) respondents comprising pastors, prophets, and religious leaders, and church members. These pastors, prophets, and religious leaders and church members were drawn from various Neo-Prophetic churches in Ghana specifically from Go Ye Harvesters Ministry by Rev. Benjamin Yahweh Apaloo and Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre by Prophet Ebenezer Adarkwa Yiadom.

These churches were selected based on the fact that they are renowned in the media landscape of Ghanaian Christianity because they employ both Television and Radio to propagate the messages which have brought to them some form of popularity among Christendom.

1.7.3 Tools of Data Collection

The study used observation, focus group discussion, and interview guide to collect data from respondents.

1.7.4 Data Analysis

In analysing the data gathered from the field, the researcher used the three aspects of ethnographic data analysis by Harry Wolcott; these are *description*, *analysis*, and *interpretation* of the culture-sharing group.⁷⁰ The analysis began with a description of the Ghanaian socio-economic religious settings in which Neo-Prophetic Christianity strives with its assurance of prosperity. Wolcott emphasizes that description is the basis upon which qualitative research is built, where the researcher becomes the storyteller, inviting readers to see, through what has been witnessed on the field.⁷¹ From an

⁷⁰ H.F. Wolcott, *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis and Interpretation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), 145.

⁷¹ Ibid.

interpretive viewpoint, Wolcott contends that the analyst presents his depiction in a chronological arrangement.⁷²

I grouped the the empirical data that was collected from Kumasi in the Ashanti region of Ghana under the headings: poverty, prosperity, Social status, beliefs, and rituals as resources for progress. In the interpretation, the researcher used historical approaches in outlining the origin of two Neo-prophetic movements in Ghana with its recurring emphasis on the upward and positive change in the socio-economic life of the people through the messages and activities. The researcher concentrated on the principle of sowing and reaping, and on the notion of '*akwankyere*' using prayer aids, and how it is emphasized as a way out of poverty, and influencing the social and economic status of Ghanaian Christians.

1.8 Scope of the study

The researcher selected two of the prophetic ministries in the Ashanti Region of Ghana due to the broad nature of the prophetic ministry in the 21st Century Ghana. These ministries are the Ebenezer Miracle Centre headed by Prophet Ebenezer Adakwa Yiadom (The Nations Prophet) and Go Ye Harvesters Ministry also headed by Rev. Benjamin Yahweh Apalloo.

The selection was inspired by the numerical strength of the group across the region and the country at large. Usage of Mass media (Radio and Television) in airing their activities and the power which these leaders claim to possess, were also considered.

⁷² Ibid.

1.9 Significance of the study

Prophetism in Ghana plays a pivotal role in the life of many citizens. The phenomenon shows no sign of disappearing from public spheres. It is therefore imperative to understand the presence, nature, dynamics, and activities of religious people in the prophetic arena. Thus, is there a way in which for instance, Prophetic beliefs and practices may be relevant to social and economic development? The polarized opinions are clear. Whereas critics of Prophetism perceive the prophetic phenomenon as an obstacle to socio-economic development, and a means by some group of individuals to enrich themselves, prophetic adherents insist that prophecies can motivate believers towards progress in life.

The pursuit to find answers to these conversely connected suppositions forms the relevance of my research. The analysis of the investigations conducted is expected to improve understanding of the meaning of prophetism in the lives of believers. It will further show how the prophetic phenomenon in Ghana interconnects with the social, economic, and moral behavior of people, thereby providing pertinent tools to enable dialogue amongst development partners, religious organizations, and governments.

Finally, the work will serve as a reference to other scholars who may want to understand the dynamism in the relationship between prophecies and the socio-economic life of people.

1.10 Organization of the Chapters

The research has been organized into five chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, the aims and objectives of the research, theoretical framework, literature review, data

collection, and data analysis, methodology, sample and sampling procedure, sources of data – primary and secondary sources, tools of data collection, the scope of the study, significance of the study, and organization of the chapters.

The second chapter deals with Neo-Prophetism in Ghana, the typology of Ghanaian Churches, the origin of Neo-Prophetic ministries in Ghana, forerunners of Ghanaian Pentecostalism, what are the African Independent Churches (AIC's)? Pentecostalism in Ghana, and Neo-Prophetism in Ghana. Chapter three explores the ministries of Prophet Ebenezer Adarkwa Yiadom of Ebenezer Miracle Church and the ministries of Go Ye Harvesters.

Chapter discusses the impact of neo-prophetic ministry on the socio-economic life of the study participants takes a look at the religious prophecies and its influence on the social life of the Ghanaian, religious prophecies and its impact on the economic life of the Ghanaian, Religious prophecies, and its effect on the moral life of the Ghanaian. The final chapter consists of a general summary of the work, some recommendations, and a conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

NEO-PROPHETISM IN GHANA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the origin, nature, and activities of Neo-Prophetic ministries and their spread in Ghana. It analyzes and describes the current situation of neo-prophetic in Ghana. Before the advent of neo-prophetic, Ghanaian Christianity was not devoid of prophecies. Therefore, there is a need to trace and understand the history of Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in Ghana.

Major changes have occurred in the field of Ghanaian Christianity since its advent in 1482. Groove outlined that the earliest recorded attempt to introduce Christianity into Ghana was 20th January 1482⁷³. Since this period, different sects, groups, and denominations have emerged to fulfil the needs and aspirations of the people. Scholars have classified these group types.

2.2 Typology of Ghanaian Churches

Distinctions are made relating to the various types of Ghanaian Churches. These classifications are usually based on the roots and origins, peculiar activities and messages, the theological standpoints, and the era of the establishment. There are enormous varieties of churches in Ghana due to the speedy spread of new churches and schisms in some of the older churches⁷⁴. To appreciate the typology of Christianity in Ghana, one needs to understand the various strands of churches in the country.

⁷³ C.P. Grooves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa* (London: Lutterworth, 1958), I: 123.

⁷⁴ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 34.

Paul Gifford asserts that Christianity in Ghana has been shaped by its current renewal as a non-western religion.⁷⁵ Scholars like Asamoah-Gyadu, Kingsley Larbi, and Abamfo-Atiemo in their various research works have supported and agreed to this assertion. Omenyo also states that there is a massive range of Churches in Ghana because of the fast spread of newly established churches and separations in some of the older ones. So, to get a fairer understanding of Christianity in Ghana, first, we must outline the main elements of churches. Omenyo in his book, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, classified the Churches as follows:

1. Historic Mainline Churches (HMCs)
2. African Independent Churches
3. Classical Pentecostal Churches
4. Neo-Evangelical/Mission related churches
5. Neo Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches/Ministries.⁷⁶

Cephas Omenyo and Abamfo Atiemo in their article *Claiming religious space: the case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana* outlined the following Taxonomy of Christianity in Ghana.

I. The Independent Churches originating in Ghana or from other African countries are referred to as *African Indigenous churches*.⁷⁷

II. The Classical Pentecostal movement such as the COP, Christ Apostolic Church, Apostolic Church of Ghana, etc.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (London, Hurst, 2004), 37.

⁷⁶ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 34.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

III. Neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic non-denominational fellowships such as Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International and Women's Aglow Fellowship International;

IV. Charismatic Renewal Groups in the mainline churches, for example, Catholic Charismatic Renewal, Bible Study and Prayer Groups of the Protestant denominations;

V. The Independent Pentecostal/charismatic Churches/ministries - which are the same as what Mwaura refers to as 'Neo-Pentecostal churches'.⁷⁹

But none of the two classifications above-identified this new group of Pentecostal charismatics under study. It is, therefore, essential to place it under a proper context before we can deal with it.

2.3 Origin of Neo-Prophetic Ministries.

According to Omenyo and Atiemo, the emergence of Neo-Prophetism further complicates the issue of categorizing African founded Pentecostal/Charismatic-type of churches founded by Ghanaians. They identified that the difficulty is further worsened by efforts at delineating the major components of African Instituted Churches (AICs). This is largely due to a variety of origin, leadership style, theology, and organizational ethos. These movements have been variously labelled Ethiopian, Zionist, African, Pentecostal, Spiritual, Prophetic, Charismatic, Evangelical, Messianic, Separatist, Revivalist, Witchcraft eradication, etc. without much distinction.⁸⁰

The neo-prophetic movement deserves to be discussed in its own right. It is crucial to put the contemporary prophetic movement which is a new phenomenon in its proper

⁷⁹ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space," 59.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

historical setting. Furthermore, by tracing its origins it will make it easy to ‘delineate it from other categories of’ Pentecostal type movements in Ghana.

The chart below shows an overview of the origin of Neo-prophetism in Ghana from the AIC’s to Neo-Prophetism.

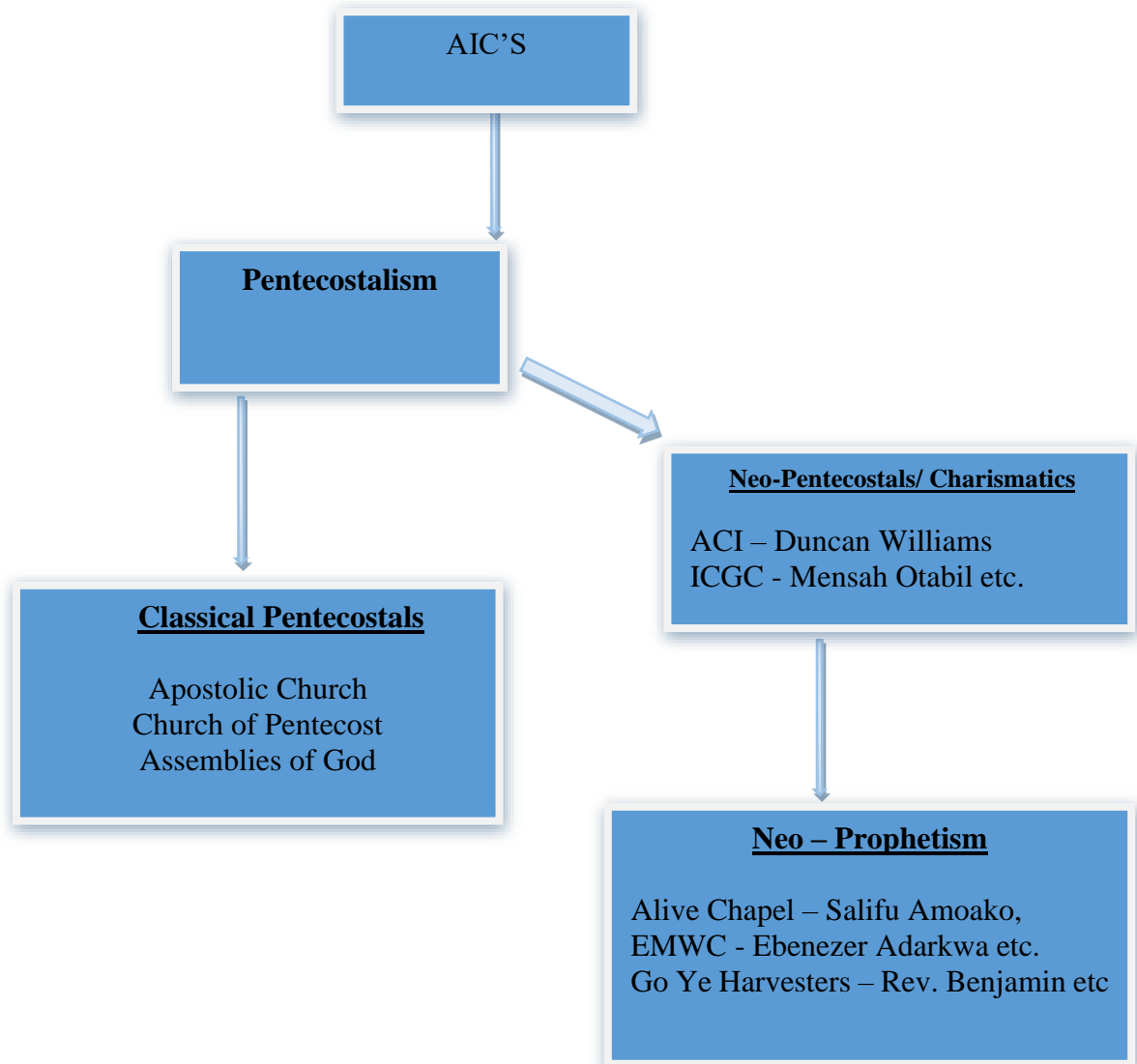


Figure 1: Tracing Neo-Prophetism from its root in the AIC.

From the chart above, AICs is the root at which other offshoots of Ghanaian churches emerged. In the 21st century, Christian tradition classifies the African continent as one of the main actors or players of Christian faith due to the role Africans play in shaping the universal religious landscape. Africa has been stigmatized by European Christianity as a traditional religious base where African Tradition religion has gained more grounds than any other continent. Having stigmatized Africans this way, European Christianity has woefully failed to address most of the existential challenges which are mainly attributed to the establishment of African Independent Churches in the 19th century in Africa. The main reason for the establishment of these independent churches in Africa was in direct response to the failure of European Christianity to address numerous problems facing Africans. By way of finding more solutions to the problems confronting Africans, the proliferation of African Independent Churches became more eminent to react to the imperialistic doctrines and practices which to the Africans provided no or any solution for them. This move by the Africans gave them self-confidence, self-belief, and self-reliance to solve their problems. This new era of Africanized panacea to the existential problems gained more grounds rapidly and changed their psyche to relegate the Europeanized Christianity to the background with the simple reason that it has inadvertently failed to provide the needed responses to their predicaments.⁸¹

⁸¹ B.A. Adedibu, "The Changing Faces of African Independent Churches as Development Actors Across borders," *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 74, no. 1 (2018), 4740; <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4740> [Retrieved on 10th January 2020].

Quayesi-Amakye has maintained that the current prophetic manifestations within the nation would be described as the fifth stage of that phenomenon. The primary stage of Christian prophetism happened within the period of the AIC's.⁸²

2.4 Forerunners of Ghanaian Pentecostalism

Scholars like Asamoah-Gyadu,⁸³ Kingsley Larbi⁸⁴, and Cephas Omenyo⁸⁵ identify Williams Wade Harris, John Swatson, and Sampson Opong as prophetic forerunners of Ghanaian Pentecostalism. They agree that these prophets were characterized by the charisma they claim to receive from God in their experience with the Holy Spirit.

Cephas Omenyo reiterated that the activities of these African Prophets resulted in an unprecedented mass movement of people into the mainline churches in Ghana and elsewhere. To him, the activities of these prophets lie in the fact that although they had their calls quite independently of any western mission, yet they identify with the mainline churches and operate in the context of the churches. He further explains that the activities of these prophets brought about renewal within the churches in which allowed them to exercise their prophetic ministries⁸⁶. A brief history of these prophets is outlined below to enhance our understanding of the history of the prophetic ministry in Ghana.

⁸² Quayesi-Amakye, "Ghana's New Prophetism: Antecedents and Some Characteristic Features;" <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304785594> [Retrieved on 3rd January 2020].

⁸³ Asamoah Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 1.

⁸⁴ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*.

⁸⁵ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*.

⁸⁶ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 67.

2.4.1 Prophet William Wade Harris

William Wade Harris, a Kru man of the Grebo tribe, was born at Cape Palmas, Liberia, and educated in the American Episcopal Church. He served in the capacity as ward to Rev. Josse Lowrie of the American Episcopal Church and later became a catechist in the same Church.⁸⁷ He then got involved in the practice of his tribesmen in working aboard ships along the coast of West Africa. Having taken part in English Christian services in Lagos, he became a fervent believer in the British colonial system, something he considered more “beneficial for the African aborigines than the rule of the Afro-Americans in Liberia.”⁸⁸

As a result, in 1910 Harris demonstrated his dissatisfaction with the Afro American rule, which at that time gave little room to the aborigines of Liberia in political matters. He showed his political affiliation and went ahead to hoist the British Union Jack. This brought about his arrest and he was thrown into prison⁸⁹. The prison experience led to his call into the prophetic ministry.

A. Call and Prophetic Ministry

In 1911, whilst in jail, Harris professed to have had a dream where he was charged by the angel of the Lord: Gabriel, to preach the Word of God. According to Ayegboyin and Ishola, the following were the words of angel Gabriel to Harris: “Harris, you are not in prison, God is coming to anoint you, and you will be a prophet, you are like Daniel”.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Bediako, *Christianity in Africa*, 9.

