

ROLES OF THE WOMEN IN THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST IN GHANA

BY

ERNESTINA ENYONAM QUIST

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DECLARATION

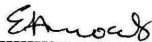
I, Ernestina Enyonam Quist declare that apart from references, which have been duly acknowledged, this is the product of my own research work. I thereby take responsibility of any errors in this work.



Ernestina Enyonam Quist

(Student)

Date..26 Sept 2003



Dr. Elizabeth Amoah

(Supervisor)

Date..26 Sept 2003

Rev. Dr. Werner Kahl
(Supervisor)

Date.....

DEDICATION

To
Sophia Mckeown, Christina Obo, Esme Siriboe,
Eunice Addison, Perpetual Owusu
and all those women who share in the success story of the Church of Pentecost.



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ABSTRACT

The Church of Pentecost emphasizes the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and its gifts for every member of the church, yet women are limited in their roles due to the traditions of the church.

This survey studies the roles of women in the church, taking into consideration the doctrines of the church, the culture of the people and the effect of contemporary society. Women have played and continue to play instrumental roles in the life and ministry of the church. Notwithstanding, apart from the Women's Movement, (the main organization of women in the church), women are not in any active leadership positions in the church.

The contributions of these women must be recognized, while equal opportunities are given to them as well. This would result in an awareness and enhancement of their potentials. By this, Christianity for the Church of Pentecost would not be static but dynamic.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the various religions the positions and roles played by members are structured, based on many factors including gender. Religious teaching and its interpretation have usually determined gender roles in various religious traditions, affecting their total way of life. These gender roles have to do with the relationship between men and women with reference to their role differentiation and power relation between them.

In contemporary times the issue of gender seems to be synonymous to the issues of women. This has been due to the limited role women are allowed to play within the leadership structures, which are in favour of men.

The Church of Pentecost, in a comparative church growth study has been asserted as one of the fastest growing churches in Ghana, with a growth rate of 118% per annum.¹ Being one of the Pentecostal churches in the country, it gives prominence to the work of the Holy Spirit. Every believer who receives the Holy Spirit is supposed to proclaim Christ. The paradigm for the Church of Pentecost is portrayed in their emphasis on Acts 2.

Though the Church of Pentecost believes that the Holy Spirit empowers every believer, there are certain positions, which are not handled by women. Ministerial positions, for instance, are solely reserved for men. No woman has yet been called

¹ Richard Foli, *Church Membership Trends in Ghana: A Comparative Church Growth Study*, University of Ghana, Dec 2000. 231

into the pastoral ministry since it is believed that they are not capable for that ministry.

In its development, women have been actively involved in sustaining the membership and growth of the church. Women in the church have been organising many activities with the aim of enhancing the growth of the church. Some of the women are so spiritually gifted that they have established some prayer centres.

The Church of Pentecost is a church in which women have been tools through which the membership and growth of the church have been sustained. It is also a church, which requires every believer to be filled with the Holy Spirit since it is that that equips the believer for God's service.² Certain duties in the church are limited to men, what then can we say is the place of women in the church?

Jesus promised his disciples that after the descent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples, who included women, would receive power and become witnesses of Him. Are the women of the Church of Pentecost living up to this promise? How are they fulfilling this call to be witnesses of the gospel? In a church where no woman has yet been made a pastor, what role do women in the Church of Pentecost see themselves as playing?

OBJECTIVES

- The historical significance of women in the development of the Church of Pentecost.

² Christine Leonard, *A Giant in Ghana* New Wine Press, West Sussex. 55

- To bring out specific duties for men and women if any, in the church.
- To study the functions/ roles of the Women's Movement in the Church of Pentecost.
- To delineate ways in which women with charismatic gifts express themselves in the Church of Pentecost.
- To assess how the church recognises women with charismatic gifts.
- To suggest a model for the church doctrine on women and charisma.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Women: These are adult females not girls. These women may be single, married, divorced or widowed.

Church: Unless otherwise stated, this term would be referring to the Church of Pentecost. 'Church' would be used interchangeably with the Church of Pentecost. For the purpose of this work, it does not refer to the universal church.

COP: This is an acronym for the Church of Pentecost. This acronym would also be used in most part of the work interchangeably with "Church of Pentecost."

Local Assembly: These are local branches of the church. These are at the grass root level.

Women's Movement: There are different groups in the church usually called movements, which bring together women in the church to serve their needs and also to help them become useful to the society in which they live.

SCOPE

This work is limited to the COP (Church of Pentecost) though some examples would be taken from other churches for comparative purposes.

It would touch on the historical background of the church, dwelling much on the contribution of women to the growth and expansion of the church. The doctrines of the church especially, those concerning women would be studied.

The role and place of women in the church would be studied taking into consideration, the Women's Movement of the church and the roles women play in movements, other than the Women's Movement and their contributions with respect to the administration of the church.

METHODOLOGY

The phenomenological method was used in studying the women in the COP. The history of the women in the church was also studied. Information was thus, taken from both primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources

There is virtually no published literature on the women in the COP hence interviews and questionnaire were given to people with relevant information.

Reference was made to relevant events in the church's history, for instance, the beginnings of the women's movement. Minutes of meetings and conferences, which are relevant to this work, were also consulted.

Since we are studying the role and place of women in the COP, the views of the leaders of the church as well as the leaders of the Women's Movement were very important not to mention the views of male and female members of the church. The researcher, being a member of the church, also had the opportunity to observe the phenomenon over time.

The Bible is of course, an important resource, especially what the scriptures meant to the people of biblical time and its application in contemporary times. Thus, with biblical hermeneutics it is believed that once a text is properly understood, its application to modern times follows automatically.³

Secondary sources

Both published and unpublished literature was made use of. Literature on women in Christianity especially, those that concentrate on Pentecostalism were consulted as well as books and journals relating to the history of the COP and women in the church. Because the church has been established in the Ghanaian culture, especially the Akan culture, literature focusing on women in the culture was useful.



³ R. T. France *Women in the Church's Ministry: A Test- Case For Biblical Hermeneutics*, Paternoster Press, Carlisle. 1995. P. 12

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is not much literature on women in the COP except reports on their activities. Most information would thus be taken from oral sources especially, people who have been in the church from its inception or have any links with them. Some of the activities of women have been documented in the *Pentecost Fire*, the church's official magazine. Brochures of the Women's Movement at conferences and conventions give brief history of the women leaders in the church and the roles they played.

Though not on women, some literature on the COP includes the roles of women. Christine Leonard's *A Giant in Ghana*, on the beginnings of the Church of Pentecost devotes a chapter to the role of women, especially that of Sophia McKeown, the wife of McKeown, the founder. She is said to have not only encouraged her husband to come to Africa but also worked extensively among the indigenous people. The chapter also focuses on some indigenous women like Mrs. Christiana Obo who were helpful to the church's growth.

Like Sophia McKeown, the pastors' wives in COP also play striking roles in the life of the church. This is what Beauty E. Agbavor looks at in her long essay⁴ *The Pastor's Wife in The Presbyterian Church and The Church of Pentecost*. Though these women have no formal training for the work, they do serve as church mothers, preachers, counselors, teachers and also are hospitable.

⁴ This and other long essays that are cited are unpublished works submitted to the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon.

Some of the outstanding contributions of women like Prophetess Sophia Abena Dede and Prophetess Grace Amma Asamoah are documented in the draft book on the history of the Church of Pentecost. These were ordinary women who ministered healing and deliverance to the oppressed. These operated from their prayer camps and served as “spiritual clinics” to the church. They also added to the growth of the church through their ministry. Rita Acquah in her long essay *Church of Pentecost Prayer Camps: A Study of Macedonia, Paradise, and Salvation Prayer Camps*, studies the operation, nature and importance of prayer camps to COP. Her case study did not, however, cover camps that were set up or managed by women though she cites Maame Dede’s prayer camp at Kade in Eastern region and prophetess Grace Adu’s camp at Edumfa in Central region.

On the status of women in the church, the constitution of the church, which is the reflection of its doctrines, is very important to the study. The constitution gives the qualities of one who takes on any position in the church. The constitution is, however, suggestive of men’s leadership roles in the church and does not allow women to assume any position above that of a deacon, implying that they cannot become recognised ministers of the church. Also in the leadership of movements and committees the constitution is indicative of men since the leaders are supposed to be Elders or Pastors who in the church are all men. These aspects of the constitution would be looked at critically to study its affect on the women in the church and also looked at in line with the roles women have played and continue to play in the church.

On the history of the Church of Pentecost a major and updated book is yet to be published by the church. But the draft is a detailed work on the history of the church,

touching on the role women have played as supporters of the men as well as spiritual leaders themselves. Some of the women were instrumental in the expansion and establishment of the church in some communities. E.K. Larbi's book **PENTECOSTALISM: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity** outlines detailed history, beliefs and practices of the Pentecostal movement in Ghana. Using the Church of Pentecost as one of his case studies makes his work very relevant to this study.

This study will, however, try to bring together the activities of these women in a more coherent form, to see how these women with Pentecostal heritage have been contributing to the growth of the church.

Considerable literature on Gender and Religion have been developed in recent times. Such studies have included biblical perspectives, on the place of women and their cultural perspectives. Recognising interpretation from men's perspective, such studies have endeavoured to surface the perspectives of women in the interpretation of scripture.

Wesley S. Ariarajah in *Did I Betray The Gospel* thinks that scripture must be interpreted again and again to communicate to every generation. He also raises the question whether the scriptures would have been different if women did the interpretation. In the same light R.T. France in *Women in the Church's Ministry: A Test- Case for Biblical Hermeneutics*, cites examples in the bible of re- evaluation of scriptural principles in the light of new circumstances. Thus reinterpreting scriptures from various perspectives is normal.

In her book *The Lady Was A Bishop*, Joan Morris highlights significant roles played by women in the Bible, for instance, the holding of meetings by the Christians in the homes of women such as Lydia (Acts 16:14-15), mother of Mark (Acts 12:12) among others. She argues that the writers of the Bible wrote it in accordance with the mentality of the age when women were seen as subjects or properties of men. Even at miraculous events, such as the feeding of 5000 and 4000 followers of Jesus it was recorded that "the number of those who ate was about five thousand men, beside women and children" as in the case of the latter. With the former, the reportage is not different. (Mt. 14:13- 21; 15: 32- 38)

Clare Drury, in her article "Christianity" in *Women in Religion*, edited by Jean Holm with John Bowker, looks at how the church has interpreted the biblical views on gender, sexuality and marriage. She looks at how the story of creation and fall has affected the woman's place in the society, her relationship to God and her husband. She believes that though women have played important roles in the gospels and Acts, it is the second and third generation of Christians such as the Ephesians and the epistles to Timothy and Titus that has kept women in a secondary role in Christianity. This point to the fact that recipients of the religion have shaped it to suit them, in line with Paul Tillich that "culture is the solvent of religion." She also sees the appeal of Christian women to be treated as men's equals as a possibility since she says "women are seen publicly in roles of importance and authority in secular life, so that some of the old arguments based on women's innate inferiority to men have disappeared in the church as well." Drury may be right in seeing the role of women improving, but as she noted the culture of the people affect the role of women in the church. It is true that in our part of the world there are women, though few in roles of importance and

authority but to what extent have these changes in the society affected the role of women in the COP in Ghana?

An example of the changing role of women is in *Those Preaching Women* edited by Ella Pearson Mitchell. She has brought together 14 sermons of women who have overcome cultural biases of church and society to take their positions in the pulpit.

There have been similar works on the role of women in the church in Ghana looking at some Christian women in Ghana. Rosemary Akurigu's thesis on *Women in the Catholic Church in Ghana* studies the ecclesiastical and social roles of women in the Catholic Church. Women in the Catholic Church form some societies to help in community development, their roles being quite different from that of the men. Priesthood, for instance, is reserved for men. They are however commissioned for other ecclesiastical duties. Similar to Akurigu's work is Alvin R. McBorrough's work on charismatic women in his *The Role of Women in the Charismatic Churches in Ghana*. He classifies views on the role of women in the church into two: the conservative and the moderate or liberal view. In line with the Pentecostal view the Charismatic churches believe individuals are endowed with the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit in order to minister to themselves and the church. He cites some charismatic churches such as the International Bible Worship Centre now Royalhouse Chapel and the Solid Rock Chapel where women are encouraged in all areas of the practice of faith and are welcomed into ministerial positions. This work looks at the Pentecostal worldview of women and the place given to such women, specifically in the COP

It is also important to study the culture in which the church was established as it influences the specific roles to be played by women. The role of women in African culture, especially Akan culture would thus be very useful since the Akan language is the main medium of expression in the COP. Elizabeth Amoah's "Femaleness: Akan Concepts & Practices" in *Women, Religion and Sexuality* edited by Jeanne Becher and J.S. Mbiti's "Flowers in the Garden: the role of women in African Religions" in *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society* edited by J.K. Olupona look at both the social and spiritual roles of women. Mbiti though similar to Amoah, has most of his examples from East Africa. Again, Elizabeth Amoah's "Akan Conceptions of the Relationship between Humanity and Nature" in *Where God Reigns* edited by E. Amoah studies the human relationship in the Akan society. In the society men generally take the major part in decision-making without the involvement or consideration of women. The role women play in the cultural practices has affected the church in general and this work looks at its effects on the COP.