⁸⁸ Debrunner, *History of Christianity in Ghana*, 270.

⁸⁹ Debrunner, *History of Christianity in Ghana*, 270.

⁹⁰ Ayegboyin and Ademalo Ishola, *African Indigenous Churches*, 51.

The scholars recorded further that on hearing these words, Harris related “the spirit descended on him with a sound like a jet of water”, an experience which occurred three different times, Harris, then regarded himself God’s Prophet who has been given a charge as a watchman as described in the book of Ezekiel 33.⁹¹

Harris began his missionary work as soon as he came out of prison. “He dressed in a ‘white robe and a turban, carrying a bamboo cross, a Bible, and a calabash for baptism.’⁹² He was also said to be a modest man”.⁹³ The content of his preaching centered on the need for the people to abandon “traditional religion” and belief in the Almighty God and have faith in the Cross, to be baptized, to establish Christian congregations under church leadership like elders and apostles, to keep the Sunday holy, to honour the Bible and to wait for the missionaries.⁹⁴ The ministry of Harris involved evangelistic activities from place to place preaching and leading people to God.

The ministry of the Prophet was also said to have been marked by signs and wonders. For Harris, Jesus is the Supreme God, and therefore allegiance to him gives the converts all the protection required against all the machinations of evil spirits⁹⁵. He was endowed with the power to carry out his mission on earth. From Larbi’s book, Haliburton is cited as indicating that:

Harris claimed to be a prophet with all the special powers that God bestows on those He chooses. These powers enabled him to drive out demons and spirits, the enemies of God. He cured the sickle in body and mind by driving

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Debrunner, *History of Christianity in Ghana*, 270.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Debrunner, *History of Christianity in Ghana*, 275.

⁹⁵ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 59.

out the evil beings preying on them. Those who practiced black magic had to confess and repent or he made them mad. He believed God had given him other powers, more dramatic assertions of their relationship, notably the power to call down fire and rain from heaven.⁹⁶

Thus, Harris did not lose focus of his calling, which is, converting people from the ‘kingdom of darkness’ to the ‘kingdom of God’, insisting on total surrender of one’s life to God. Furthermore, as a prophet. Harris was constantly inclined to the Divine to know what to do at a time.

Casely-Hayford describes him in the following words:

The angel Gabriel’s name is constantly on his lips, and he talks of receiving telegrams ... “I received a message that I must turn back. I am not to go forward. If I go to ‘Seccondee’ the people there will not hear ... God is making use of me, a Kru man, for his purpose, yet men will not hear.”⁹⁷

It is evident from the above that the Prophet was aware of the opposition that awaited him yet he held on to the ‘prophetic word’.

B. The influence of Harris Ministry on Society

Prophet Wade Harris’s ministry did not lead to the formation of a denomination of his own, though some of his converts, namely, Tani and John Nachabah, later decided to establish their churches. Rather, his ministry was seen as of revival ministry to the then existing churches, particularly, the Methodist and the Seventh Day Adventist church.⁹⁸

It is said that people who were drawn by irresistible power to surrender to God found their way to the churches of their consensus and remained there⁹⁹.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Debrunner, *History of Christianity in Ghana*, 271.

⁹⁸ Debrunner, *History of Christianity in Ghana*, 271.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 272.

Furthermore, it is on record that there was, particularly, a general religious awakening throughout the length and breadth of the Appolonia (Nzima) district. Debrunner quotes from the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Report, 1915, the following observation:

Now people have rushed with feverish haste into churches. Everywhere, bamboo chapels and churches were built. Their thirst for the word of God and the songs of Zion is insatiable. They pounced on travelers, timber clerks, and any man of the letter either to preach to them or teach them a Christian song. Others came to the principal stations on the Sabbath, hear the preacher, and returned to repeat what they have heard to their fellow villagers.¹⁰⁰

The assertion attests to the infectious and spectacular nature of the message preached by the Prophet. The hearers, having experienced the power of the Word, could not keep it to themselves but spread it. Baeta argues that:

It was admitted that in a mission lasting two years he brought more people to profess Christian faith than all orthodox missions in the area had done over two generations. His inspiration was a conviction that he had received from the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, he spoke with a conviction of immediate authority, which few or no missionaries of the older churches would claim.¹⁰¹

Thus, the prophetic-evangelistic ministry of Harris introduced into the existing churches, a revivalist and an awakening spirit.

Concerning his preaching, Harris was orthodox but simple, but his baptismal formula and ritual included laying his Bible on the head and saying, “This is God’s book, you

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Christian G. Baeta, *Christianity in Tropical Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 112.

must obey it”.¹⁰² He recommends monogamy as the ideal; he also acknowledged the special virtues of monogamy saying that’s good for Africans.¹⁰³ Harris did not strictly insist on a monogamous type of marriage for his converts, he suggested it was a good practice but the missionary churches did insist on Monogamy. It is also worth noting that even though Harris did not establish his church yet most spiritual churches notably Grace Tanni’s Faith-Healing Church and John Nachabah’s Twelve Apostles Church trace their roots to his movement about whom Baeta has written a lot. Finally, another outcome of Harris Ministry is his influence on John Swatson, who as a disciple followed the steps of his master, Harris.¹⁰⁴

Several African Independent Churches (AIC’s) were established within 1920 and 1930.¹⁰⁵ These groups popularly referred to by Prof. Beata as ‘spiritual churches’ is traceable to the year 1914 with the visit of the well-known prophet William Wade Harris to the Apollonia and Axim districts of the then Gold Coast. This visit produced “The Church of the Twelve Apostles” popularly called the “Nackabah”. This group claims to be the first spiritual church to be established in Ghana.¹⁰⁶

2.4.2 John Swatson

John Swatson was a mulatto. His father, a European, was attached to the court of Omanhene Amakyi I of Beyin. Nzima, his mother, was a member of the royal house.¹⁰⁷ He was educated at the local Methodist School at Cape Coast, Central Region of Ghana.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ayegboyin and Ishoja, *African Indigenous Churches*, 53.

¹⁰⁴ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 59.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 63.

¹⁰⁵ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*.

¹⁰⁶ Beata, *Prophetism in Ghana*.

¹⁰⁷ G.M. Haliburton, “The Anglican Church in Ghana and Harris Movement in 1914,” *The Bulletin of the Society of African Church History* 1 (1964): 101-106.

He married according to church ordinance, a daughter of a Methodist pioneer of the area. Swatson worked for a commercial house at Axim but he made some losses in this job and eventually moved to what is now Benin City in Nigeria where he as a civil servant.¹⁰⁸

Swatson then came to Ghana as a Methodist teacher-catechist and worked in the Axim Circuit, which included Bassam, Aboisso, and Assinie in the Ivory Coast. Between 1912 and 1913, Swatson settled down and became the leader of the Aboiso congregation in the Ivory Coast.¹⁰⁹

A. Call and Ministry

John Swatson was inducted into the missionary and prophetic-evangelistic field when he met Prophet William Wade Harris. His calling came through the command of Harris to become an adherent of the Church of England, and the imposition of the commission to evangelize. Swatson started his evangelistic crusade in 1915. “Early in 1915 John Swatson took up his cross and started on his evangelistic tour, and performed the same wonders as Harris.”

Haliburton reports that Swatson begged Harris to teach him about the “powers of baptism” which he did and commissioned him as his disciple. It is said that;

From that moment Swatson believed that the Holy Spirit, so manifest in Harris, had fallen on him. He abandoned his possessions, dressed in a white robe-like Harris, and like him carried a cross swathed in white calico and the indispensable bowl of baptismal water. His success was considerable. Like Harris he used the Bible to drive out evil spirits, placing it on the head

¹⁰⁸ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 64.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

of a fetish priest and exhorting him until he was cleansed and driving “gods” from their shrines and groves. He also used his power to introduce some reforms.

One of the teachings to his converts was that it is wrong to swear by the fetish. The converts were also made to understand at the stage of their conversion that the Bible and the Cross-should be seen as being more than the Whiteman’s fetish.¹¹⁰

B. Influence of Swatson’s Ministry

Indeed, Swatson moved as an itinerant preacher in carrying out his commission as a servant of God. He made converts who were said to have joined the existing churches and others combined to form a denomination called Christ Church or Church of England.¹¹¹

According to the accounts of Haliburton, Swatson, in 1915, felt that his ministry would be successful if it was connected to the Church of England. He stayed with this denomination, known as Christ Church Mission - Beyin, and carried out the Bishopric responsibilities.¹¹²

In 1916, Swatson started to encounter difficulties with the authorities of the Aowin District as a result of his association with the new denomination. The Acting District Commissioner, J. P. Ross, is said to have reported that: an itinerant preacher called Swatson or Nianghia, calling himself ‘Bishop’, was holding meetings and taking collections ... He told the DC that he was going to hand his converts to the Church of

¹¹⁰ G.M. Haliburton, “The Anglican Church in Ghana and Harris Movement in 1914,” *Bulletin of the Society of African Church History* 1 (1964): 101-106.

¹¹¹ Haliburton, “The Anglican Church in Ghana,” 102.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 221.

England, but it appears that that Church has not accepted the responsibility and Swatson claims to collect the money on behalf of an institution called “Christ Church”, Beyin.¹¹³

The movement of Swatson is said to have further been characterized by fraud. This depicts how a section of the public antagonized the ministry of Swatson. These people, particularly the authorities, saw his ministry as the destruction of native property. This is portrayed in the word of the Wiawso District Commissioner recorded by Haliburton as follows: “I told him that I would tolerate no smashing of fetishes or any procedure likely to lead to rioting, that every person was entitled to his own beliefs and that his angelic visitations could not be made an excuse for breaking up people’s household gods.”¹¹⁴

Despite this caution, Swatson is said to have shown “a lack of tact by interfering in the household matters and fetish affairs about stool rights”.¹¹⁵ For fear of being poisoned, Swatson was advised to leave the town. The D.C. had to go to Enchi to persuade Swatson to leave Wiawso on the same day; otherwise, he would be worried about the safety of his life and all his activities in other communities.¹¹⁶

Again, the ministry of Swatson was seen as violating certain traditional values of the society. It is said that in many cases that were brought before the authorities, it was obvious that the people’s “conversion to Christianity was used as an excuse to indulge

¹¹³ Ibid., 202.

¹¹⁴ Haliburton, “The Anglican Church in Ghana,” 102.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 219.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

in casual amours without the fear of consequences which, in their fetish faith, constituted the sum total of their morals.”¹¹⁷

Some Christian leaders, on the other hand, saw the ministry of Swatson as having had a positive effect on the society or the communities he visited. One Archdeacon Morrison is said to have found Swatson to be “an extraordinary man.”¹¹⁸ This is because the latter had handed over to the Archdeacon a list of over one thousand names who were baptized by him in the Denkyira and Sefwi areas.”

There were certain places where the whole village led by the chief virtually burnt their fetishes, washed their stools and were baptized. His preaching was characterized by great conviction and power to convert. Thus, for some people, Swatson was successful in his ministry despite the adverse effects of his ministry.¹¹⁹

In 1943, long after he died in 1924 (having been considered as one who had lost his sanity), Swatson’s Movement was described in the following words:

John Swatson was a rather undisciplined and very ignorant self-constituted missionary, people were stirred up by him out of Heathenism, but he did not give them much else, among the converts, there was great zeal, vast ignorance, some indiscipline, a tendency of some, especially young men, to flout the local chief’s authority, and much moral laxity. With a natural hesitancy in accepting and practical difficulties in putting into effect, the Church’s rule about having only one wife.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 101-106.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 219.

¹¹⁹ Haliburton, “The Anglican Church in Ghana.”

¹²⁰ Debrunner, *History of Christianity in Ghana*, 299.

Thus, Swatson's ministry ended on a sad note discolored all his successes in the past as far as prophetic or evangelistic works are concerned.

2.4.3 Prophet Sampson Oppong

Sampson Oppong is a Ghanaian born to a Grushi slave who was captured by Samori and sold to a man at Dormaa, Brong-Ahafo Region.¹²¹ He worked at the railway construction, Ivory Coast, and later became a cocoa-labourer in Ashanti-Akim and Akim-Abuakwa.¹²² He is also said to have been a sorcerer who prepared and sold magic medicines and charms to harm others.¹²³ Thus, concerning his religious background, Sampson Oppong could be said to have indulged in the "indigenous traditional religion".

A. Call and Ministry

It all started after Sampson Oppong had escaped from prison and made his way to Akim Abuakwa. He met one Rev. Ofosuhene of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and was baptized. It was after this experience that he felt the call to preach.¹²⁴

In 1920, this man, wearing a long black robe that has the design of a red cross on both shoulders and a bigger red cross in the centre, this criminal turned evangelist, tall, strongly-built, with long matted hair over his shoulders and the back of his neck entered Ashanti.¹²⁵

Thus, it is probable that Oppong had a strong inner urge to propagate the gospel among those yet to hear the word of God.

¹²¹ Haliburton, "The Anglican Church in Ghana," 222.

¹²² Debrunner, *History of Christianity in Ghana*, 310.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 68.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Another spectacular thing about the call of Oppong is the fact that, as an illiterate adult, he is believed to have had “a greyish oval-shaped flat stone in his hand”¹²⁶ from which he read or quoted accurately “the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation”.¹²⁷ Larbi quotes a report of a local newspaper when Oppong visited Cape Coast in 1923:

This man, an uneducated peasant... saw the vision of the cross of the Risen Jesus, and was compelled to preach to the Ashanti's. He carried a wooden cross and a stone wrapped in a handkerchief. From looking at the Stone, he cites with great exactness and precision every text from the Bible of Life, He surprised Cape Coast.”¹²⁸

B. The influence of Sampson Oppong's Ministry

The Prophet's ministry had a great impact on the growth of the Methodist Church in the Ashanti Region. Hundreds of souls sought enrolment in the Church under his fiery preaching.¹²⁹ Larbi reports of the incredible harvest that took place in the period: “Chiefs and people have confessed their faith in Christ in such numbers that for the moment, my colleagues are at their wits' end to find either accommodation or teachers. They have enrolled over a thousand during the past week.”¹³⁰

According to Omenyo, it was the ministry of Sampson Oppong, which paved way for the gospel in the Ashanti Region.¹³¹ Omenyo adds:

This was at a time when there appeared to be insurmountable difficulties in the preaching of the Gospel in Ashanti. Where converts were made in

¹²⁶ Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, 311.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 311.

¹²⁸ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 67.

¹²⁹ F.I. Bartels, *The Roots of Ghana Methodism* (Accra: The Ghana University Press, 1965).

¹³⁰ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 67.

¹³¹ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 87.

trickles, his ministry produced converts in torrents, to the extent that the missionaries could hardly cope with the numbers.¹³²

Apart from the positive impact his ministry had on the Church and the society of Ashanti, some were not impressed but doubted him. For instance, the Basel Missionary Church (Presbyterian Church) in Dormaa Ahenkro looked on the ministry of Sampson Opong with caution and considered him as a “big fetish man” who used Christianity as a camouflage.¹³³ This may be attributed to the unfortunate end of his life. His moral life was impaired and marred. He is said to have become a drunkard during the latter days of his life.¹³⁴

Also, Opong is said to have raped a small girl which led to a heavy fine, by the Paramount Chief of Dormaa, and his exclusion from the Methodist Church.¹³⁵ Despite these negative records, Opong later made peace with the Methodist Church and became a local preacher at Akuntanim, his hometown.¹³⁶

2.5 Conclusion

Even though these three Prophets — Williams Wade Harris, John Swatson, and Sampson Opong — are acknowledged as the forerunners of the Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity, they did not establish individual churches. Rather, some of their followers established churches. Again, though some people are of the view that these prophets had negative reports, their ministries had great impact and influence on the Christianity of their generation. They proclaimed to have received from the Holy Spirit. They

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, 311.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, 311.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

understood their commission and did not allow the principles of the existing churches to influence them or misdirect them.

The earlier Prophets carried out the Christian evangelization resulting in mass conversion; people willingly gave out their amulets, charms and other ritual objects to be burnt. They made an impact on their generation and lifted the face of Christianity in Ghana as well as in Africa.

Omenyo underscores the point that “the prophets discussed understood the African worldview and operated in such a way as to make Christianity relevant to their followers”.¹³⁷ The ministry of the above Prophets also led to the springing forth of the *Spiritual Churches*. This was because some churches doubted the “direct inspiration and charisma of the prophets and therefore were prepared to work in equal partnership with them.”¹³⁸

The Ministries of these prophets also led to the establishments of the African Independent Churches in Ghana, out of which other Pentecostal, charismatic, and the Prophetic and Neo-prophetic churches emanated.

2.6 African Independent Churches (AIC's)?

African Independent/Indigenous/Initiated Churches (AIC's) may be defined as churches that have been established, instituted, controlled, managed, propagated, and funded by Africans for the resolve of declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ redeeming the lost soul to the Christ, breaking the chains of the enemy from the life of the afflicted and worshiping the true God.

¹³⁷ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 72.

¹³⁸ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 73

Akrong is of the view that these churches are not dependent on mission funding and control, and that the AICs were established to bring meaning to the gospel to suit African circumstances and worldview.¹³⁹

In Ghana AIC's are called *Sumsum Sore* in the Akan dialect or *Mumu Solemo* in the Ga dialect, which means; 'Holy Spirit Churches'¹⁴⁰. Beata thus called them spiritual churches, because their activities are envisioned to imply that in their worship, the groups involved embarking on different activities that are meant to invoke the holy spirit of God or are to be understood as signs of his descent upon the worshippers.¹⁴¹

The AIC's were principally established by former members of the Historic Mission Churches who were separated from their mother churches. Others were offshoots from other spiritual churches or were introduced by Nigerian migrants. The major ones are The Twelve Apostles church (*Nankabah*), Musama Disco Christo Church, The saviour Church (*Memene da Gyidifo*), The Apostles' Revelation Society (*Apostolowo Fe Dedefia Habobo*), African Faith Tabernacle congregation. The Eternal sacred order of cherubim, and Seraphim Society church of the Lord (*Aladura*)¹⁴².

According to Beata, the AIC's exhibit revivalist tendencies and emphasis faith healing. Their worship is vibrant and full of lively music. He describes the miracles that mark out the spiritual churches as follows:

Rhythmic swaying of the body, usually stamping of the feet to repetitive music (both vocal and instrumental, particularly percussion), hand-clapping, ejaculations, poignant cries and prayers, dancing, leaping,

¹³⁹ S. Akrong, "The Historic Mission of the AICs," *Research Review (NS)* 14 (1998): 13-21.

¹⁴⁰ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 45.

¹⁴¹ Beata, *Prophetism in Ghana*.

¹⁴² Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*.

and various motor reactions expressive of intense religious emotions, prophesying, speaking in tongues, falling into trances, relating dreams and visions and witnessing, i.e. recounting publicly one's miraculous redemption.¹⁴³

Omenyo outlines that during services, most AIC's burn pleasant-smelling incense and candles, Footwear is not allowed in the chapels of most the churches.¹⁴⁴ Leaders of the AIC's have special dresses-usually long white or coloured gown with girdles. Most of the churches have sacred places, sacred objects, and sacred dresses. They generally adhere to food prohibitions (mostly abstinence from alcoholic drinks and tobacco, eating of pork, etc.) and other ritual restrictions such as not engaging in sex in the night proceeding to a declared fasting and prayer day.¹⁴⁵

Faith healing plays an important role in AIC's. Turner identifies that revelation from the spirit through the prophet and healing are the two core features of the AIC's.¹⁴⁶ That is why most of these churches have healing camps and healing centres, and those afflicted and sick are kept there for a while. In some instances, the sick spends years at the camp before they are healed. In their process of healing, fasting is emphasized and prayer aids such as anointing oil, ritual bathing, drinking of blessed water, and other physical elements are used on patients. After patients are healed, they are obliged to be appreciative of the leaders either in cash or in kind. Sometimes those who are unable to afford may be asked to remain in the camp to work for the leader- usually on his or her farm as a token of appreciation.

¹⁴³ Beata, *Prophetism in Ghana*.

¹⁴⁴ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*.

¹⁴⁵ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 74.

¹⁴⁶ H.W. Turner, "A typology of Africans Religious Movement," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 1, no. 1 (1967), 28.

Most of the AIC's exorcised evil spirits and heal witches who have confessed their witchcraft. In the course of exorcising the evil spirits or cleansing witches, victims sometimes make confessions of their witchcraft activities that create tension, and subsequently instability, in some families.¹⁴⁷

The AIC's pursue to satisfy the African's deeply religious and spiritual search and the quest for authentic spirituality. Thus, they have in numerous ways sought to communicate at the wave-length of Africans through their worldview¹⁴⁸. Thus, the attraction of some of the members of the Historic Mission churches to the AIC's. One member recounts why people are attracted to the AIC's as follows;

We may not all be articulate in written theology, but we express faith in our liturgy, worship, and structures. Our services are alive with warm expressions of joy as we clap and dance in rhythm with the new spiritual and indigenous songs. Needless to say, people come because they feel at home.¹⁴⁹

The AIC's in the words of Kwame Bediako has paced and blazed a path that others have followed even in contemporary times. Herein lies their significance for they have shown to the direction in which broad segments of African Christians were moving, and so they attested to the reality of some generalized trends in the Africans' response to the Christian faith in African terms.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*.

¹⁴⁸ J.S. Pobee and Gabriel Ositule II, *African Initiatives in Christianity: The Growth, Gifts and Diversities of Indigenous African Churches: A Challenge to the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications 1998), 10.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁵⁰ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995).

Out of the AIC's emerged the Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana, the preceding paragraphs take a look at the Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana in its diverse forms.

2.7 Pentecostalism in Ghana

At this point, it is prudent to examine the history of Pentecostalism as a strand of Christianity. Placing Pentecostalism in African Christianity in the context of the meaning of the term 'pentecostal.' Historically the advent of Pentecostalism globally has been understood as having a direct continuity with the practices of Charles Fox Parham and William J. Seymour's Azusa Street movement of 1901 and 1906 respectively. While a scholar like Synan believes that practically, all Pentecostal groups in existence can trace their lineage to the Azusa Mission, there is an indication to propose that not all Pentecostal surges around the world may be causally linked to North American initiatives.¹⁵¹

Kingsley Larbi identified that the origins of Evangelical Ghanaian Pentecostalism are mainly traced to Faith Tabernacle Church of Peter Anim. Out of this organization arose three of the four leading classical Pentecostal churches in the country: the Christ Apostolic Church, Church of Pentecost, and the Apostolic Church.¹⁵²

The development of the movement has been greatly influenced by two devoted and charismatic individuals, Peter Anim and James McKeown. Anim's movement was started in 1917 and had an affiliation with the UK Apostolic Church in 1939. Anim and McKeown separated due to a strong misunderstanding of divine healing and using preventive and curative medicine. Anim restructured the rest of his followers with the

¹⁵¹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 10.

¹⁵² Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 69.

title “The Christ Apostolic Church”. Mckeown was joined by some supporters from Anim’s group, as he continued to work as a missionary of the UK Apostolic church, until 1953 when he seceded from the parent body to establish his local group. The year 1953 therefore saw the emergence of three Pentecostal bodies in the country all having the words ‘Apostolic church’ as part of their names. These were Anim’s Christ Apostolic Church, Mckeown’s Gold Coast Apostolic Church, and the Apostolic Church of Gold Coast, an affiliate of the UK Apostolic Church. These three bodies and the Assemblies of God became the four main Pentecostal bodies.¹⁵³ Asamoah Gyadu offered a working definition of Pentecostalism which the researcher has adopted for this work.

Pentecostalism refers to Christian groups which emphasize salvation in Christ as a transformative experience wrought by the Holy Spirit and in which pneumatic phenomena including ‘speaking in tongues’, prophecies, visions, healing and miracles in general, perceived as standing in historic continuity with the experiences of the early church as found especially in the Acts of the Apostles, are sought, accepted, valued, and consciously encouraged among members as signifying the presence of God and experiences of his Spirit.¹⁵⁴

Ghanaian Pentecostalism can be classified under two main headings, that is “*The Classical Pentecostal Churches* (Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God Church and the other strands of the Apostolic churches) and the *Neo-Pentecostal Churches* (These comprises a group of renewal groups in the Historic Mission Churches, trans-national

¹⁵³ Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 70.

¹⁵⁴ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 12.

denominations, and new independent Pentecostal churches) which are also referred to as *Charismatic Churches*.”

Out of these Neo-Pentecostal/charismatic churches emerged the Neo-prophetic ministries which is the focus of this study.

2.8 Neo-Prophetism in Ghana

The Christian scene in Ghana has been marked by the establishment and development of Charismatic and Neo-Prophetic churches. Asamoah-Gyadu, in his article “African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana”, suggests that growths have happened in the field of African independency. He attributes the first development to the wave of autonomous churches which emerged as a result of the activities of African prophets. He discusses further some new independent churches in Africa which have been established through charismatic renewal by the Charismatic ministries. Asamoah-Gyadu opines that the third wave of Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana, commenced in the 1970s, through the trans-denominational fellowships, prayer groups, ministries, and independent churches.¹⁵⁵ The historical reference is important as far as the churches being researched into are concerned since most of them fall within the purview of the third wave of Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana.

Neo-Prophetic ministries/Churches are the prophet-led ministries within Ghana’s charismatic churches/ministries (CMs) which emerged from the early 1990s, these ministries emphasize evil and that there is the need to negate this evil amongst adherents.

¹⁵⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*.

In this class of prophetism, the persona of the prophet is central. It is the prophet the people look up to for a divine word and direction in the intercession of evil. The prophets involve their adherents in different prophetic rites.¹⁵⁶

The Neo-Prophetic Churches which emerged out of the Charismatic churches in the 1990s and 2000s also shares the same historical roots as the AIC's. Some Neo-Prophetic Churches' resulted from the prayer/deliverance activities of prophetic personalities. A case in point is the Christ Gospel Miracles Ministries international of Mamfe-Akwapim of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The church is the offshoot of the Mount Horeb Prayer Centre. Both the prayer centre and the church are the results of the prophetic ministry of Prophet Paul Nii Okai, who is described by seekers and clients as God's anointed prophet-evangelist for the 21st century.¹⁵⁷

As stated by Cephas Omenyo and Abamfo, Neo-Prophetism is a new wave of Christianity that emerged in the 1990s.¹⁵⁸ Some explanations given by C.G. Beata for the emergence of prophetic ministries include Africans reacting to Western European political and ecclesiastical domination, compensating for the loss of traditional support systems,¹⁵⁹ addressing the traditional fears of the African, and answering to the quest for belonging¹⁶⁰.

Paul Gifford referred to 'Neo-Prophetism' as Ghana's new religious movements, Gifford reiterates that this new type of Christianity flourishes mostly because of their claim to possess solutions to the most pressing existential problems, economic

¹⁵⁶ Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, "Prophetism in Ghana's New Prophetic Churches," *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association* 35, no. 2 (2015), 162–173.

¹⁵⁷ Quayesi-Amakye, "Prophetism and Development?," 230.

¹⁵⁸ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space."

¹⁵⁹ Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 130-133.

¹⁶⁰ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space."

survivals.¹⁶¹ Omenyo and Atiemo opined that, While Gifford's assertion is partly true because it seems true that new movements often emerge to serve the religious needs of people in specific generational brackets, socio-economic class and of a religio-cultural orientation.

Whereas William Wade Harris, John Swatson, and Sampson Oppong are regarded as the precursor of Ghanaian Pentecostalism, Cephas Omenyo and Abamfo Atiemo identify Prophet Amoako, *Prophet Elisha Salifu Amoako*, and *Prophet Emmanuel Kwaku Apraku as the forerunners to Neo-prophetism in Ghana*.

2.8.1 Prophet Amoako

The late Francis Akwasi Amoako, popularly known as Brother Amoako, is the generally acclaimed forerunner of contemporary Prophetism in Ghana.¹⁶² Prophet Amoako emerged on the Ghanaian religious scene in the early 1980s. In Amoako's testimony, he had a pre-Christian background which was characterized by drug addiction, robbery, and drug peddling (particularly Indian hemp). He also claimed he was deeply involved in 'spiritism' - invocation of spirits mainly for malevolent purposes¹⁶³. He claimed to have a spectacular conversion to Christianity. A local Christian press gave the following account of Amoako's conversion to Christianity after Amoako's demise in March 1990:

Amoako whose early life was shrouded in fear - a terror in the society – became converted when one day he was preparing to wrap Indian hemp (wee or marijuana) for sale. It all happened suddenly in July 1969 at

¹⁶¹ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, ix.

¹⁶² Paul, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 42-43.

¹⁶³ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space."

Santaase, Kumasi, when a bright light surrounded him in his room and a voice told him to give his heart to the world Saviour so that the Lord can use him. Amoako at first seemed adamant but the sign was so burning and conquering that he could not help. He did not sell that day, and the call also did not end that day. It continually dawned on him and he was later led by the light to the forest where he was confined for two weeks with only the Bible as his armour while fasting and praying. Having thus been equipped by God for His work, Amoako started traveling throughout the country with the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁴

Generally, Amoako was thought to have received an independent conversion although it is evident that at the initial stages of his conversion, he participated in the Santaase Methodist Church's renewal meetings and the local Assemblies of God Church and the Scripture Union Fellowship.¹⁶⁵

It is believed that Prophet Amoako used to have private retreats in the bush after his conversion experience. During one of the retreats, he claimed God called him and promised to use him as a preacher and to bring healing and deliverance to most people throughout the universe.¹⁶⁶

Prophet Amoako's ministry could not be restricted to the framework of any particular church or ministry. As such, he began an independent itinerant evangelistic ministry that led him to the establishment of a group called Bethlehem Evangelistic Ministry (BELAM) around 1977. He was later assisted by eight others whose highest education level was the basic level. They expanded the group and renamed it the 'Resurrection Power Evangelistic Ministry' (REPEM).¹⁶⁷ It is significant to note that Amoako

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space."

¹⁶⁶ Emmanuel M. Ahlijah, "Pentecostalism and Belief in Witchcraft in Ghana: A Case Study of Resurrection Power Evangelistic (REPEM) Kumasi," BA Dissertation (University of Ghana Legon, 1989), 12.

¹⁶⁷ Omenyo and Atiemo: "Claiming Religious Space."

surrounded himself with others who, like him, only had the minimum basic education.¹⁶⁸

Amoako's preaching of the gospel was labeled as plain but bold. He fearlessly attacked the then Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) government verbally for its anti-Christian predispositions which earned him the nickname "John the Baptist of Ghana." A more noteworthy characteristic of Amoako's ministry was his demonstration of the authority of Jesus to heal and deliver individuals who were believed to be in oppression to the devil. He attracted over 20,000 people to his ministry by 1990 through the manifestation of the above-mentioned characteristics which his clients advertised through their testimonies.¹⁶⁹

The REPEM later grew into thirty-six (36) local branches in Kumasi alone, four (4) in Takoradi, ten (10) in Accra, and others in various parts of Accra. On the global scene, itinerant preaching tours led to the founding of branches of REPEM among Ghanaian immigrants in London, Holland, Belgium, and Germany. Indeed, his demonstration of power and miracles coupled with his rather blunt and sometimes use of vulgar language was so non-conformist that no established church or ministry could contain him within its framework.¹⁷⁰

This special style of ministry by semi-literate or entirely illiterate pastors and evangelists pioneered by Prophet Amoako, has become the pattern followed by the contemporary prophets who lead the neo-Prophetic ministries in Ghana. One typical example of the modern-day prophets who came to the ministry through the late Prophet

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Omenyo and Atiemo: "Claiming Religious Space."

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

Amoako's ministry is Prophet Elisha Salifu Amoako who is the focus of our discussion in the next session.