In *The Will to Arise: Women Tradition and The Church in Africa* edited by Mercy Oduyoye and Musimbi Kanyoro look at culture, sexuality, rituals and rites of passage as part of the African religion having influence on Christianity. They also look at leadership roles in the matrilineal society and how this can contribute to women's leadership both in the ordained and administrative ministries of the church. J. S. Pobee (edited) in his introduction to *Culture, Women & Theology* calls on theologians to take culture seriously as they discuss the place of women in the Church.

Some works, which are relevant to this study, though not quoted, have been cited in the bibliography. This is due to limitation of words to be written in this work.

RELEVANCE

Religious beliefs of people affect the gender roles of adherents. The COP has a significant story about how women fare in the church. It also reveals the dynamism of women, which can be tapped by others. The women's organisations try to make the women self sufficient by engaging them in income-generating activities. This relevant story of the women in the COP will help future research on women in the Pentecostal churches or the church in Ghana.



CHAPTER TWO

THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

INTRODUCTION

The Church of Pentecost (COP) has its origin in the Ghanaian soil, though has an European as its founder. The establishment of the COP in Ghana is one example of an African initiative in West African Church History.

Africans have been directly or indirectly involved in the propagation of the gospel. Thus, missionary work in Africa has not been the exclusive concern of Europeans. Methodism in the Gold Coast (Ghana) for instance was indirectly introduced by a group of enthusiastic African young men called the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. These young men requested for bibles from Captain Protter who in turn contacted the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, which was so impressed with the initiative shown by the Africans that, they recruited their first missionaries⁵ to come to the sub-region.

Twentieth Century Pentecostalism has its origin in the early 1900s. It is said to have begun with Miss Agnes N. Ozman, a student of a bible school in Topheka, Kansas in the United States⁶. This woman received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the gift of speaking in tongues.

However the general wave that made the phenomenon to spread began with the Apostolic Faith Mission in Azusa Street in Los Angeles where many received the

⁵ J.K. Agbeti, *West African Church History*, Leiden. 1986. 54

⁶ Max Assimeng, *Saints and Social Structure*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Tema. 1986

Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. This was understood to be a repetition of the Pentecost experience of the apostles in Acts 2. The spread of this movement is significant since the same period marked the period in which Christianity was only to be expressed in rational terms. Emotionality on the other hand accounted for the growth of the movement. Women have been instrumental in the Pentecostal movement. The Apostolic Faith movement was for instance founded by Florence I. Crawford. Aimee Semple McPherson also founded the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel.

At the turn of the century there was a growth in literacy and also an increase in foreign newspapers and other publications in many African countries. Pentecostal propagandists were also transmitting literature on the work of the Holy Spirit as a means of evangelism. It was one of such literature *Sword of the Spirit* that reached the Gold Coast from the Faith Tabernacle Church in Philadelphia. This magazine focused on divine healing through absolute faith.

Larbi classified Pentecostalism as the second strand of twentieth century renewal movement in Ghana. He links it to Peter Anim and James McKeown and traces the history of three classical Pentecostal churches i.e. the Christ Apostolic Church, the Church of Pentecost (COP) and the Apostolic Church especially to Anim⁷. This is because though Assemblies of God was the first foreign Pentecostal mission to work in Ghana, their impact was less with respect to evangelism⁸. Debrunner points out that

⁷ E.K. Larbi, *PENTECOSTALISM: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, CPCS, Accra. 2001. 69-70
⁸ Ibid. 71

its Pentecostal element was less pronounced than in the Apostolic church⁹. It was not until recently that the Assemblies of God began to experience real numerical growth, the effect of an evangelistic strategy nation-wide.¹⁰

With respect to the advent of the COP, Peter Anim, a staunch Presbyterian, came into contact with the '*Sword of the Spirit*' in 1917. He developed a deeper sense of faith through this magazine, than, from what the missionaries were preaching. He was himself miraculously healed from a chronic stomach ailment and later formed a prayer group through which many people were healed and were also converted in Asamankese and some parts of the present day Eastern region of Ghana where he preached.¹¹

He established links with the Faith Tabernacle Church. He, however, came into contact with another magazine published by the Apostolic Faith in America through which he learnt more about the Holy Spirit. This contact did not please the Philadelphia church leading to the abrogation of links with Anim's group.

The Anim group later established links with a visiting apostolic pastor thus becoming affiliates of The Apostolic Church, Bradford (U.K) and adopted the name Apostolic Church. This group of men and women desiring Pentecostal revival became the nucleus of the Apostolic Church in the Gold Coast.¹²

⁹ Hans Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*. Spottiswoode, Ballantyne & Co. Ltd. London. 1967, 326

¹⁰ Larbi, *op cit.* 74

¹¹ History of the Church of Pentecost (West Africa). Manuscript 7

¹² Leonard, *op cit.* 23

From the headquarters in Bradford, Rev. James McKeown was sent as the first resident missionary.¹³ He was very instrumental in the establishment of the Apostolic Church and later, the COP.

JAMES McKEOWN IN THE GOLD COAST.

McKeown was a native of Northern Ireland, U.K. Born at the turn of the century; he left school at eleven to help his father on the farm. He joined the Pentecostal movement at an early age and became a member of the Apostolic Church after his marriage. His wife Sophia played an important part in his work as a missionary through her persuasions. The seed of this call as a missionary, the sole passion of his life, was however sown by his wife, Sophia¹⁴

McKeown coming to the Gold Coast as a missionary was a result of the persuasion of Sophia. But for his wife, he would not have started what has now become a big phenomenon in Ghana. As the adage goes "behind every successful man is a woman", He had refused the call to Africa for 15 months. His wife had always been persuading him to take up the challenge till his wife awoke him one night, crying and pleading with him to go as a missionary. In his own words, McKeown declared "what can you do when your wife is crying at your back every night!"¹⁵

He arrived in the Gold Coast on the 4th of March 1937¹⁶ and started work at Asamankese, which was part of the Gold Coast colony but today is in the Eastern region of Ghana. After two years he, however, had to break-up with Anim, the brain

¹³ Larbi, *op cit* 107

¹⁴ Leonard, *op cit* 24

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 19

behind Pentecostalism in the country. The break-up was due to their different views on medication. The Anim group relied totally on divine healing. Other forms of medication were considered demonic¹⁷ to the extent that wounds were not dressed, women in labor were not helped and they only resorted to prayer, resulting in the death of many mothers and their children.

McKeown was worried about people dying for lack of basic medical care, which was available at that time. The Apostolic Church in Bradford also rejected the non-medical view. James himself when taken ill resorted to medication, which eventually generated a lot of tension between himself and Anim.

He broke up with the Anim group; Anim renamed his church Christ Apostolic Church, a church that still exists in Ghana. In 1938 he moved to Winneba, which was also part of the Gold Coast colony, but today in the Central region. He later moved the Headquarters to Accra but had already planted churches in a number of places through the help of the indigenous people especially, the women around him.

He interacted freely with Africans and co-operated with them. Leonard reports an interview with McKeown saying that, it was the Africans who did the work since he could not have done it all by himself, an example of African initiative. This is because the Africans knew the geography of the land and the language of the people. These Africans served as interpreters, companions; house-helpers among others, to enable him attain a great success. This is very typical of missionary work in West Africa- the indigenous people doing the bulk of the work especially in the hinterland.

¹⁷ Ibid., 31

When Sophia wanted to teach the women sewing, she realized that, the women were more interested in spiritual work. They had no time for needlework, but prayer. Some of these women were traders and as they went along with their trade, they preached the gospel. As people got converted, they opened assemblies, a means by which the church expanded to those places. According to Leonard,

‘ in the market places throughout the region, women were telling stories about what was happening, so when James came to preach the people were curious to come and listen. Women were opening assemblies at that time- Dunkwa-On-Offin, Kumasi, Sekondi, Takoradi- the women went to all the key places from Saltpond, "taking the fire down as they put it".¹⁸

There were other women who, as prophetesses caused great revivals in the areas they operated. They include Sophia Abena Dede and Grace Amma Asamoah. Prophetess Sophia did her work at Kade in present eastern region of Ghana at a time when there was no Pentecostal movement in the area. *Tigare*¹⁹ had a stronghold in Kade and its surrounding towns and villages. It was difficult for her to convert the adults thus, forcing her to turn her attention to the children, teaching and praying for them. Through her prayers, a particular set of candidates passed their Standard Seven Examinations with distinction. She was brought to the limelight resulting in many adults responding to her call to them to become Christians. The church thus began in Kade. In 1949 she is said to have raised a dead woman to life at Oda opening up Oda

¹⁸

Ibid. 55

¹⁹

A powerful new traditional religious movement, which emerged during the century. It combined elements of both traditional religion and Christianity. It was a threat to many missionaries due to the large following that they had.

also for her work. It was through her ministry that the church was established in other parts of that area.

The activities of Prophetess Grace at her prayer centre in the present Ashanti region were a catalyst for the fast growth of the church in that region. She established other assemblies at Ofoase, Twedie and Yamfo all in the region.

McKeown also found out that, women were trustworthier in relation to monetary matters than men. He noted that, apart from being very committed as regards to prayer times, they also gave their money to support church activities. To this effect, Leonard concludes that if McKeown had his own way, most of the credit for the human foundation of the church would go to the women. One of such women is Mrs. Christina Obo, who is described as a rock in the foundation of the church, as her name depicts.²⁰

McKeown was a good mixer having the ability of interacting freely with the indigenous people in their living conditions, which was less developed as compared to his background. This in an age of colonialism was very revolutionary. This helped him greatly, as he was able to win the confidence of the people and converted them easily. He had natural alliance and sympathy with the ordinary people, which had something to do with his background.

His prior job as a tram driver in England apparently had prepared him for his new missionary work because he had to interact with different kinds of people including

²⁰ Obo in Akan means rock

Africans whom he got interested in and felt they were lovely people. The leaders of the Apostolic Church in Bradford also acknowledged this virtue in him that, though he did not have the required education, he was able to easily adapt to circumstances more than many others could do.²¹ In fact since the Pentecostal movement emphasized the Holy Spirit, they were not very much interested in the education of their pastors. Max Assimeng quotes an adherent of the Pentecostal faith as saying

“the majority of the pastors and evangelists of the Pentecostal movement were simple laymen from the ranks of the working classes, and often with little education. What they lacked in worldly knowledge seemed to be supplemented by a double portion of spiritual power... If they lacked the education to speak with authority on matters of doctrine, they certainly did not lack the power to cast out devils and heal the sick.”²²

Emphasis on the Holy Spirit is an important factor in attracting the Africans since the African interprets life spiritually. Leonard said ‘in these days of colonialism, the Africans were amazed that a white man lived as they did and did not mind the conditions in which he slept, though primitive.’²³ This was not characteristic of many other African missionaries in the Gold Coast. His gift of adaptability enabled him to win the hearts of the Africans, achieving a lot of success through them.

McKeown became one with the African thus starting the process of indigenization from the beginning of his ministry. Working hand-in-hand with vibrant men and women, the Apostolic church was established in many towns and villages. By 1952 there were 53 ordained indigenous pastors, 512 assemblies and membership had increased to 10,000 from 200 members at the time he broke away from Anim.

²¹ Leonard, *op cit.* 24
²² Assimeng, *op cit.* 133
²³ Leonard, *op cit.* 31

There was yet another controversy, this time between James McKeown and The Apostolic Church, Bradford. The Headquarters had an idea of establishing black ministers for the blacks and white ministers for the whites so that blacks would not have rule over whites. McKeown did not agree with this view, which led to conflicts and finally he seceded from the Headquarters.

ESTABLISHMENT OF COP

There was however an immediate cause for the break from The Apostolic Church by McKeown. It happened with the Latter Rain team,²⁴ a group of American evangelists led by Dr. Wyatt. Contrary to the headquarters position, the team visited the Gold Coast in February 1953, and it brought great spiritual revival to the church. There were a lot of miraculous acts leading to more conversions. More so, their mode of preaching was marked by spiritual force. The church in the Gold Coast adopted this feature, though not part of the norms of the Bradford Church.

The headquarters disagreed with the coming of the Latter Rain team and at a General Council meeting in May 1953 it tried to discourage missionaries from taking decisions on church governance. They also amended the constitution on church government to suit the headquarters' view.

McKeown did not subscribe to the ruling because he felt they were unscriptural. He could see racist tendencies in the amendment and could not accept it out of conscience. During the time of re-affirmation, he stood up when it was his turn and

²⁴ History of the Church of Pentecost (manuscript). 17

said, "I cannot conscientiously accept this".²⁵ He was then dismissed as an apostolic minister, and made to hand over his ordination certificate.

His pastorate heard about what had befallen their minister but did not see anything wrong with the revival brought by Dr. Wyatt's team, since they felt they had become better Christians. Taking the initiative, they invited McKeown back and even took responsibility for his travelling expenses but this time, not as a missionary of the Apostolic Church. The headquarters sent another missionary to the Apostolic Church, Gold Coast.

With a section of his pastorate that was loyal to him, he established a new church with members from the mother church. This was named Gold Coast Apostolic church but later in 1962 became the Church of Pentecost.²⁶ It is now one of the fastest growing churches in Ghana.

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Beliefs

The tenets²⁷ of COP summarises its core beliefs. The COP believes in the divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is infallible and final in authority. All the beliefs of the church have biblical basis.

²⁵ Ibid. 18-19

²⁶ Leonard, *op cit.* 142. This was due to a confusion of names in which three Pentecostal churches had apostolic added to their name. President Nkrumah (Ghana's first president) decreed for a change of name.