2.8.2 Prophet Elisha Salifu Amoako

Prophet Salifu Amoako was born in Kumasi in 1966 into an Islamic family. His parents could not afford a formal education for him in his childhood days. Prophet Elisha Salifu Amoako went to school at a rather mature age. Due to the humiliation that he suffered, he abandoned schooling after one year and became wayward, taking to smoking, drinking alcohol, and armed robbery.¹⁷¹ Prophet Salifu Amoako was led to the Christian faith by one Mr. Awuah who presented him to the local Assemblies of God Church at Bantama Kumasi. He later abandoned the Assemblies of God Church due to its over-emphasis on the English language which he did not quite understand. He then joined Evangelist Amoako's Resurrection Power Evangelistic Ministry at Santasi which used the local language, Twi. He dedicated himself to serve at the church by undertaking all kinds of menial works in the church including doing the house errands for Prophet Amoako who later asked him to live with him in his house. Amoako thus became his mentor hence the addition of his mentor's name 'Amoako' to his original name.¹⁷²

Salifu Amoako claimed he had a remarkable experience a week before his mentor, Evangelist Amoako, died. According to him, he was sleeping in Evangelist Amoako's car when the late evangelist laid his hands on him and prophesied that the anointing on him would be transferred onto him Salifu Amoako and God would use him throughout

¹⁷¹ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*.

¹⁷² Ibid.

the world. Salifu Amoako claims when he heard of the news of the death of his mentor, Prophet Amoako, he was so distressed that he went into a room and resorted to prayer.¹⁷³

According to him, God spoke to him during the period to confirm what his mentor had prophesied that he would have a worldwide ministry. Prophet Salifu Amoako emphasized the ministry of angels to humans. According to him, angels are vehicles for remarkable and supernatural manifestations in the lives of human beings. He believes the work of angels has eschatological significance and that God shall use angels as the main instruments for the achievement of his end-time plans. Salifu Amoako claims angels play a crucial role in his ministry and that of other prophets; consequently, his followers are encouraged to yearn to perceive their angels since they do visit them with answers to their various requests. He believed that God has a vision for each Christian in life and this vision needs to be realized at the right ‘timing of God’. There is thus no room for failure for Christians. He believes that successful Christians are those who have discovered their ‘God-given ‘vision at ‘God-chosen ‘times and have utilized all the opportunities.¹⁷⁴

Salifu Amoako commenced his ministry with the formation of a small fellowship in Kumasi. He was later directed by God in a trance to move from Kumasi to Accra to start his ministry. He claims in 1994 God spoke to him to organize a ten-day prayer vigil dubbed “*Ghana for Christ Believers All-Night.*” According to him, this vigil prayer served the purpose of announcing his ministry of signs, wonders, and prophetic

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Elisha Salifu-Amoako, “Vision and Provision” (2000); quoted in Omenyo and Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space.”

manifestations to the nation. This led to the establishment of his fellowship which he named '*Jesus is Alive Evangelistic Ministry*' which transformed into a church by the name '*Alive Chapel International*' which was inaugurated on 10th January 1998. The church meets at the Orion Cinema at the Kwame Nkrumah Circle.¹⁷⁵

Prophet Salifu Amoako, Founder and General Overseer of the Alive Chapel International administered healing and deliverance to people by using oil, handkerchief, and honey. He believed these items also are used as aids when praying for people to attain wealth and prosperity. He, however, claimed these items are administered under divine direction, thus they are not the norm in the church's ministration.¹⁷⁶

2.8.3 Prophet Emmanuel Kwaku Apraku

The 37-year old Prophet Kwaku Apraku hails from the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. He is a first-generation Christian. His parents practised the indigenous religion and forbade him to attend church. He dropped out of school at a very early stage and became a juvenile delinquent, involving himself in crimes such as theft and the abuse of hard drugs.¹⁷⁷ According to Apraku, he was one day held in a police cell for stealing a fowl when one Pastor Kwabena Paul who visited the cell on a routine preaching tour prophesied that he was going to be a prophet.¹⁷⁸

According to Apraku, he dreamt of seeing a beautiful city with the inscription "King Jesus" on entering his father's shrine as well as Jesus hanging on the Cross with blood flowing and he heard a voice assuring him that if he believed in the blood and in the

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space."

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

name Jesus many signs and wonders would be performed through him. He also claims in that same dream he was given the name 'Emmanuel'. He believes that was the beginning of his conversion. He then began to associate with one Evangelist Kusi Berko, a popular gospel singer, and preacher. He later joined the Christ Redeemer Church in Kumasi and became an itinerant preacher, working mainly in Kumasi and its environs.¹⁷⁹

Prophet Apraku later moved to the Central part of the Central Regions of Ghana touring towns such as Swedru, Winneba, Ajumako, Oda, and Besiase. Due to his unorthodox practices, he had difficulty of being accepted by some mainline churches in the above-mentioned towns that sometimes invited him to minister. He later moved to Accra and in 1998 established the "King Jesus Evangelistic Ministry" from where he has opened several branches throughout the country.¹⁸⁰

A common feature of the church is the fact that it sells items such as toilet soap, lime, bottled oil (anointing oil), honey, salt, white handkerchief, porridge, and other items which are believed to aid prayers during its services. Furthermore, during fundraising services the prophet sometimes gives out items such as cubes of sugar, toffees, raw eggs, and others at prices that are several times higher than the market value, yet worshippers willingly patronize them.¹⁸¹

2.8.4 Messages and activities of neo-prophetism

Neo-Prophetic Churches emphasize salvation in Christ as a transformative experience wrought by the Holy Spirit and in which pneumatic phenomena together

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space."

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

with speaking in tongues, prophecies, visions, healing and miracles in general, perceived as standing in historic continuity with the experience of the early church as found particularly in the book of Acts of the Apostles, are sought, accepted, valued, and deliberately encouraged among members as signifying the presence of God and experiences of His Spirit.¹⁸²

Neo-Prophetic churches preach deep personal faith, mysticism, the belief that prophecy is a daily reality, while faith-healing, exorcism, and dream and visions are all elementary parts of religious sensibility¹⁸³

Neo-Prophetic Churches are marked by a strong Christo-centrism. Their discernment of Jesus is one who stands at the centre of their lives as a cohort, saviour, deliverer, healer, intercessor, sanctifier, king, and baptizer in the Holy Spirit. In the same vein, they believe that anointing oil usage has a supernatural influence that can rid a person of evil spirits and also confer good favours upon a person.

Neo-prophetic churches make use of the name and blood of Jesus many times in their language, prayer, and songs. They are of the notion that just mentioning the name of Jesus drives away evil spirits, and bring about miracles. From the background of folk religions where animal sacrifices are made for pacification and ritual cleansing. The Christian teaches that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sins and this resonates well with Ghanaian neo-prophetism.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*.

¹⁸³ Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁸⁴ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space."

Neo-prophetic churches employ both the belief systems and components of African Independent Churches and Charismatic groups. In analyzing the theological and hermeneutical positions of neo-prophetic churches in Ghana, Omenyo and Arthur maintained that the exertion of physical force was vital for receiving answers to prayers in neo-prophetic churches. Thus, their prayer sessions were frequently quite deafening, boisterous, and very physical. Some of the activities during their time of service is hand clapping, stamping of feet, shouting, and pacing to and fro within a wide radius, these are distinctive of their prayer sessions. Members have the freedom to move onto verandas and forecourts of the chapels. There, one observed them energetically pacing up and down randomly in what were called ‘army’ or ‘military’ prayers. Again, the neo-prophetic churches believed that whatsoever the mouth says, shall be accomplished. Hence, one hears an oral shooting “peeii peeii” (*mimicking the sound of a gun to symbolize a spiritual gunning down*) of the enemy in the prayers, and at most of the prayer meetings all in the hope that ‘it shall come to pass.’¹⁸⁵

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

Awurade, efiri ene Eek-o yi,
Atamfo a womma me ho nnto me no,

¹⁸⁵ Cephas N. Omenyo and Wonderful Adjei Arthur, “The Bible Says! Neo-Prophetic Hermeneutics in Africa,” *Studies in World Christianity* 19, no. 1 (2013): 50–70.

Sɛ wofiri me fie o, m'abusua mu o, m'adwuma mu o, anaa babiara,
Ewo Yesu din mu (stressed with vigour), se mebo me nsa mu bo
mpaee a, Aprannaa nte mfiri soro emegu wonnom so . . .¹⁸⁶

Translated:

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

This is usually followed by loud, spontaneous, cacophonous praying and clapping by members. Biblical texts which are believed to support this teaching are Psalm 35: 1–4, Ps. 109: 1–2, 5–10, and Ps. 109: 1–2, 5–10.¹⁸⁷

The specific theological emphases of neo-prophetic churches 'include the concept of *atamfo* (human enemy), the practice of *akwankyere* (guidance), anointing (*ngosra*) and the various forms of exorcism and healing'.¹⁸⁸ Neo-prophetic churches do not view *atamfo* (human enemy) only in terms of human beings that their members had cause to doubt of carrying out malevolent activities against them, together with undermining their 'health, wealth, honor or

general well-being through witchcraft, evil, juju, or the spread of malicious gossip'; they also comprise actual spiritual beings that were alleged to be agents of Satan and by whom the human enemies receive their authority and to whom they were allied.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Omenyo and Adjei Arthur, "The Bible Says!," 50–70.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

Omenyo and Atiemo are of the view that among the Akans a witch or wizard could attack and harm a person only if he or she was from the person's family or conspires with a member of the person's family. This was a cause of mistrust, suspicion, and tension between family members. This is further explained by the fact that the Akan belief system is rooted in the maxim: "*se aboa bi beka woa, na afiri wo ntoma mu*" (the animal that will bite you is hidden in your cloth) which means, your enemy cannot harm you except he or she is aided by someone from the family.¹⁹⁰ Their hermeneutical undertakings, therefore, betray a tendency to want to deal with the *ɔtamfo* (human enemy) and thereby show Christ's victory over the devil and all his agents.¹⁹¹

Akwankyere or prophetic guidance expects the prophet to give 'information that is expected to explain a person's situation and to prescribe solutions'.¹⁹² Occasionally, this is done openly in the scenery of public worship, but mostly it is done on a one-on-one basis.¹⁹³ The anointing is seen as synonymous with an action with authority, bringing the power of God to bear upon the life of an individual. The anointing service, in which, mainly, oil is used on members, is a very popular activity among neo-prophetic churches in Ghana.

They believe that there is a spiritual anointing in which the sovereign God acts with no visible elements 'but you see the unction at work', as in Acts 13:1–4, where no oil was used. However, the most popular type among neo-prophetic churches in Ghana is the tangible one in which oil is administered by a pastor or church leader on the

¹⁹⁰ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space," 59.

¹⁹¹ Omenyo and Arthur, "The Bible Says!"

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

congregation. They view the anointing service as a time of ‘impartation’ of spiritual gifts to empower the clients to realize wealth, obtain healing, and see visions, among other things.¹⁹⁴

If the family member could not harm one or help others to harm one, he or she could sell one to the assailants, or contract them to harm one. This concept is supported by Micah 7:6b: “... a man’s enemies are the men of his own house..” The exclusive emphasis on the enemy has given rise to the novel ritual forms of dealing with them, defending oneself, or opposing the enemy’s diabolic activities. Some of such means are the practice of whipping the enemy in prayer with canes.¹⁶⁶

The next chapter of the work takes a look at the prophetic ministries of Prophet Ebenezer Adarkwa Yiadom of Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre and Rev. Benjamin Yahweh Apaloo of Go Ye Harvesters Ministry.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MINISTRIES OF PROPHET EBENEZER ADARKWA YIADOM AND REV. BENJAMIN YAHWEH APALLOO

3.1 Introduction

Each age, dispensation, and covenant of God has added and dropped terminologies regarding the ministries of God. The early years witnessed the Patriarchal ministry. Then emerged the Law as defined by priests, Levites, Scribes, and Kings, which was also followed by the era of the Prophets in the old Testament. The New Testament also witnessed Apostles, Prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, elders', deacons, bishops, and Saints.¹⁹⁵

It is worthy of note that the only ministry which can be found unswervingly functioning in every age and dispensation from Genesis to Revelation is that of the Prophetic ministry. The Prophetic ministry is the only one that has never been limited to any particular dispensation, age, or covenant of God. The man or woman who becomes the pure expression of the mind of God to humankind is the prophet or prophetess. This manifests more consistently throughout the whole Bible.¹⁹⁶ This same ministry continues to strive into the 21 century and even beyond.

Sampling Method

It is not my aim as a qualitative researcher to make generalizations but to comprehend the specific ways in which individuals respond to poverty, and socio-economic issues in line with the prophetic ministries and messages. The need for a thick description

¹⁹⁵ Bill Hamon, *Prophets and the Prophetic Movement* (Point Washington, FL: Christian International — Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 1990).

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

made essential a small sample size for the qualitative interviews. The choice of informants was founded on both Simple random sampling and purposive sampling because the fieldwork aimed to generate themes on the social, economic influence of Ghanaians on Neo-Prophetic ministries. According to Teddlie and Yu, the purposive sampling technique is used in qualitative studies by choosing units (individuals, groups, organizations) based on definite purposes associated with answering research study questions.¹⁹⁷

The church administrator informed the prophet of the church of my request to interview him and some other members of the congregation as well as some of the junior pastors. The purpose of the research was in the note taken from the department requesting permission to undertake such research. As asserted by Janice Morse; “a good informant is one who has the knowledge and experience, and can reflect, to articulate, and has the time to be interviewed, and is willing to participate”.¹⁹⁸ Inspired by Morse, I selected twenty-five informants including the prophets and from those members who made out time to be interviewed and were prepared to participate. Demographics such as age, gender, employment status, and length of adherence to Neo-Prophetic ministry was considered, the target of gender equality was achieved. The respondents excluding the head prophets had been members of neo-prophetism for not less than five years.

¹⁹⁷ C. Teddlie and F. Yu, “Mixed Methods Sampling: A Typology with Examples,” *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1 (2007): 77-100.

¹⁹⁸ J. Morse, “Designing Funded Qualitative Research,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds. N.K Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994).

It was fascinating to note that some informants were self-employed, and some were even unemployed, but they all had different stories to share regarding Socio-economic standing. This enhanced the diverse responses and further added a comparative value to the research.

Field Observation

Researchers who conduct field investigations seek to understand religious phenomena by participating as fully as possible while observing and reflecting on what people do. More than seeking just to describe religious activities, they are involved in a method with rich and radical implications for intellectual engagement with religion.¹⁹⁹ The ideological explanation of fieldwork strongly indicates that scholars should focus mostly on observable activities, actual events, and practice, rather than focusing on the kind of texts, preachers, or even what ‘ordinary’ participants ought to do. While they will concentrate on people’s desires to live up to some exalted, commanding version of what a religion should be, it is ‘what people do’ that engages fieldwork researchers.²⁰⁰ They may seek to get answers about religious writings and the ‘tradition’ that form the model of how a religion ‘should be’- but the reason for such questions will be an effort to better understand people’s experiences and interpretations.

Religion, from this viewpoint, is not accurately understood without attention to its fully embodied, materialized, local and diverse practice: its vernacular or lived reality. By implication, academic understanding is best sought by scholars who are willing and able to participate reasonably fully in the field of performance and experience that they

¹⁹⁹ Graham Harvey, “Field Research Participant Observation,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods*, 243.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

research. By entering the ‘field’ of religious life, performance, and community, researchers seek to contribute to academic knowledge and debate.²⁰¹

The observer played quasi-roles in the research. First, as an “informant observer” and as an “observer informant. Thus, participation in church activities was purely for research, but I occasionally shifted to doing more observations than participation.

I took part in the services of ‘Go Ye Harvesters ministry’ and ‘Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre’, observing closely prayer sessions, testimonies, prophetic sessions, sermons, and rituals while paying particular attention to the themes of Social and Economic issues on poverty, prosperity, health, marriage, childbirth, visa, and travel issues, etc.

3.2 Prophet Ebenezer Adarkwa Yiadom

3.2.1 Early life

Prophet Dr. Ebenezer Opambour Adarkwa Yiadom was born in the early 1960s to a needy family. His mother, Madam Diana Ama Serwaa, was a “chop bar” operator and his father, Opanin Osei Kwabena, was also a palm wine tapper. The duo are now in their grave resting. They both hail from Juaso Pramso in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Kwame Adarkwa Yiadom as he was previously called, lived with a guardian at Aboabo Zongo, a community in Kumasi. He had his basic education at St. Peters Educational Centre at Kwadaso and continued his education at the Kumasi Technical Institute (KTI) where he studied plumbing as a course. In his early days at school, Kwame was esteemed by most of his friends because he had a melodious voice, even though he was

²⁰¹ Ibid.

always in a frayed school uniform. His melodious voice eventually made him a composer and singer in the school. He is presently married to Maame Mavis and God has blessed them with have five children. This man is indeed the founder and General overseer of Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre.