²⁷ Minister's Manual, The Church of Pentecost, 6-8

Like the mainline churches, the COP believes in the existence of God who is the one true God *Elohim*. It is believed that God made the whole universe and is revealed as the Triune Godhead-Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is the understanding of the functions of the different persons of the Godhead. Larbi attributes this understanding to Ghanaians being equipped linguistically to express the distinctions between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.²⁸

Through the working of the Holy Spirit whose evidence in the life of a believer is the speaking in tongues, it is expected that the believer is to be sanctified. The Holy Spirit guides the Christian and also endows one with specific gifts and abilities. Lack of formal education is not a hindrance to one being used since it is believed the Spirit is a strong teacher. In recent times there is preference for the more educated people. The church emphasizes the working of the Holy Spirit as the agent that gives direction and guidance to the church.

With respect to the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, a convert is baptized by immersion as an evidence of his/her repentance and confession of sins.

The church does not practise infant baptism. Children are dedicated to the Lord. A convert must be about 13 years to qualify for baptism²⁹. All members who are in full

²⁸

²⁹

Larbi, *op cit.* 267-279

Minister's Manual, The Church of Pentecost, 7

fellowship³⁰ are supposed to partake in the Lord's Supper or communion. Elders and Pastors of the church, who are all males, lead these sacraments.

The church believes in the divine healing of sickness and disease but does not prevent one from soliciting the assistance of qualified medical practitioners.

The church emphasizes the great commission in Matt. 28. The church sees itself as a missionary body. Every member is a missionary whether one is in his office, market, home or anywhere. To promote the gospel of the kingdom of God, considerable resources are needed. The church believes in tithing and the giving of free-will offerings basically for evangelism. A believer who does not give tithes is robbing God.

These beliefs are binding on all the members of the church. They are the doctrines and dogma of the church, and thus do not change. Practices of the church, however, may change in the light of changing circumstances and situations.

Practices

The church aims at being true to the word of God and addressing the spiritual and cultural needs of its members. Cultural practices, like drumming, clapping and dancing which do not question fundamental Christian beliefs, are accepted. They might have learnt the lessons of the missionary societies, which did not give room to the indigenous cultures. This is because culture is the solvent of religion hence

³⁰

One in full membership is one who has been baptized and given the right hand of fellowship. For one to be given this opportunity he/she must not indulge in any form of sinful acts or any adulterous or polygamous relationships.

religion must thus be well appropriated in any culture. Gehman was right when he says:

“When Christianity brings to another culture all the problems and questions of a foreign culture and fails to address itself to the issues and needs of the new culture, that Christianity will remain foreign based. When Christians of one culture seek to express their Christian faith in foreign forms, the gospel fails to become rooted and indigenously established.”³¹

The COP incorporated those aspects of the African culture, which does not go against the Bible into its liturgy, thus clapping, drumming, and dancing are central to the worship of the church. Also the main medium of expression is Twi, an Akan language. For most of these practices they found a basis in the bible, thus the church could possibly transfer the traditional notion of women mostly being in the background with its corresponding basis in 1Cor. 11:8-9, that women would have to be subordinate to men.

In the life of the COP, there is a clear distinction between men and women. Not only are, men and women expected to sit separately during a typical COP service, but also there are different roles played by them. Women do not usually conduct service, preach or lead intensive prayers during main church services as a norm. It is the men who mostly preach and this is reflected in the church's administration. Women are not ordained as elders and pastors.

³¹

Richard Gehman. *African Traditional Religion in Biblical Perspective*, East African Educational Publishers Limited, Nairobi. 1993. 270

About dressing, members are urged to be modest. Women are not to be seen in male clothing. Women are also expected to put on scarves, especially, to church services. Men are to be men and women, women.

The COP is particularly noted for its moral standards and discipline. Both laity and clergy are expected to live pure lives in readiness for the second coming of Jesus Christ or the judgement day. Strict measures are taken against members who engage themselves in what is considered as gross misconduct. Examples are "misappropriation of church funds, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, erroneous teaching of church doctrine, disrespectful behaviour which affects unity and progress within the church, gross insubordination, non- cooperation with fellow ministers"³² (in the case of ministers). The church upholds monogamy and disapproves of polygamy. Members who are polygamous are prevented from the Eucharist. Men who marry more than one before becoming members are asked to divorce all except the first wife. In the same way women who are not the first wives in polygamous marriages are also encouraged to divorce their husbands, as this would qualify her to partake in the Eucharist. Polygamists are not regarded as full members of the church.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure of the church aims at looking at the flow of authority and the various decision-making bodies in the church. For matters that affect the members and the church at large, there are various decision-making bodies set up to see to them. This shown in the chart below:

³² Larbi, *op cit.* 16 Quoted from COP Pastors' workshop.



The organization chart shows the general administration of the COP, which includes both paid and unpaid personnel. The unpaid personnel are usually those at the grassroots seeing to the day-to-day physical and spiritual needs of the members. These include the presiding elders, local movements' leaders, local presbytery, district movements' leaders and the district presbytery and the district executive with the District Pastor being on the payroll of the church.

At the local and district levels where some decisions concerning the local assemblies and that of the district are taken, women are represented but this reduces tremendously as it moves higher till at the general council where only one woman is present by virtue of being the Women's Movement director. (This will be discussed later.) The General Council or the Regional Presbytery boards make decisions, which are then implemented by the district and the local assemblies. Those at the grassroots are actually not autonomous but act on the decisions of the general council. The decisions of the general council may however, be suggestions made at the local, districts, regional or national levels ratified at the council meetings.

There are various sub-groups/ movements in the church bringing together people with similar needs. There is for instance the Children's Movement and the Women's Movement. Groups that have been established recently have, however, adopted names such as ministry and fellowship. This is typical of contemporary Christianity in Ghana. Apart from the Women's Movement, women are not in active leadership positions of the church. The core of the leadership is exclusively for men.

FACTORS OF GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Being a community based church; the Church of Pentecost is one of the fastest growing churches in Ghana.³³ From a membership of 10,000 in 1952, membership in Ghana as at December 2001 had increased to 589,904, with an external membership of 83,357.³⁴ Through a special exercise conducted in 1999 by the church, it was realized that the female/ male ratio is 1.8:1. Expectations are that, the ratio should have increased to 2:1 currently. Factors responsible for this growth may be grouped into two: external and internal factors.

External factors

This is the result of transfer of membership to the church. In the early years of the church, when McKeown separated himself from Anim, some of Anim's followers joined him. This is because, James' approach was more appealing to them. In McKeown's church, they could experience the Holy Spirit; divine healing, physical and spiritual protection, lively worship and more so, freedom to seek medical help when necessary.³⁵

There were also movements from the historic or Mainline Churches like Methodist and Presbyterian churches.³⁶ In fact, The Church of Pentecost sees its success as a build-up on that of the early missionaries. Though, these early missionaries had as their primary aim the evangelisation of the African, they were also involved in other projects such as education, administration and medicine, using these as means for evangelism. In order to fund these projects, they engaged in trade and most of their

³³ Foli, *op cit.*

³⁴ Statistics of COP membership as at December 2000

³⁵ Leonard, *op cit.*

³⁶ Ibid. 23,42

resources were directed to these projects; from the perspective of the COP, this was a diversion from evangelism, and the purpose for which they had come.