3.2.2 Call to ministry

According to the man of God, he was born into a Christian family. His mother was a Wesleyan while his father was a Catholic. He attended the Catholic Church where he sold items like rosary and bible. When the mother passed on, according to him, he was very young. Times were very tough and hard so he went through some maltreatment. He said one night he had a dream and in the dream, his mother held his hand and left all his siblings in his care. Life became unbearable for him and his siblings but he felt the presence of God and the urge to wait upon the Lord. Without hesitation, he went to Atwea mountains located in the Ashanti Region of Ghana to wait upon the Lord. According to him, he spent about three years in waiting upon the Lord with fasting and prayers. Aside going onto the mountains to wait upon the Lord, he also resorted to prayer, fasting, and waitings at “Wonoo” in the Ashanti Region sometimes for 14 days and some other times for 21days.

The prophet of God then started what is his ministry today as a prayer group with his (Opambuor’s) peers in the early 1990s at Osei Kyeretwie Secondary School (OKESS) at Tafo, a suburb of Kumasi. The group thrived and attracted many people. This was because those who attended the prayer fellowship felt spiritually fulfilled and so invited others to the meetings. Many people started attending prayer meetings. As the membership increased, there was a need to change the venue to a bigger place. They

then relocated the meetings to ‘Krofrom’ a suburb of Kumasi in the Ashanti Region. According to him, he helped in the building of the structure at the Seventh day Adventist (SDA) school in ‘Krofrom’ around New Tafo. He was nicknamed “electric” by members and people around that area because any time he touched somebody the person experienced a kind of shock that made him or her fall down. His spiritual gifts drew crowds to the church. At Krofrom, membership grew so much that he converted the prayer fellowship to a church and named it “Ebenezer Miracle Centre.” He later relocated the church from Krofrom to Abrepo Junction, a suburb of Kumasi, and then to a place called “Friends Garden.”

Per the number of members in the church, it became evidently clear that he needed a very large compound to worship the Lord. In this regard, he secured a land at Ahenema Kokoben to build a church auditorium because the membership had increased. Also, there were a lot of complaints from neighborhood as the activities of the church disturbed their peace in the residential area. He was the first to settle at Ahenema Kokoben where he put up the church auditorium, his residence, and residence for those who partake in his programmes but come from far places. He named the place “Island City.” When asked whether he served under another man of God before establishing his church, the man of God said he had a spiritual father then, but he is currently not in the country but resides in the USA now.

The church which started as a prayer group has now seen an exponential growth where there are between 500 to 1000 plus members and other non-members who come sometimes to seek the face of God. That is the ‘Ebenezer Miracle Worship Center’ (Island City) located at “Ahenema Kokoben” on the Kumasi - Obuasi road. With over

35years of an encounter with God, the man of God believes God has used him to restore people's socio-economic life in this country and beyond.

When asked if he had other branches apart from what is in Kumasi now, the man of God said he opened branches in Accra but it is now in the care of some of the prophets he trained. So, he would not say they are still under his watch. He further reiterated that he has plans of opening more branches across the country in due course.

3.2.3 Messages and Activities

Services at Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre (EMWC) are held on four different days within the week. They are Friday's all-night services, which he calls "Mugamu War Night"- These all-nights according to him are days where healing and battling with people who are tormented by the devil is done. It is done to redeem and rescue people from ancestral bondage and covenants, curses upon people's social and economic life, to set them free for them to realize their place in society socially and economically.

Tuesdays are free counselling sessions. Here, the Prophet Sit one-on-one to listen and address people's problems. He asserts that those who need spiritual solutions are scheduled for the "Mugamu War Night Service" where some are given "the akwankyere" (direction) to buy any of the prayer aid's to help in bringing solutions to their problems. Those who require financial and economic breakthroughs sometimes are given financial assistance in the form of paying school fees for their wards, giving some amount of money to establish their own businesses and other socio-economic interventions.

Wednesdays are the Miracle, deliverance, and testimony Service where people mostly come to share their testimonies of what the Lord through the prophet has done for them. People who had an encounter at the all-night service and have not had full recovery are also given the chance to be healed totally. Those who have had a positive change in their situations are called forward to give their testimony. Sunday's service is the Anointing service of the church where the man God gives Sermons and exaltations to members and gives hope to the hopeless.²⁰²

I was part of the Wednesday and Tuesday church services to observe the meticulous prayer sessions, testimonies, prophetic sessions, sermons, and rituals while paying precise attention to the issues on socio-economic influences on the testimonies given by the congregants.

The church services on Wednesdays which are the Miracle, deliverance, and testimony service started from 9 am to 5 pm, but I arrived on the first day at the Opambour city where services are held at about 7 am to observe preparations before services began. To my surprise, upon arrival, the church auditorium was almost full even though service was to start at 9 am. Members were led into prayers by some of the 'younger' pastors of the church.

Various Prayer topics were raised by the leaders and members were given five to ten minutes to pray on the topics. Most of them prayed in tongues whiles moving to and from one side of the auditorium to another side of it. Others prayed in their local Asante dialect. As they prayed, I realized that anytime the leader said "Fa wo nsa bo Yesu

²⁰² Field Observation at Ebenezer Miracle Worship Center, January 2020.

Mmogya mu, Na to tuo” meaning “Dip your hands in the blood of Jesus and shoot a gun’, all the congregants would tap the floor with their left hand and stretch the hand forward as though it were a gun and make the sound of a gunshot three times, thus “pae, pae, pae”. Some prayer topics raised included; “bo mpaeε se Otamfoε biara εmma wo sikasεm εnkε so no, mede me nsa bo Yesu mmogya mu mebc no tuo paeε”

At about 9:20am, the prophet of God entered the Auditorium accompanied by eight young men who are the young pastors of the church under training. The members of the church stood on their feet and welcomed the Prophet of God Dr. Ebenezer Adarkwa Yiadom with songs and shouts, as he walked through the crowd. When he took the microphone, he sang for a while amidst drumming and dancing. After the songs, the whole auditorium was quiet and he began to prophesy.

Most of the prophecies centered on dreams of people and how the evil spirit and witchcraft from their family are trying to destroy their destiny and socio-economic life.

On one instance, the prophet had this to say;

εbaa bi wε ha. Wo soo dae na wordi εmoo, nna nsa bi beyii εnam a εda aduane no so no. wowε ha a, sεre bra”. Se wokεda a wobεsan aso daeε no, na nsa no de εnam no bεba abεto aduane no so, se wo di εnam no a, wo sika ne w’animonyam ahye. Se wo te ha a, sεre bra.

Translation: There is a lady here you had a dream, and in the dream, you were eating rice and someone took meat on the food away. If you sleep again you will have the same dream and the hand that took the meat will bring it back if you eat the meat you will destroy your prosperity and wealth and status. If you are here come.²⁰³

²⁰³ Quote from the field observation on Wednesday 12th February 2020 at Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre.

Over 15 female congregants rose and run to the man of God and he prayed and prophesied that

ensa biara επε σε εyi w'animonyam ne wo yiedie no, mede Yesu mmogya ehwe no, na mede Onyame Honhom Krondron εdane nkrante twa to twene.”

Translated as: Any hand that wants to take away the prosperity, wealth and status of any one of you, I burn it with the blood of Jesus and with the holy spirit sword I cut that hand off.

As the prophecies go on the prophet of God once in a while will sing a song and will play his “dondo” (a local drum that is usually played by the traditional priest) a local drum that is played by putting it in your armpit and beating the head made with animal skin to give a rhythm to the song. The Figure below is the man of God singing and playing the “dondo”



Figure 2: Prophet Opambour playing his “Dondo”(local drum) and Singing

The service continued with the revealed dreams of the people and every dream he told the people there, was not a singular individual who has had that dream but there were at least 5 or more people who claimed to have had the dream revealed to the man of God. Most of these dreams were about the death of the people, the collapse of their business, the destruction of their wealth by the enemy, or the death of their loved ones' husbands or wives, parents, or children. And anytime the prophet recounted the dreams, the whole auditorium stood quiet and still until he calls "*se waso saa daee a , sore bra*" translated "if you dreamed that stand and come" and several people will run to the man of God for deliverance.

After the first part of prophecies and deliverance, the prophet ordered the congregants to give three different offerings. Anyone of the offering given was accompanied by a special blessing from the man of God. Some of the offering required the congregants to put the money into the offering bowl and their palms were anointed with an oil which the man of God had taken from the altar. Prayers were made for them for giving after being anointed in their palms for wealth and prosperity that God should bless the work of their hand and increase their lot in the society. All through the first part, the bible was not part of the messages giving. It was all prophecies and blessing on the people to have a change in their socio-economic status in the society.

The prophet went on a recess in a room behind the altar in the church and most of the members went out to stretch themselves. Some went out to buy some white bottles, and when I inquired, I was told they were using it to fetch "*Abura mu suo*" "well water" so I decided to get closer to observe proceedings. There were uncountable bottles at the backyard of the auditorium waiting to be filled with "*Abura mu suo*". When I asked

one of the congregants what the water was used for, she explained you can pour some into your bathing water to bath, or you may also use it to wash your face or your head if you have a dream or experience some sickness. They were also to use it to sprinkle their shops and their work place to bring more customers and to bring them more money.

All the people came back after about 2 hours of recess and the Prophet also returned amidst singing and dancing. He sang about three different songs some of which seemed to be composed by himself, and that is most of the adherents refer to him as a singing prophet. After the songs, he gave a bible verse (2 Corinthians 9:6) to be read which he used to give about 3 minutes sermon and continued with the prophecies and testimonies. As he preached and prophesied, he asked some of the people to come and buy the “Kodi awuo kosoa” which they would use to kill their enemies who are blocking their socio-economic development.

At about 4:30 pm, the man of God blessed all the water in the bottles and everyone was asked to pick his or her bottles after the closing prayer and benediction have been said. ‘When you get your bottle, you can then leave’, he remarked.

But some of the people were residents at the church premises, so I inquired and was told if you are in the process of being delivered and you come from faraway place. you are permitted to stay over until you feel ok.

3.2.4 Prospects

He outlined that they are waiting on the face of God for directions to establish branches in other parts of the country and that he hopes that God will continue to use him in this

prophetic ministry to change the lives of many individual members who have faith in him and trust God can through him brake the demonic, family and ancestral curses from their families so that they can enjoy financial freedom and societal status.

3.3 The Ministry of Rev. Benjamin Yahweh Apaloo

3.3.1 Early life

Rev. Benjamin was born in the early years of 1970 at ‘Afful Nkwanta’ around ‘Amakom’ a suburb of Kumasi in the Ashanti region of Ghana to the late Mr. Lewis Mensah Apaloo and Mad. Agnes Dede Mensah. He attended his basic schools at Christian preparatory school and later went to complete his basic school at New Asafo Primary school. He then went to learn a trade in furniture making at Kuti Mensah Perspectives furniture works in Kumasi and after completion started his career in furniture making. He still does that job any time he has a contract on a building. He asserts that all the wooden works on his uncompleted church building were done by himself and some other church members. He recently in 2018 took a course at Accra Business College.

3.3.2 His Call to ministry

The man of God narrated to me that both parents were Christians so he was born into a Christian home. To him, he only continues with the work of God and for that matter doesn't see it as a conversion because he has always been a Christian. His mother was a Presbyterian but his father was a Catholic. But according to him, he felt the hand of God and Gods' call at about 1985 when he was still young, and he was still in the Presbyterian church at Amakom a suburb of Kumasi.

He said he had his tongue-speaking in a dream while he was still a Presbyterian and was a chorister at the church. He explained that in a prayer meeting at the Presby church in Amakom, when he prayed in tongues the people stigmatized him, ‘and thought I had acquired some supernatural powers’, and he said he did not even understand what was happening to him so he went to ‘Atwea’ mountains for three days fasting and prayers to seek the face of God to understand if the spirit is from God. So, in 1989 he was directed to a church ‘Go Ye Harvesters Time Ministry’ under the leadership of Archbishop Prince, who is now out of the country.

After being groomed under the Archbishop in 1999 he was ordained as a full minister of God, he then went to head a church in Obuasi to learn more about the ministry of the prophet and the work of God, After eight years in Obuasi he returned to Kumasi to the Amakom branch where he is now pastoring the flock of God at “Go Ye Harvesters Ministry”.

3.3.3 Messages and Activities

Messages at Go Ye Harvesters Time Ministry according to the man of God are mostly directions from God, and so he preaches and does what God has asked him to do, when asked if he uses prayer aids like handkerchiefs, anointing oil, apples, etc. he answered that he uses only oil when directed by God. And he does not sell that oil and he does not ask members to go and buy, because to him any man of God who sells items to members is not doing the work of God but has turned him/herself into a businessman in his church. He quoted a verse in the book of Acts 8:19-20, the gifts of God are not paid for so why should they be sold to people?

He said one preaching title he usually does in his church is; “*How to keep your deliverance,*” He said most of the time some prophets embark on deliverance service, and all one could hear is shouting “come out, come out” which is a command to the assumed spirit in the person being delivered. But he quoting Jesus in Mark 5:1-13, that whenever you want to deliver someone you have to be sure where the spirit will go and not just ask the spirit to go. But to him, the greatest deliverance is for one to repent, accept Christ, and remain in Christ as a righteous believer. So “how to keep your deliverance” is just an exercise to keep the believers under his ministry for God and live righteous life as possible as we patiently wait for the second advent of Jesus Christ.

His deliverance services take place on Friday night at an all-night service from 7:30 pm to 5 am. During the service, people’s socio-economic and spiritual problems are dealt with, and the people whose businesses are not going well, people with educational and learning challenges and many others are helped to overcome such problems.

When I asked the prophet of God why they always embark on deliverance services and what they seek to achieve, he outlines that there are demons in this world. He continued, ‘some are from one's maternal family;’ ‘some may be from the paternal family others may come from the family of one’s spouse or even from a person’s place of work and so if you are working and things are not going on well then you need to be delivered from the charms of these numerous demons. Wanting to have more understanding of demons, H. A. Maxwell Whyte in his book ‘Demons and Deliverance’ asserts that demons were real. He sorts to answer these questions;

- What exactly is a demon?
- How does a person come under demonic influence?

- Can we inherit evil spirits from our ancestors?
- Can a believer be possessed?
- How can Christians resist the powers of darkness?
- Can just anybody cast out a demon?
- Are there any dangers in casting out demons?²⁰⁴

Dave Miller quoted some references from the scripture to show what demons are. He maintained that they were spirits, unclean, evil, and malevolent, and are connected with Satan. They are intelligent, conscious, and have a true knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. They afflict people with pain, diseases, poverty, and disgrace, and those possessed, exhibited manifestations. He dismissed the idea that demons had never existed and that it was sheer superstition.²⁰⁵

He proclaimed that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the establishment of his kingdom affected the limitation to Satan's influence on humankind and that direct supernatural influence over a human being ended. For that reason, there is no more demon possession of human beings.²⁰⁶

He refuted claims in the contemporary age of deliverance, stating that Jesus did all his deliverances publicly but those who did it in contemporary times did it in chambers, and those done publicly too were unconvincing. He concluded that the ability to cast out a demon had ceased. He quoted 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 to support his claim.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Maxwell H. A. Whyte, *Demons and Deliverance* (New Kensington, PA.: Whitaker House, 1989).

²⁰⁵ Dave Miller, *Exorcism, Demons, Witchcraft, and Astrology*, <https://apologeticspress.org/apcontent.aspx?category=11&article=1198> (Retrieved 12 February 2020).

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Miller, *Exorcism, Demons, Witchcraft, and Astrology*.

When asked whether people have had solutions to their socio-economic problems, the man answered in the affirmative that so many people have come to testify what the Lord had done for them from prophecies and deliverance they went through.

3.3.5 Prospects

He outlined that he is hoping that God will continue to keep the ministry and will continue to speak through him and deliver people from social, economic, and moral challenges and that he desires that people of God are emancipated to enjoy the blessings of God as well. When asked if he has plans of establishing other branches elsewhere, he said he will not establish any new branch because the mother church has branches across the country so it is the responsibility of the leadership to do that. He concluded he is only responsible for seeing to the expansion of his branch (church under him).

CHAPTER FOUR

PROPHETIC ACTIVITIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF PEOPLE

4.1 Introduction

Ghana has a contrasting socio-economic structure because whereas spectacular wealth exists, there is also devastating poverty. It is arduous to make sense of this reality. The country remains incredibly rich in mineral, natural and human resources; yet, many citizens strive to access daily food, quality healthcare, and struggle to survive. Scholars from diverse disciplines have propounded various theories to account for this paradox, but religious beliefs are generally dismissed as irrelevant in such discourses. Kwame Gyekye a Ghanaian philosopher argues that “the African Universe is a spiritual universe, one in which supernatural beings play significant roles in the thoughts and actions of the people.”²⁰⁸ This assertion which explains the continued pervasiveness of religion on African thinking and living makes imperative a religiously inspired view of poverty and socio-economic development in Ghana.

This chapter seeks to examine the linkages between the neo-prophetic activities and the socio-economic conditions from the perspectives of the prophets and the church members in the Ashanti Region. This is achieved by examining the views of respondents on how these neo-prophetic activities affect their socio-economic conditions. It is imperative to state that some biblical verses used by these prophets to advance the argument in favour of the linkage between these neo-prophetic activities

²⁰⁸ K. Gyekye, *African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 69.

and the socio-economic conditions of people are also discussed and analyzed in the chapter.

Prophetic activities discussed and analysed in the chapter include Prophetic Ministration (messages and teachings), Prayer and Directions (*Akwankyere*), and Giving and Seed Sowing. The data presented in this chapter are primarily excerpts from the researcher's participatory observation and the semi-structured interviews conducted with the leaders of the research site, along with some adherents. The trends of teachings and practices in Neo-Prophetic ministries are normally determined by the personal orientation and vision of the leader.²⁰⁹

It would therefore be misleading to give the impression that the views represented here are representative of Ghanaian Neo-Propheticism. Nonetheless, the general prominence exhibited by these perceptions and its connections with the existing academic literature on the phenomenon served as the guiding principle in this presentation.²¹⁰ It is prudent to have an idea of the Demographics of respondents.

²⁰⁹ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 5.

²¹⁰ B. Meyer, "Delivered from the Powers of Darkness: Confessions of Satanic Riches in Christian Ghana," *Journal of the International African Institute* 65, no. 2 (1995): 236-255.

The table below shows the Age distribution of respondents who were interviewed.

Table 1: Age of Respondents

Age	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18 – 25	5	20
26 – 35	10	40
36 – 45	6	24
46 and above	4	16
Total	25	100

Source: Fieldwork 2020

Table 1 indicates the age brackets of the study participants. This variable is important to the research because it allows the researcher the opportunity to understand the dynamics of the class of people in terms of age, whose social and economic life are been investigated. From table 1, the majority of the respondents (84%) are 45 years and below. A group that falls within the economic active group of the labour force of the country.

This youthful group may be the majority of the respondent seeking this prophetic haven because of their penchant towards economic successes in life. This implies that not only do the majority of the aged group in the country desire to have a change in their socio-economic lives through the neo-prophetic ministry but rather the young and active members of the society. This is further evidenced in the responses provided by these participants during the interview.

My son, I am here to fight for my son who is abroad. He needs papers to work with but it has been extremely difficult for him. Meanwhile, he is the

breadwinner of my family. That is the reason why I am here. I believe in the prophecies of the man of God and I know I will get positive results from God in this Church (55-year-old woman).

However, another young man also posited that:

For me, I came to redeem the times. My brother, I am a businessman and of late things are not going on well for me concerning my business. So, I have come to seek spiritual support from the man of God. I know I shall breakthrough. (39-year-old man).

These responses depict the varied reasons that push or pull people into soliciting spiritual assistance from these prophets. From the responses, while some go there for personal gains, others go there to seek spiritual support for their relatives. It is incumbent to realize from the responses that improvement in socio-economic conditions either for the people seeking the help or their relatives remain the outstanding factor that motivates them to seek these neo-prophetic activities. It is worthy to note that their motivation is premised on their strong believe in these neo-prophetic activities.

Table 2: Educational Background of respondents

Educational Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
J. H. S	5	20
SHS/ GCE O' & A' Level	9	36
Technical /Vocational	6	24
Diploma	4	16
Graduate	1	4
Post Graduate	0	0
Total	25	100

Source: Fieldwork 2020

In addition, the researcher found it expedient to identify the educational background of the respondents. This is important because the socio-economic status of most Ghanaians is affected by their level of education. Studies have shown that a significant percentage of those who attend the neo-prophetic churches have lower levels of education. As a result, the researcher found it imperative to analyse the educational background of the respondent. From the study, none of the respondents had a post-graduate degree, only one respondent had a first degree which represented four percent (4%) of the sample population, four (4) of the respondents representing 16% have a Diploma Certificate, 24% of the respondents have attained certificates in technical or vocational education and 56% of the respondents were both Junior High School or Senior High School graduates.

This analysis indicates that most of the respondents who seek neo-prophetic guidance have lower educational background and therefore their chances of getting a white colour Job which will enhance their socio-economic status are low.

Table 3: Number of years in Prophetic Church

Years	Number of adherents	Percentage (%)
0 – 10	18	72
11 – 20	5	20
21 – 30	2	8
31+	0	0
Total	25	100

Source: Field Work 2020

Table 3 shows the number of years the respondents have been members of the Neo-prophetic churches. It was identified that the majority of the respondents (72%) have been in the neo-prophetic church for ten years or less. Twenty percent (20%) of the respondents have been in the percent for at least 11 to 20 years. Only two (8%) of the respondents agreed that they have been in the prophetic church for at least 21 years or more. This is important to the researcher because he identified that most people do not stay in the prophetic church for a long time as found in the Historic Mainline Churches. Those who have been in the church for more than 10 years are those who hold some position or founding members in the Neo-prophetic churches. For example, this respondent asserted that: “I have worshiped in this church for 15 years. I am among the leaders of the women ministries department in the church. I have nowhere to go because God is here too” (49-year-old woman).

Another respondent also buttressed that: “I have worshiped in this church for the past 20 years or more. I am part of the members the man of God started the church with.

Currently, I am the church administrator and I play a critical role too” (52-year-old man).

However, the study found that the short-term members of these neo-prophetic churches are also members of other denominations but go to the former as a place of rescue; and to find remedies to their pressing issues in life. For instance, a respondent opined that: “I am a Methodist church member. I was born into it. But you know, we are fighting a spiritual battle. Thus far, you need to seek spiritual support from the prophets of God who see spiritual realms to fight for you. That is why I come here but I still go to my church too. For that, I cannot stop” (42-year-old woman).

From the responses, it is clear that socio-economic reasons are the most outstanding factors that push people to seek help from these neo-prophetic churches. This raises critical questions as to whether these individuals have confidence in the churches they attend.

Table 4: Employment status of Respondents

Employment Status	Number of Status	Percentage (%)
Unemployed	13	52
Self-Employed	6	24
Informal	6	24
Formal	2	8
Total	25	100

Source: Fieldwork 2020

The researcher needed to understand the employment status of the respondents to help make a better analysis on how Prophetic activities impacted or influenced the

socio-economic status of Ghanaians. This is because when people are gainfully employed, there is a higher probability that they would have a better and higher socio-economic status. In all, it was identified that only two (8%) of the respondents were in the formal sector. More than half of the respondents that is 13 (52%) of the respondents claimed to be unemployed. Six (24%) of the respondents were self-employed and another six (24%) of them were in the informal sector. The employment percent may explain why many of these people attempt to seek help from these neo-prophetic churches. Many of these unemployed folks go to seek spiritual help to better their socio-economic lives. This was buttressed by one respondent as: “I come here to seek spiritual support. I have done all my possible best to secure a job to be able to cater for myself and family but to no avail. In fact, I’m battling and I think it is a spiritual one that needs spiritual fortitude” (42 year old man).

Table 5: Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Single	12	48
Married	10	40
Divorced	3	12
Total	25	100

Source: *Fieldwork 2020*

Marital status and number of children that one has are also determinants of one’s socio-economic status.²¹¹ The data showed that 48% of the respondents were single,

²¹¹ Annette Lareau, *Unequal Childhoods: Race, Class, and Family Life* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2003).

while 40% of them were married, and 12% were divorced. Out of the 48% who were single, some of them have children they were taking care of as single mothers, two of the respondents were married but had no child yet. All the divorced respondents had children they were taking care of. These are also features that determine the socio-economic status of individuals. This dependence of children on these people might influence their socio-economic status which in turn influence their acceptance of these neo-prophetic activities.

4.2 The Nexus between Neo-prophetic activities and the Socio-economic status of People

The American Heritage Dictionary of Cultural Literacy defines socio-economic status (SES) as an individual's or group's position within a hierarchical social structure. It explains that socio-economic status depends on a combination of variables, including occupation, education, income, wealth, and place of residence. Sociologists often use socioeconomic status as a means of predicting the behaviour of people.²¹²

Socio-economic status (SES) is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and an individual's or family's economic and social position concerning others. Others include households' income, earners' education, and occupation. However, SES is more commonly used to depict an economic difference in society as a whole.²¹³

²¹² E.D. Hirsch, James S. Trefil and Joseph F. Kett, *American Heritage Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (Boston, MA : Houghton Mifflin).

²¹³ National Center for Educational Statistics (31 March 2008). <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/glossary/s.asp>. (Retrieved, November 2019).

Socioeconomic status may be typically divided into three levels (high, middle, and low) to describe the three places a family or an individual may fall into. When placing a family or individual into one of these categories, any or all of the three variables (income, education, and occupation) can be assessed.

Thus, socio-economic status in the Ashanti Region is simply the basic financial, educational, and health standing that is necessary for survival. The socio-economic status varies for people in the Ashanti region. The majority of the people fall within the low-income bracket thereby seeking help from the neo-prophetic churches. This could be attributed to one main aspect - poverty. However, the discourse on poverty from a Neo-Prophetic perspective is not entirely a socio-economic condition. In Neo-Prophetic churches in the Ashanti Region, the primary cause of poverty is discerned in the spiritual realm “a category designed by Satan to primarily win more souls for his Kingdom”. Interviews with all of the informants and the participatory observations revealed that poverty, from a Neo-Prophetic understanding, constitutes a spiritual dimension, a stronger or higher spirit acting negatively upon the lives of individuals, families, and even the nation.²¹⁴ Commenting on the reality of poverty as spiritual. One pastor at Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre buttressed this view by saying that:

As a Christian, I understand that there is a spiritual aspect of poverty. There are situations where people have done everything they can, but things are just not working well for them; some are very well educated, they have worked very hard, they have looked for the jobs, roamed everywhere; in fact, you can say that they have done almost everything they can, but they are just not making it, as in, they cannot afford a basic comfortable life. This is spiritual to me.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Interview conducted on 26th February 2020 at Ebenezer Miracle worship on some of the informants.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

Another study participant emphasized this view by saying:

To be successful in life, you need luck. And to get the luck you need a spiritual support. Not that we are lazy, but we have done all that we can but nothing better is happening to us. Many of the guys we started with them have made it in life and yet we are still wallowing in poverty. After all, what at all have they got that we do not have. I think they have fortified themselves spiritually (44 year old man).

Here, personal responsibility is not entirely overlooked. But this notion of personal responsibility in situations of poverty seems to oscillate with spiritual causality. This notion of oscillation was prevalent in the views expressed by all of the study informants. Thus, it is commonly believed that “a man’s business may succeed as the good forces (God’s Angels and the Holy Spirit) enables him/her to be unsuccessful as his *atamfo* (enemies i.e. the devil) in the spiritual realm “fight” against him”²¹⁶. Thus, although personal responsibility is not entirely overlooked, the cause and power to change situations of poverty are deeply interrelated or dependent on spiritual conditions.

To compliment the views aforementioned, Amoah argues that the holistic nature of African traditional believes connotes the sacred and the secular as complementing each other. She further argues that poverty in such African contexts are not only material but also spiritual.²¹⁷ In effect, the Neo-Prophetic lifeworld emphasizes one of action and counteraction of man and potent spiritual forces; spirits acting upon and influencing actions of human beings. The prevention of the works of evil forces therefore brings

²¹⁶ These notions were expressed by all informants and from this notion one also gets to understand this from the radio and television programs of all neo-prophetic messages. February 2020.

²¹⁷ Elizabeth Amoah, “African Traditional Religion and the Concept of Poverty,” in *Religion and Poverty: Pan-African Perspectives*, ed. P.J. Paris (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

fulfilment in life. But the continued presence and influence of the former impedes progress.

4.3 Belief in the Prophetic Ministration

The analysis of the influence of the prophetic Ministrations (Messages and teachings) on the social and economic life has been illustrated in the in Table 6.

Table 6: Do you believe in Prophetic messages?

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	25	100
No	0	0
Total	25	100

Source: Field interview 2020

Table 6 shows that all the twenty-five (25) respondents answered in the affirmative, that they believe in prophetic messages and preaching by their prophets. This belief might have influenced their strong faith in this prophetic ministration.

Table 7: Influence of prophetic messages on socio-economic development

Response	Number of respondents	Percentage %
Yes	20	80
No	0	0
Somehow	5	20
Total	25	100

Source: Field interview 2020

Table 7, indicate that 80% of the respondents' belief that prophetic messages influence the socio-economic development of members, when they were asked to explain further one of the informants said;

...one day I was so broke (didn't have any money) and didn't even know what to eat after church but when the man of God was preaching he said if you do not have what to eat today come forward. God has a miracle for you, I came forward with a lot of other people. And what he told me to do I did and since then my life has never been the same. (35-year-old man)

Another woman explained,

Life was very hard for me. Whenever I went to the market to sell, I didn't make much sales. Sometimes I didn't even get Twenty Ghana Cedis (Gh¢ 20) the whole day. Getting money to pay my bills and provide food for the children was difficult. But since the man of God gave a prophetic message to me and I obeyed. Things have been going on well financially with me. Now I can sell about two hundred cedis in a day. (42-year-old woman)

However, one respondent asserted different that:

Yes, I believe in prophetic messages. But I do not have any testimony to show that it can influence the socio-economic development. I am yet to encounter the influence of the prophetic messages on my socio-economic life. I believe rather in hard work, education, and dedication to work as key elements in the development of my socio-economic status. But it is not prophecies that can change my socio-economic life" (39 year old man).

When he was further asked he was in the church, if not for an elevation in socio-economic status, he opined: "Please I am here to seek for healing for my family member who is serious ill. Myself and family have applied every orthodox medication prescribed by doctors but to no avail. But I was advised by a colleague to bring her here to seek spiritual assistance."

Even though this respondent did not believe in the influence of this prophetic ministration on his economic life, at least he believed he could healing support from this activities. This explains the varied reasons that pull people to seek help from these neo-prophetic prophets. That notwithstanding, the majority of the respondents believe that their economic fortunes lie in these prophetic activities. In other words, the respondents are of the view that prophetic messages influence the socio-economic life of the people.

4.4 The nature of the Prophetic Ministration (messages and teachings)

The first prophetic activity is the ‘prophetic Ministration’ which mostly comes in the form of messages, teachings, songs, and other forms. This section focuses on the messages and teachings which are enriched with songs of prophets.

The prophetic messages according to the respondents; that is both the prophets and the congregants are a way of communicating to God through His word that is the Bible, and this is the time the prophet also shares the vision and mind of God to the people.²¹⁸ For instance, one of the prophets expressed that: “God directly speaks through us through vision, dreams and trance. We say what the Lord has revealed to us to say. The song ministration attached to the prophetic service help the members to enter into the mood of prophetism during that time. And it helps a lot.”