The experience of the Holy Spirit to these people became real, just as it was in biblical times. This is due to the experience of miracles: the crippled were walking, the blind were seeing and even in some cases, the dead were raised. Most of the early leaders of the church were former members of the Mainline Churches.

Internal factors

Evangelism has been one of the most important tools for the growth of the church. Since the church is evangelism oriented, every first Wednesday of the month was set aside as Missionary Day for prayers and offering. At present, special offerings are taken every first Sunday to support missionary work. The Witness Movement is expected to mobilise members for evangelism. Around the 1940s a vibrant group emerged from the Witness Movement known as the “Bombing Group.” They “bomb” the enemy by evangelising. This group is credited for starting the earliest assemblies in the Greater Accra region.³⁷

Missionary workers of the church are responsible for the establishment of branches in other places, but there are also members who are very instrumental in the establishment of some branches, including foreign branches. A member who travels to a place where the church does not exist usually starts a prayer meeting and looks for other members around. The fellowship draws others to join and as membership increases the group makes a request to the Head Office for pastoral help. A pastor is

³⁷ Ibid. 91

then assigned to that branch, as some other members of the church are commissioned as elders, deacons and deaconesses. This has been the trend for many foreign branches. At present the church can be found in 44 other countries apart from Ghana. The church has spread to other parts of Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States.

Every movement or group has the primary aim of drawing people to Christ and into the church. There are testimonies of people who have become members of the church because of their interest in and benefits from movements such as the Children's Movement, the Women's Movement, PENZA (Pentecost Students and Associates) and other groups in the church.

PENZA, a very vibrant group of church members in the universities and other tertiary institutions often go to towns and villages to proclaim the gospel and win souls for Christ. For instance PENZA-Legon (a branch in the University of Ghana) over the past four years have been to remote villages in the Greater Accra, Eastern, Volta, Central and Northern regions of Ghana on evangelism. These evangelistic activities have added about 4000 people to the membership of the church.³⁸

It is very important to mention the contribution of women to the church's growth. The Women's Movement in every region or area met and still meets every first Tuesday of the month to pray for spiritual, financial and numerical growth of the church. Foli in his study points out the Witness Movement and the Women's Movement as being very evangelical in their activities.³⁹

³⁸ Compilation of the annual reports (1997-2001)
³⁹ Foli, *op cit*, 154

This movement was officially established in 1945 but women have played a prominent role in the church since its inception. Women easily accepted the message of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. At the onset of the church's development, the instrumentality of women was prominent.

The church had its share of financial problems in its early days. McKeown aimed at making the church self-supportive, hence inculcated into the members the spirit of giving. It was basically the efforts of some women like Mrs. Obo who supported the church by making sacrifices on behalf of the church as such as selling their ornaments to support the church.

It is from some of these sources that the church has been sustained. The church continues to attract the support of such selfless people who contribute greatly towards the work of God.

The COP have had women actively involved in the life and mission of the church yet in the practice of the church, minimal opportunities are given to women to relive their contributions to the church in its earlier days.

CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY

In trying to analyse the importance of women leaders in the COP it is fundamental to discuss the view of the Bible on women as the church draws most of its beliefs from it. It is also useful to draw from the role women play with regard to cultural backgrounds especially in the Akan cultural context and the place of women in the church in general in Ghana with emphasis is on the Pentecostal/ charismatic movements as it may have some influence on the church.

OLD TESTAMENT AND RABBINIC TRADITION

Women, as in the Bible, are part of God's created order. The Bible gives two main accounts on the creation with different views on the place of women: Genesis 1:1-2:3 and Genesis 2:4-3:24. In the first account, (Gen. 1:1-2:3) God created human being (man) in his own image, creating them male and female. In this account God gave both of them dominion over all things and made them co-workers. In other words, both man and woman were created in God's image. The difference between them could be primarily for procreation, to enable human produce their kind. (Gen.1: 28)⁴⁰

In the second account, (Gen. 2:4-3:24) the male was created first, and God later realising that the man (male) was lonely caused him to have a deep sleep in order to remove a rib of the man to make the woman. The woman in this case was made to be a companion and helpmeet for the man.

⁴⁰

There is a new interpretation by scholars like Letty Russell that the command to increase and multiply is not necessary to procreate but also to increase in one's talents like Jesus.

This account has been interpreted as having some basis for male superiority. However the Gen. 2 account does not necessarily suggest subordination as it clearly talks about equality.

The fall of humanity Gen. 3 have been interpreted as intensifying the superiority of men.⁴¹ God announces that the woman's desire would be for her husband, the man would have authority over the woman (Gen.3: 16). It must be noted that both the man and the woman were cursed, however with the help of science and technology man has done something about his situation, but why can the woman not do anything about her situation?

The woman's place and her relationship with God in the patriarchal society of the Old Testament and Jewish tradition also reveal their interpretation of the Genesis account. Women were seen as lesser beings and part of the property of men, naming them among slaves and animals (Ex. 20: 17). Thus a synagogue prayer states, "I thank God I am neither a slave, woman or animal". Similarly, a doxology attributed to Rabbi Judah Ben Elai, (AD 150) states: "Praise God he did not create me a heathen, Praise God he did not create me a woman, Praise God he did not create me an illiterate person."⁴²

However, in the course of ancient Jewish history, there were some great women whose contribution was very important. These women emerged in times of crisis whether publicly or privately and determined the future of Israel, playing roles such as

⁴¹ This is a popular idea held by Christians of the day with the COP not being an exception.
⁴² P.K. Jewett; "Man as Male and female: A study in sexual relationship from a theological point of view" in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament*, ed. Colin Brown, Zondervan Publishing House, Michigan 1995

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judges, queens, army commanders, and prophetesses. Such women include the mother of Moses, Sarah, Deborah and Esther. The mother of Moses emerged in a time of crisis, and took a bold step by defying the orders of the Pharaoh at the time to keep her son, thereafter appearing as a nurse to care for the child. (Ex.2: 1-5) She in fact taught the child that he was a Hebrew and he lived to that effect though in the Palace, later coming to lead the Israelites out of bondage. In this journey from slavery, women played exceptional roles. Sarah was a woman of faith and the mother of the nation of Israel. (Gen. 17:15-16)