This view was buttressed by one of the respondents that: “My brother, you cannot doubt the prophecies of the prophet oo. For God Almighty has said in the Bible that He does nothing without revealing His secret to His servant the prophet. Why should you then

²¹⁸ Field interview with congregants on 19th February 2020 at EMWC.

doubt the prophecies of the man of God? For me, I believe” (Sister Adwoa, 45-year-old woman).

This response shows how revered people perceive the messages of these neo-prophetic prophets. This concurs with the views of Ramsey. Concerning the message of the prophets, Ramsey indicates that it is one of the mediums of communication or speech of Yahweh to the people of Israel. The prophets claim to speak with Yahweh’s authority, and this is why their utterances were frequently introduced with the formula *Na Onyame Se* (“Thus says the Lord.”) This is also why the people who edited their prophecies in writing described how the word of God came to them.

In this context, according to Ramsey, the term “word of God” has special significance for the understanding of the prophetic message. Ramsey notes further that the criteria of the authenticity of the word of God thus spoken were found not in the particular media of communication, whether dream or ecstasy, but in the fulfillment of the things which the prophet declared would happen. Such fulfillment was evidence that the word of God had truly come to the prophet.²¹⁹

The word of God found in the Bible is of utmost significance for what it represents symbolically and for what it contains in terms of instruction. Neo- Prophetic preachers usually select keywords from the Bible, including phrases and sentences that bother on promises, and play on these words constantly by declaring them fulfilled either in “the name of Jesus” or in the “Holy Spirit/Ghost fire” as they usually put it. Gifford, outlined this in an example of Pastor Martin Ssuna of the World Harvest Church in Kenya in his

²¹⁹ Michael Ramsey, “The Authority of the Bible,” in *Peake’s Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Matthew Black and H.H. Rowley (Middlesex: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1977).

preaching on ‘the parting of the Red Sea for Israel’s escape from Egypt’. In the application of the text, members were led to shouting after the preacher: “God, cut off for me ... any unproductivity, failure, negativity, confusion, lack, in Jesus’ mighty name. We have passed over. May this day be a pass-away of sickness, failure, poverty and lack, confusion and terror, generational curses and witchcraft, hindrances in your life.”²²⁰

The messages and preaching of both Prophet Ebenezer Adarkwa Yiadom and Prophet Benjamin Yahweh Appaloo do not deviate much from one another. Most of their messages are based on the concept of the acceptance of the prophet, the “Otamfuo” “Enemy or Evil” and the need to realise that if you do not prevent these evil forces, your social and economic life would be mesmerised. For example, Reverend Opambour normally initiates his prophetic messages by saying: “For death, everyone will die. But do not allow any nonentity to kill you before your due time. Seek the prophetic protection so you live your full destined time on earth.”

Prophet Apaloo also buttressed this view by prefixing his prophetic ministry by saying: “Poverty is a curse but the devil would not want you to break that curse. So, you need a prophetic message and direction to overcome this curse and to break the chains of poverty.”

These linkages the prophets draw between spirituality and poverty prepare the minds of the congregants to accept the prophecies of the prophets during the entire service.

²²⁰ Gifford, “Ritual Use of the Bible,” 181.

Again, as stated earlier, the messages of the prophet go hand in hand with songs, and so before the prophet begins their message, well-ordained musicians are made to sing to bring an atmosphere of the spiritual into the auditorium.

Quayesi-Amakye outlines this in these lines; “Neo-Prophetic church services employ gifted worshippers to ‘prepare the ground and charge the spiritual atmosphere’ with ‘powerful’ worship songs for prophets. These prophets insist that they cannot ‘flow’ (that is, bring the word of God) in an atmosphere devoid of worship. To ‘flow’ requires the ‘activation’ of the Spirit’s presence through anointed music.²²¹ During the researcher’s Observation at the EMWC, he realized that music played an important role in the messages of the prophet, and most of the time it is the prophet (Ebenezer Adarkwa Yiadom) who led most of the songs during the time of the messages. He can craft songs from almost every situation he uses as a message, this is why the members of his church have nicknamed him the music prophet aside other accolades that are given to the prophet of God. Most of the songs ministered during prophetic services are centered on the prosperity gospel and how the devil is chasing the congregants spiritually; and the need for them to constantly seek spiritual assistance.

Once again, during the prophetic ministration, the prophets emphasize the need for the congregants to wholeheartedly accept the work and prophecies of God through them. The prophets constantly emphasised that the congregants need to exercise faith towards the prophecies for it to come to pass. For example, in one occasion when Rev. Benjamin began to preach, he made the congregants understand that a person can only succeed

²²¹ Quayesi-Amakye, “Prophetism in Ghana’s New Prophetic Churches.”

when they believe in the word of God and his prophets, this he outlines from
2 Chronicles 20:20

And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed." To this, he explained in his message that the bible has clearly stated that for us to succeed we need to believe in the prophets of God, he outlined that most people today have rejected the prophetic counsel and so their lives are in jeopardy. The Prophet thus in his message to his congregants encouraged them to believe in 'God's prophets', since their prosperity hinges on how they relate to him and his ministry.

The man of God continued the message with a verse from the book of kings, that is;
2Kings 2:19-22;

Now the men of the city said to Elisha, "Behold, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the land is unfruitful."
²⁰ He said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So, they brought it to him. ²¹ Then he went to the spring of water and threw salt in it, and said, "Thus says the LORD, I have made this water wholesome; henceforth neither death nor miscarriage shall come from it." ²² So the water has been wholesome to this day, according to the word which Elisha spoke.

With this verse, the man of God explained that the bitterness of the water of the city represents bad luck, unfruitfulness, lack of success in one's endeavour, and failure. He further said the bitterness is a sign that one cannot succeed. To him, the only means to overcome this bitterness is for the individual to seek the guidance and message of a Prophet of God who will give a direction for the problem to be overcome. As the people of the city turned and consulted their prophet Elisha and had a permanent solution to

their situation, so must people of our time consult a prophet of God if they want a solution to their socio-economic bitterness.

According to him, if they want to ‘sugar or salt’ their socio-economic life then they need to believe and consult their prophets. The prophet gave other biblical verses to show that for one to be successful in life he/she needs to consult and obey the word and message of the prophet. For instance, he quoted 2 kings 6:1-7, 2 kings 13:14-22 were also used in his message to indicate how one must rely on the message of the prophet if they want to improve their spiritual and physical life.²²²

4.5 Prayer and Directions (*Akwankyerε*)

This section examines the relationship between prayer and the socio-economic life of the study participants. Neo-prophetic Christians believe extensively in the power of the spoken word, and to them, for prayer to be effective, it must be done in a positive, bold, and decisive way. In the Neo-Prophetic church, the Christian approach God’s throne with authority and not as a sinner seeking pardon and pleading for crumbs. For example, one pastor asserted that:

Prayer is the key, prayer is the key,
Prayer is the master key
Jesus started in prayer and ended in prayer
Prayer is the master key.

This was the song one of the pastors of the church sung when he was asked whether he believed in the power of prayer as part of prophetic activities, he said the work of the prophet relies greatly on how often the prophet can pray, and to him, any prophet, pastor

²²² Message by Rev. Benjamin Apallo at Go ye Harvesters church on one of the field observations before the lock down.

or man of God who does not pray regularly cannot receive the visions that he/she need from God. He said that is why most of the time the prophets of God will go into a secluded area like the *Atwea mountains* (a prayer camp in the Ashanti region) to wait on the Lord to receive strength and anointing which will help them see visions from God to help the congregation.²²³

Prayer is understood to have the power to stir the supernatural by decimating the powers of evil and releasing the anointing of the Spirit. Thus, in neo-prophetic thought, prayer is an activity inspired primarily by a certain understanding of the workings of the Holy Spirit as the believer's source of empowerment.²²⁴

Bishop Charles Agyin-Asare of Ghana is the founder of the Word Miracle Church International and is widely recognised for his ministry of miracles. In his book; *Power in Prayer*, Bishop Agyin-Asare referred to the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer:

Pray without ceasing is the clarion call of the Holy Spirit. Prayer is the breath of the Christian. Everybody needs to inhale and exhale. In the natural realm, we inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. In the same way, we inhale oxygen in the spiritual realm and exhale spiritual carbon dioxide. The more you give and minister in the things of God, and the more you keep going as a Christian you exhale, and if you are going to keep alive in the realm of the Spirit you must exhale. As God is a giver, he does not inhale, He always exhales. He exhales his power and His breath to us and as we pray, we inhale God's breath.²²⁵

²²³ Phone Interview with one of the respondent, pastor at Go Ye harvesters church, April 2020.

²²⁴ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*.

²²⁵ Charles Agyin-Asare, *Power in Prayer: Taking your Blessing by Force* (Hoomaar: His Printing, 2001), 7.

The above assertion by Bishop Agyin-Asare implies there is a link between Christian prayers and the impartation of God. In other words, you receive as you pray. During the observation session in both Neo-prophetic churches, prayer was more of warfare with the unseen enemy, and they seem to do that with all the strength in them and the word used is authoritative. In one instance the leader of the prayer session quoted: Ephesians 6:11-13, After the reading of the verse they make what one may describe as both a decree and a declaration, he leads the people to say;

By fire by force, as I clap my hands and pray all forms of evil devices fashioned against my life, my finances my breakthrough, scatter in the name of Jesus. The people will repeat after him, and then begin clapping and moving to and from with a loud voice and in an aggressive manner just like warfare.

After two minutes, the prayer leader will clap his hands and the room will be quiet again, then he will begin with a new prayer topic: “By fire by force, every unknown evil dedication that is troubling my life in any form, die by fire in the name of Jesus.”

Then the people will repeat after him and continue with the prayer:

By fire by force, every household witchcraft power nominated for my destruction fall and die in the name of Jesus. By fire by force, every witchcraft expectation against my life die in the name of Jesus. I soak my life in the blood of Jesus. I overcome all barriers erected against my life and walk into my breakthrough now in the name of Jesus.

All these were done in the bid to overcome the evil forces believed to be responsible for blocking their chances of becoming rich and overcoming their problems.

Neo-Prophetic prayer is understood within a range of settings, in particular live worship, prayer vigils, revival services, healing and Exorcism service, and other forms. Several weekday prayer services and all-night services have also developed within

African Pentecostal churches in a bid to create ritual spaces for supernatural attention. Additionally, the sick, the socially downtrodden, and troubled seek prayerful interventions at these neo-prophetic church centers. Sometimes people may be quarantined for various lengths of time according to their needs.

With the increasing use of communications through social media in Neo-Prophetic churches, prayer has also been commercialized. Recorded prayers are sold for public consumption on compact disc and in other such forms, to be played at home, in cars, and shops. The people “inhale” the promises of God as they listen to these prayers and appropriate for their circumstances those aspects that cast aspersions on their enemies.²²⁶

Praying in tongues is widely used by Neo-prophetic Christians and both the prophets and their followers’ belief that tongues are very powerful in dealing with certain issues of life. Another important prophetic activity that usually accompanies the prophetic prayers is what can be referred to as divine directions (akwankyere), this activity marks out the leaders of the Neo-Prophetic churches from the other waves of Christianity. According to Cephas Omenyo; “In ‘prophetic guidance’ these leaders who prefer to be called ‘prophets’ give information that is supposed to explain a person's situation and also prescribe solutions. Sometimes this is done openly in the setting of public worship but mostly it is done on a one-on-one basis.”

There are times that they declare seasons for special ‘prophetic ministration’. This may take the form of a specific number of days declared as days of fasting and prayer. Most

²²⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*.

of them also hold regular weekly prayer vigils on Fridays”²²⁷ Akwankyere (direction or guidance) is very renowned at the EMWC of Prophet Adarkwa Yiadom, most of the Wednesday and Friday Night vigils are dedicated to this phenomenon, the sole aim is to identify and shows ways of overcoming person’s otamfo (enemy). One would realise that there are similar Akwakyere for different people with different problems. Some of the renowned directions given by the prophet are the use of the “Aburamusuo” (Well Water) the picture below shows a section of the congregation getting aburamusuo from the premises of the church.



Figure 3: a section of the congregation with gallons of Aburamusuo(well water)

Aburamusuo (Well Water) is the popular prophetic well dug at the premises of the church, which according to the prophet is a divine direction from God to give that water free of charge to anyone who has a problem and want a solution. According to the

²²⁷ Omenyo and Atiemo, “Claiming Religious Space.”

prophet, Aburamusuo can heal any disease, make the barren pregnant, and help people to succeed in life when used. During the interview session, one of the senior pastors ask me to read Jeremiah 8:14 which they use to explain the Aburamusuo, but he could not give a better explanation as concerned this verse in the Bible and how it is related to the Aburamusuo,

One of the respondents testified that she sells sachets water on the roadside but for a long time her market was not good at all sometimes she is not even able to sell half a bag of the water and so she consulted the man of God and was directed to get the *Aburamusuo* and Sprinkle on the water and the immediate surroundings where she sells the water, and she is testifying that since she performed the *Akwankyere* with the *Aburamusuo*, her business is going well and today she can take care of all her expenses at home.

Another respondent also stated that she sells food but at a point anytime she went to sell there will be a lot of houses flies around her business area and anytime that happens she does not get people to buy the food and so her finances were getting worse off, she said that a certain man in the vicinity saw this and gave her some of the *Aburamusuo* which he had to sprinkle on the area and the food and she said since then she has not seen the house flies again and business is now very good. Some of the congregants gave testimonies of what the *Aburamusuo* has done for them.

Another important divine direction (*Akwankyere*) at EMWC is the use of the Anointing Oil, the anointing Oil at the church is referred to as the *Opantako Agyeko Abone bo* anointing Oil, the figure below shows the picture of the special oil from EMWC. The

oil has the picture of the Prophet Ebenezer Adarkwa and the inscription *new Opatako Agyeko Abone bo*.



Figure 4: Sample of Opatako agyeko abone bo oil at Opambour church.

This Oil according to the prophet is used to protect people from the evil spirit and it is sold to different people at different prices. Depending on the gravity of the person's problem and the direction that the prophet will receive from God determines the price of the oil to the person it is been sold to, the price ranges from Two hundred Ghana Cedis (GHc 200) to five hundred Ghana cedis (GHc 500).²²⁸

Some of the respondents said they had to buy the oil to prevent them from the snare of death, this happened when the prophet of God told them about the death of some family members and so the need to have this anointing oil to use as directed by the prophet of overcoming the hand of death that hangs on the family, and they believe they have been saved from death when they used the oil.²²⁹

²²⁸ Personal observation at EMWC.

²²⁹ Interview session with congregants at Ebenezer Miracle worship centre, February 2020.

The last Akwankyere to be discussed at The church of the Nations Prophet 1 EMWC is the use of the “Kodiawuo Kosua” (Egg of Death/ egg of destruction) this according to the prophet during the observation is used to kill the Otamfuo(enemy) in the life of any member who buys it, it has the potency of destroying any evil plans against the person who will use it and emancipate him/her and an entire family from the poverty and from financial problems this and the oil are the breakthrough directions from the prophet of God. The figure below is a sample of the “Kodiawuo Kosua”



Figure 5: A sample of the Kodiawuo Kosua (egg of destruction) at EMWC.

These are eggs that seem to have been coloured with some paint, but when I inquired from one of the pastors of the church, he was reluctant to disclose to me why the eggs were reddish-brown and said it is a special egg from the Prophet of God. When I asked him why the use of this egg, he quoted the book of Isaiah 59:5. He explained that these eggs are used to kill the enemy in the spiritual realms when one follows the directions.

At Go Ye Harvesters church, the man of God claimed that he uses only anointing oil to do his divine direction and that is only when God had directed him, and most of the time he doesn't do the public Akwankyere, he does on the individual basis on a one-on-one counselling session. He also said every Friday he holds an all-night service, and most of the time God reveals aspects of the life of the people to him but he does not pronounce these revelations to the whole congregation but would usually ask the church to do a general prayer about the issue and then if necessary ask the person involve to see him at the counselling session.

Most of the informants at his church claimed that they have had a lot of improvement because the man of God's directions are always true and when you obey it you will see the results from it and what makes them admire him most is that he does not sell the anointing oil to them he uses his anointing oil during Services, he does not also allow anyone to buy and bring an anointing oil, this makes us believe that he is a true prophet of God, we are more comfortable been under his watch because he never mentions anyone's problems or issues to the congregation, any vision he sees he will talk to the individual in private and help the person to pray and fast to overcome the problem.

4.5 The Prophetic Directions (*Akwankyere*) and Socio-economic Life of People

The section examines the prophetic prayers and directions on the socio-economic life of the study participants. The table below shows the respondents' view on the efficacy of the prophetic prayer and divine directions (akwankyere) to help improve the socio-economic status of members.

Table 8: Respondents belief in prophetic prayer and Direction (Akwankyere)

Responses	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	19	76
No	0	0
Somehow	6	24
Total	25	100

Source: fieldwork, 2020

Table 7 shows that nineteen (19) of the respondents representing 76% belief that the prophetic prayers and directions have a direct influence on their socio-economic development, to this they gave various testimonies about their life experiences on these prophetic activities and the changes it has brought in their socio-economic status. Six (6) of the respondents representing 24% were indifferent to the question. They said even though so many people have given various testimonies to the Prophetic prayers and the akwankyere, they have not yet had any testimony and to them, they will only believe in these prayers and akwankyere when they experience a breakthrough in their life. None of the respondents said no to the question.

Taking a closer look at the various testimonies by the respondents concerning prayer and divine direction (Akwankyere) in the various prophetic ministries. One can say that concerning the socio-economic life of the people, the prayer and Akwankyere is working well for some of them. The people still have great hopes in their prophets and to them, they have experienced socio-economic emancipation in their life.

According to Cephas Omenyo and Abamfo Atiemo, “Worshippers often testify to the efficacy of such symbolic acts in prayer and the akwankyere. Some testify that such

acts have resulted in inexplicable physical injury, incapacitation, or even death of suspected enemies. Or sometimes people least suspected to be one's enemies are believed to have suffered the material result of such specific symbolic acts of violence, thus exposing such people as one's secret enemies.²³⁰

4.6 Seed sowing (Giving)

This session examines giving and seed sowing as a prophetic practice and its influence on the Socio-economic development among members of Neo-prophetic churches. The matter is approached through the principle of "sowing and reaping" the book of psalms outlines this in Psalm 126:5-6.

In Neo-Prophetic churches, giving and seed sowing is linked to the material and spiritual prosperity of individuals and nations.

Nimi Wariboko outlines what he calls the covenant paradigm. This argues that "God blesses people and nations according to either the covenant of giving or the covenant of good efforts." Usually, though, in Neo-prophetic teachings the two go together, as Wariboko explains:

The individual's prosperity, which starts with ceaseless sacrificial giving of giving or time and effort to the church will lead to national development. Irrespective of the overall state of the national economy, poverty is a religious problem caused by a lack of faith or trust in God's promise. Thus, Christians demonstrate their faith in God to turn around their bad socio-economic circumstances by giving financial and other material resources to the church."²³¹

²³⁰ Omenyo and Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space."

²³¹ Nimi Wariboko, "Pentecostal Paradigms of National Economic Prosperity in Africa," in *Pentecostalism and Prosperity: The Socio-Economics of the Global Charismatic Movement*, ed. Katherine Attanasi and Amos Yong (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 37.

Giving among Neo-Prophetic Christians can be in cash or in-kind (Land, car, house, clothing, foodstuff, etc.); this is used to support the work of God and the prophet of God. There are various ways that the prophetic churches receive this “seeds and gifts” One of the pastors of the church outline that: giving is biblical and among the early Christians outlined in the Acts of the Apostle the bible outlined that the possessors of the lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds to the apostles to be distributed. this eliminated poverty among the church. Giving is done through offerings, tithes gifts, and seed sowing.

Offerings are taken on every church service. This is the money a person gives from their own volition in support of the church's progress. One of the respondents said:

My brother I believe in offering and all forms of seed sowing. Even God gave us his son as a seed to the world and this has brought salvation to a sinner like me. So, we should also give to support God’s work. When you give to God he blessing you abundantly.”²³²

Neo-Prophetic Christians believe that offering is a way of opening the heavenly gates to receive the blessings of God. They believe that refusal on the part of a person to give his offering is a robbery, the man of God quoted (Malachi 3:8-11).

The man of God explained that if you do not want the curse of God on your finances. There is the need to be diligent and hour your tithes and offerings. This is the only way God can open the windows of heaven to bless you. So many people are not experiencing the divine blessing because they have refused to pay their tithes and offerings and so

²³² Field interview session with one of male respondents, February 2020.

the devil continues to devour their possessions. It is only God who will rebuke the devil but He will only do that when you have paid your tithes and offerings.

Unlike offering, the tithe is a tenth of a person's income, either weekly or monthly, the man of God quoted Leviticus 27:30-32 "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or the fruit of the trees, is the Lord's; it is holy to the Lord. ³¹ If a man wishes to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add a fifth to it. ³² And all the tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the Lord." And Numbers 18:26 "Moreover you shall say to the Levites, 'When you take from the people of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the Lord, a tithe of the tithe.'"

Tithes are therefore compulsory tenth of a person's income, which are to be paid to church coffers. This is what the lord tasked the Israelites to pay the Levites who had no lands as the other tribes because they the priestly family.

4.7 The influence of Seed Sowing (giving) on the Socio-economic Life

This section further analyses the influence of the concept of giving and seed sowing on the study participants. Most of the respondents agreed that they needed to pay their tithes, offerings, and sow a seed to the church. This to them was the only reason God was going to bless them. One of the respondents said: "if you are poor, the only true way is to uplift your socio-economic life is to regularly and diligently pay your tithes, offerings and sow seed in the church of God" (52-year-old man).

Another respondent buttressed the point in the following words: "My son, all the big and rich people in the country pay their tithes and offerings. If you want to overcome poverty you cannot do that without paying your tithes and offerings."

The responses showed that there is a greater influence of offerings, tithes, and seed sowing and the socio-economic development of individuals.

4.8 Conclusion

The chapter has taken a look at the prophetic activities and their influence on social and economic development. The demographics of the respondents were looked at in the chapter. The prophetic activities outlined include; Prophetic ministration (teachings and messages), prayer and direction (akwankyere), and giving and seed sowing. From the observation, interview sessions, it came to light that the prophetic activities outlined tend to influence the socio-economic development of the members of the two churches under study and the general populace at large.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

The last chapter of the study is divided into three major sections. These are the summary, conclusion, and recommendations for further studies to aid to restructure the activities and messages of the prophetic ministry.

5.2 Summary

Contemporary Neo-prophetism in Ghana has been very phenomenal in the 21st century. Over the years, Prophetism was the prerogative of the AIC's, the Charismatic renewals in the HMC's and strands of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Neo-Prophetic churches seem to have taken over the activities of the prophetic scene in the country. Most Ghanaians who patronize these Neo-prophetic churches and prophets believe that they can have a change in their socio-economic status.

This study has dealt with the engagement of Neo-Prophetic churches and their influence on the socio-economic standards of Ghanaians. While some people opine that prophetic activities have a great influence on the socio-economic status of the people, others believe that it is through hard work, dedication, and commitment to work, that will break the chains of poverty from once life. But not prophecies.

The research transcribed and analysed the prophetic activities (messages, divine directions, seed sowing, and prayer) of two Neo-Prophetic churches in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Based on the data collected, the researcher identified that the activities of the Neo-Prophetic preachers operate and strive in the credit that is giving to supernatural powers. These powers like witches and wizards, and satanic forces

hinder the progress of believers. This affects their socio-economic status in society. This undue stress on the supernatural creates an indelible fear in the minds of the believer, which to them (the believer) and the Prophet the only way to overcome these demonic attacks on your socio-economic life is to seek the counsel of a prophet.

For instance, one female respondent considered herself a very hardworking and resilient young lady. But she claimed she has not been able to save enough money for herself and the family. Because of this, she is of the view that some malevolent spirit is attacking her finances and socio-economic freedom. But upon further interrogations, she came to understand that she is unable to save because of her attitude towards spending. And a lack of a saving attitude. So, she understood that does not need a prophet but a change in attitude towards spending and saving.

Again, the research revealed that most of the informants have been in the congregation for several years. With the hope of having a breakthrough, but all they get is to “sow more seed” and some have ended up spending the little resources they had before consulting these prophets on seed sowing and offerings of all kinds. But their fate is now in the hands of the prophets waiting on them to declare a breakthrough message to them.

Finally, the study found that most of the Neo-Prophets have enriched themselves with various prayer aids. These prayer aids are sold to the unsuspecting congregants at exorbitant prices. This has had a continuous deterioration in the socio-economic status of the people. It was found that while the prophets and their team continue to get richer, the people continue to wallow in poverty and fear. But sadly enough they still hope in their prophets. This is so because they believe in the messages of a better future if you

wait on the Lord, and the affluence lifestyle of the prophets also gives them hope that they will also get it right with the passing of time and trust in the activities of their prophets.

5.3 Conclusion

Prophecy is both a theological and a socio-cultural phenomenon. There is no doubt that contemporary prophets in Ghana are meeting some needs of their followers. However, the prophets of the Neo-Prophetic strands of Ghanaian Christianity, have become autonomous theologians. Their activities continue to create fear in their hearers, this in turn has created a kind of dependency on the prophet and his instructions rather than the word of God. Some contemporary prophets use their gifts not only to help the vulnerable in society but also to extort money from them. Abamfo Atiemo opines that this development addresses fear of the African.²³³

Lartey has also indicated that a Pastoral examination of the perspective of the membership of contemporary prophetic movements revealed “a basic fear of malevolent forces, a dependence on the ‘prophet’s anointing’ and a belief that the protection and blessing of God will remain upon them so long that they remain faithful to God and the church.”²³⁴

The assertion of both Atiemo and Lartey with the participant observation and interview sections by the researcher revealed that “fear” is the reason for the upsurge and striving of Neo-prophetism in Ghana generally, and in the Ashanti region to be precise. People

²³³ A.O. Atiemo, *The Rise of Charismatic Movements in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* (Accra: Asempa Pub., 1993).

²³⁴ E.Y. Lartey, “Of Formulae, Fear and Faith: Current Issues of Concern for Pastoral Care in Africa,” *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* XI, no. 1 - 2 (Jan/July 2001): 5-15.

live in fear of spirit powers who are believed to be the causes of misfortunes in life and a barrier to one's progress both financially and spiritually. This was shown by the answer given by one respondent that "my brother, sometimes we know that things are not going well with us but we are also afraid to voice it. This to him may anger the prophet of God who may cast curses upon you. So just keep quiet and pray that life goes well" (40-year young lady).

The study showed that most of the people who tend to seek greener pastures from Neo-prophetic churches. In the desire to change their socio-economic status, do not realise their desire. But some continue to stay in the hope of a better tomorrow. Some of the respondents asserted that their encounter with the prophets of God has generated enmity between them and some of their family members. This is because, according to the prophet some uncles, aunts, mothers, fathers, and grandparents are responsible for their inability to progress in life.

The study also showed that some of the respondents have lost huge sums of money to the Neo-Prophetic church. This is because of the consistent persuasions of the Men of God to buy anointing oil, different forms of blessed water, eggs, and other items used as prayer aids at exorbitant prices. In this event, the prophets have rather raised the socio-economic status of themselves and their families while most of the congregants continue to be burdened daily with offerings and seed sowing which intend seem not to be bearing any fruit for them. One respondent when asked why she continues to be part of the congregation if she is not realizing her dream for coming there. She responded that there is the fear that whenever you leave something bad will happen to you, and your

life will be worse off. For fear of this, they will continue to stay to be able to live under the protection of the Prophet of God.

Finally, the study identified that most of the time it is the young and youthful in the society, who want to get rich quicker, usually seek the services of there Neo-prophetic churches and pastors. But unfortunately, the change and betterment of one's life do not rely on Prophecies by the Neo-prophetic churches. But if you want to break the chains of poverty then one needs to get an education, or work hard and be dedicated to whatever you find your hands on as your work. this is also stated in the Book of Ecclesiastics 9:10a "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might..." The book of Colossians 3:23 also states "Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men", these verses show that it is important to work diligently to overcome the grips of poverty.

5.4 Recommendation

Based on the findings of the research, the researcher wishes to make the following recommendations.

First, it is recommended that religious bodies like the Christian Council of Ghana, Catholic Bishops Conference, and Pentecostal and Charismatic Council should put in place regulatory measures to control the extend some of the activities of churches in the country, especially the activities of Neo-prophetic churches. This, I hope, would go a long way to bring sanity in the churches and worship in the country.

Secondly, it is recommended that there should be a wider education by religious and moral educators in the country. This is to create an awareness of unsuspecting

Christians who would want to seek the services of Neo-prophetic ministers, to be more vigilant so they don't fall into the hands of the bad and fake one's. Also, people should be educated to read and understand the bible so these Neo-Prophets do not read and misinterpret it to them and to use it to extort monies from them.

Finally, the researcher also recommends that future researchers should delve into the negative effects of Neo-prophetic churches' activity of exposing people in public and witchcraft possessors and people who are possessed with other malevolent spirits.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Dear Sir/Madam, I am Bosco Aboagye, an M.Phil. Student of the Department for the Study Religions, University of Ghana – Legon. I am researching on prophetic ministry and socio-economic life of Ghanaians. I would be very grateful if you can please spare 30 minutes of your time with me to answer the following questions? The information gathered from your outfit would be treated with the strictest confidentiality and for the purpose for which it is gathered. Thank you.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Title Prophet Apostle Evangelist Rev. Rev. Dr. Mr. (Optional).....
2. Age: (20-25) (25-30) (35-40) (45-50) (50-60) Above 60
3. Sex: Male Female
4. Place of Birth:.....
5. Name of Parents.....
Alive or dead?.....
6. Level of Education: Community Literacy Education
 Middle School / Junior High School Senior High School Technical/ Vocational School Teacher Training College Polytechnic University
7. Marital Status: Married Single Divorced

Spiritual Encounter:

8. *Man of God please:* Where and when did you become a Christian or converted?
9. *Man of God please:* Into which church or denomination were you first converted?
please Do you still belong to that denomination?

10. ***Man of God please:*** Can you briefly narrate to me; where, when, and how you felt the call of God upon your life? Where you employed before you entered the ministry? (If yes,) What was your occupation?

11. ***Man of God please:*** When and how did you start your ministry

12. ***Man of God please:*** Do you use prayer Aids, like anointing oil, handkerchief, and other things?

If yes how does it influence prophecies?

13. ***Man of God please:*** What message titles do you mostly dwell on the have an encounter with the divine and prophecy to the people (at least three of them with biblical verses)

14. ***Man of God please:*** Can you share with me if there were any socio-economic hardships you faced before you entered into ministry as a Prophet?

15. ***Man of God please:*** Did you notice sin, evil spirits, ancestral curses, demons, and witches playing significant roles in these economic hardships? Please explain further

16. ***Man of God please:*** What did you do in dealing with these hard-socio-economic situations? How did you respond? (For eg tithing more, prayers /deliverance, job seeking, self- employment)

17. ***Man of God please:*** Do you presently face any socio-economic hardships at times? Please explain how?

18. ***Man of God please:*** Is socio-economic and moral issues part of the problems that people come to see you with?

19. ***Man of God please:*** How far can you say that people have been emancipated socially, economically, and morally through your ministry?

20. *Man of God please:* has it ever happened that the socio-economic and moral needs for which people come here were not resolved?

If yes what might have accounted for that

21. *Man of God please:* Can you share with me your views on poverty?

22. *Man of God please:* Do you consider poverty as having spiritual connotations?

23. *Man of God please:* Do you consider a prosperous life as the result of (1) faithfully paying tithes (2) rendering financial supports to the church and (3) giving money frequently to support the prophetic ministry? Please explain further

24. *Man of God please:* What is your view on the issues that prophetic ministry does not advocate for people to work hard but rather rely on God instead of spending time at workplaces

25. *Man of God please:* do you consider the prophetic ministry as influencing the socio-economic and moral lives of Ghanaian's? why do you say so

Thank you, Sir, please is there anything you want to say to the people in our educational circles

Appendix Two: Pictures of Selected Prayer Aids

Sample of the egg of destruction (Kodi awuo Kosua) at EMWC



Sample of anointing oil at EMWC



A section of Congregants at EMWC with gallons to fetch the well water(well water)