Deborah, the judge, and Esther, the queen, can be cited as women who rose in time of crisis to save their people from disaster. Deborah, the only female judge of Israel led the Israelites against Jabin when men were reluctant to lead, out of fear. (Judges 4-5) Esther risked her life to speak out for justice for her people. (Esther 4-5) These women and other women like Rachel and the five daughters of Zelophehad broke through the norms of their times. Rachel, at her first meeting with Jacob was reported to be a shepherdess, a vocation that was a reserve of men at the time. The five daughters of Zelophehad (Num.27: 1-11) were bold to claim the inheritance of their father, which by law was not for them. Their action of going before Moses and the whole assembly of Israel led to the enactment of a new law: The Lord said to Moses "What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right".....Say to the Israelites "If a man dies and leaves no sons, turn his inheritance over to his daughter." (Num. 27:5-8)

In spite of the role women played in the life and history of the Israelites, women, during the time of Jesus were still seen as less than men and grouped in a category of slaves and children. In the account of Jesus' feeding of five thousand and four

thousand, the New Testament gives the number besides women and children, (Mt. 14: 13-21; 15: 29-35) -an example of the patriarchal ideology, which pervaded much of Mediterranean antiquity, including the New Testament writings

The women were segregated in the temple; no woman was allowed to go beyond the court of women. Only the males were asked to read the scriptures of their time: *the laws and prophets*, and it was not considered necessary to teach a woman the law.⁴³ It was actually seen as teaching her foolishness. According to the Jewish tradition, “may the words of the Torah be burned; they should not be handed over to women.”⁴⁴ Theological conversations with women were even discouraged. This is evident in the disciples’ reaction when they met Jesus having a theological dialogue with the Samaritan women (John 4: 27).

In contemporary times orthodox Jews maintain this strict distinction between men and women with the non-orthodox Jews reforming many of the laws on segregation. Religion for Orthodox Judaism is still discussed in the domain of men, addressing the deity in the masculine gender. Women are excluded from the central point of religious activities. In the main prayer place of the synagogue, the women are behind the men with a partition dividing them. This prevents the women from the view of the service, which takes place in the section of the men. The law (Torah), scrolls and other holy objects are also kept in the men’s section. With patronage of the synagogue, women

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ H. W. Robinson, ‘Woman’ in *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol.2 ed. Hastings, J.; D.D., 1926. Pg.689

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are seen once on the Sabbath or holy days while men especially devout men would go to the synagogue once to thrice a day.

Orthodox Jewish women believe they have a special place in the home as Carmen Levin asserts.⁴⁵ To her it is because of the women that Judaism strives since they are educators and enforcers of their tradition nurturing Jews in the home. Thus for them the men control activities in the synagogue with the women's centre of religion being in the home. It is however surprising how these women are able to educate their children on Jewish laws since they do not have first hand information on those laws. It is therefore possible that they do not teach their children what is right, on the other hand it also shows the women are able to preserve what has been handed over to them.

The non- orthodox Jewish communities have reformed some of the segregation rules. They allow women to participate fully in the religion. There are no designated sections for men and women in the synagogue. Women are allowed to study the Torah and other scriptures extensively, ordaining a few as rabbis. Gender barriers do not affect these women unlike the orthodox women.

WOMEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Women and Jesus

In tracing the genealogy of Jesus, the gospel of Matthew mentions people of varied personalities. Apart from mentioning people considered as heroes of faith, others not

⁴⁵ She writes to the editor of *Women in Judaism: A multidisciplinary Journal*.

being of good reputation and others as evil, he also makes mention of four women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Uriah's wife. This was not usual of genealogies in Judaism tracing one's ancestry mentioning women. It also tells that women have played important role in the Jesus life as Jew.

Women played a very important role in the life of Jesus. In the Lukan account of his birth, a woman was to take singular responsibility (Luke 1:26 –38) since it was through the Holy Spirit that Mary (the mother of Jesus) got pregnant. More so the news of his birth was first conveyed to a woman. This is however not peculiar to the New Testament. In the Old Testament there is a similar account where the birth of Samson, who was to save the people of Israel from the Philistines was first announced to a woman. (Judges 13:1-6)

Jesus started his ministry relating to both men and women equally at the time when women were bracketed among children and slaves. Among the twelve disciples that he chose there were no women, yet it is clear that Jesus did not give preference to people according to their gender. For him, both men and women had the same status in relation to salvation. More so, women were said to be with Him suggesting that they travelled along with Him, just as the twelve did.

He challenged his own Jewish tradition as he spoke to both men and women alike in public. He even went to the extent of engaging the Canaanite woman (Mt. 15: 21- 28) and the Samaritan woman (Jn 4: 7- 29) in theological discussion. He commended and preferred Mary's choice of discipleship to Martha's choice of the traditional role of women. (Lk. 10: 38- 42).

Around Jesus were people who served as evangelists in his lifetime, the Samaritan woman of John 4 being one of them. After this woman realized the identity of Jesus, she went to the town to tell of the man whom she had met, thus bringing them to meet Jesus. This enabled Jesus to preach to a group of people, the Samaritans, who were excluded, from people of God by the Israelites, due to religious differences between them. This also clearly shows Jesus' affirmation of women and their ministry. More so, women need not to come to God through men as in Judaism. Since she came, she also proclaimed the good news.

At His death, burial and resurrection women were very instrumental. (Mt. 27: 45-61; 28: 1-10). At the climax of his ministry women faithfully were present to see to His burial needs with the male disciples hiding out of fear. They were the first to be witnesses of His resurrection and getting the message to the other disciples. However since the male disciples could not accept their witness they regarded their story as tales. (Lk. 24:11)

Women were among those who went to wait for the promise of the Holy Spirit in the Upper room after the ascension of Jesus as reported in Acts 1: 14. The coming of the Holy Spirit was to enable all those present to be witnesses to the end of the world. Acts 1:13-14; 2:1-4 suggests that women were included when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers. Acts 2:4 states "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the spirit enabled them." It follows that the women who were present were given the power to be God's co-workers just as the men since on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came on all who were present in the Upper

room. Without the role played by women in the propagation of the gospel, the gospel may not have been complete since their role is essential.

The Apostles and Women

Women were with the Apostles just as they were with Jesus, playing very important roles. They were the first to announce the resurrection of Jesus to the Apostles (Matt 28:1-9; Mark 16:9-11; Luke 24:9-11) at a time when they were scared to the bone and had hidden themselves. The Apostles being Jews, however, were influenced by the Jewish thought about women.

At the commencement of the Apostolic movement (Acts 2), on the day of Pentecost, Peter in his first teaching, after being filled with the Holy Spirit, expounded on the prophecy by the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28-32) and taught his audience that God had promised to pour his spirit on all flesh, where sons and daughters will prophecy. By that, he impressed upon his hearers that the promise had been fulfilled on that day. What is important here is the inclusion of women in the promise as this gives a new dimension to the outlook of women in those times.

Just as with Jesus, there were women who worked with the Apostles especially with Paul and were prominent in ministry. In Paul's personal greetings (Rom.16: 1-16) he appreciates the role of eight women among other men who supported him in ministry. In the first verse, he commends Phoebe for her service to people including Paul. She is described as a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. Being a deacon suggests she might have been the leader of the church. He then acknowledges Priscilla and her husband, Aquila. The fact that Priscilla is mentioned first suggests that she was more

renowned than her husband; perhaps she was the one who did more work in the ministry. This suggests that there women who served as Apostles. This acknowledgement was made at a time when most Jewish men would thank God for not creating them women or Gentiles and this mention of women in ministry was against the Old Testament male superiority mentality. There were still differences between men and women but women in this case, were treated as equals in relation to men in the body of Christ. Women who had the spirit could work.

Paul, however, in his teaching concerning the place of women in the church based his arguments on the second account of creation and also on the cultural status of women of the time. (1 Cor.11: 1-10). In the third verse he makes it clear that the head of every man is Christ whilst that of the woman is the man. He further states a man *dishonours* his head if he prays or prophesies with his head *covered*, while a woman *dishonours* her head if she prays or prophesies with her head *uncovered*.⁴⁶ He then concludes on this matter in verse 7-10

A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. For this reason and because of angels, the woman ought to have a sign of authority on her head.

The head cover then becomes a sign of subordination of the woman to the man since she was made for the man.

It then follows logically that men should be the heads and spiritual leaders in the home and in the church as he asserted in 1Cor. 14: 33b-35.

⁴⁶ Emphasis mine.

As in all congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

He gives a hierarchy in the church, putting God first, then Christ, men before women. Later in the first letter to Timothy, Paul instructs him not to permit any woman to teach or have authority over men. (1 Tim. 2: 11-15)

A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man; she must be silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one to be deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be saved through childbearing –if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

These have laid down the basic role of men and women in the church, which has become the theological basis for churches that do not allow women in places of authority in the church. Paul in this letters was trying to address a particular problem that was ensuing at the time.

By referring to the second account of the creation story that the woman is the weaker sex, he also blames the woman for the world's sin and suffering. For that matter she must be silent in the church. We must note that the man never had the chance to be deceived, thus it is not known what the man would have done the if the “serpent” had approached him first!

His conclusion in 1Tim.2: 11-15 that the woman would be saved through childbearing locates the woman's place in her marriage. To Paul, the home is where her highest position and true dignity can be found. As a God-fearing wife and mother, she must bring up her children in the fear of God exactly what the Jewish woman is supposed

to do. There is a similarity with the African culture where the unmarried has practically no role to play in the society. Augustine (354-430), the influential Christian writer and Bishop of Hippo in North Africa also had a similar view. He recommended that the woman together with her husband is the image of God. If she stands alone, she is not, but the man by himself is the image of God just as when he is joined together with the woman as one.⁴⁷

There seem to be an inconsistency in Paul's argument since at one point he is talking about subordination (1 Cor.11: 1-10) and other times inferiority (1 Cor.14: 33b-35), the question may be put if subordination is equal to inferiority. It is clear from these passages that Paul reflects the role of women in the contemporary society of his time. This is because there is no reference in the Old Testament law to this effect. It seems the law was rather pertaining to the Corinthians. More so his use of the word "disgraceful" suggests that his instructions had a cultural backing in the context of Mediterranean antiquity. Thus, although he gave a theological reasoning, it was somehow tied to some kind of social convention.

Paul's teaching is linked with the custom of the time where women were not allowed beyond certain point of the temple. This limitation of women was broken at the death of Christ, which has been interpreted, as leading to all having direct access to God without any human intermediate. Thus the death of Christ brought a lot of changes,

⁴⁷ Clare Drury "Christianity" in *Women in Religion*. ed. Jean Holm, Pinter Publishers Ltd. 1994. 36

including an invitation of the Gentiles into the household of God. How then could women depend on their husbands for their spirituality as Paul taught?

Also in his teaching in 1 Cor. 11, Paul talks about women praying or prophesying in the church. This, on the other hand, betrays Paul's position that women should not speak in church. If she is to be silent in the church, how then could she pray or prophesy at the same time. This gives an additional indication that his prohibition of women as functionaries has to be understood within the cultural matrix of his time. Some Scholars have argued that, the prohibition was a later interpolation, but this idea is observed in Paul's thinking since he mentions it at other places as well, though not as strong as in 1 Cor. 14.

The idea of the man alone being in the image of God as reflected in Paul's teaching about the head covering for women in 1 Cor. 11:1-10 is also in opposition to other opinions expressed by him in the chapter. He acknowledges that, in the Lord, both man and woman have mutual dependency when he says, "In the Lord, woman is not independent of the man, nor is man independent of the woman." (1 Cor. 11:11) Also in Gal 3:28, which has become a popular verse for many women theologians, Paul, perceives a new image for any person in Christ Jesus. "For there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This eliminates any discrimination against any person with reference to gender, race or status. This does not however, erase sexual differences but women are not to be treated as outcasts but as equals in the household of God. There is however, the implication that, equality of men and women before God is for those who are redeemed.

As a result of the death of Christ, Paul recognises reconciliation between human beings and God, as He (God) does not count their sins against them. It is in this view that Paul sees everything as becoming new; that the old has passed away once one is in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:12) This would imply that prohibiting women from places of authority for the reason that they were the first to be deceived is still placing women in the old state for which Jesus Christ suffered and died and thus, defeating the work of the cross.

Paul's assertion that the true place of woman is said to be a wife and a mother contradicts his preference for the unmarried in service. The unmarried woman, to Paul, is more devoted in body and spirit in her service to God. (1 Cor. 7:34) This means that the woman was not restricted to the role of being a wife and a mother, but again it points to the fact that Paul was addressing particular problems of his time. The role of women was not limited to the home but also in the church as Paul himself acknowledges some in Rom. 16. The COP women though are modelling their lives on that of the women in the New Testament; it seems they do not acknowledge some of the activities of those women.

WOMEN IN THE GHANAIAN CULTURE

Cultures from which any particular religion operates have much influence on the ethos of the religious phenomenon and thus true to Paul Tillich words that "Culture is the solvent of Religion."⁴⁸ Just as the Jewish tradition affected the Old and New Testament, the African culture has had a significant impact on Christianity in Africa. In the COP in particular, the Akan culture has had its toll on it since it was established

⁴⁸ P. Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, Oxford university Press, New York, 1959

in the Akan society and one cannot deny that the culture may have affected the church one way or the other. To understand some of the roles of women in the church it would be useful to study some aspects of the Akan culture.

In traditional Africa in general and in Ghana in particular the notion of God is that of a male who is the creator of the whole universe and the giver of life.⁴⁹ God is often referred to as *Onyame/ Onyakopon, Mawu, Ataa Naa Nyongmo* respectively among the Akans, Ewes and Gas in Ghana. Apart from these general names given to God there are other names on the attributes of God. Among the Akans other honorific names given to God include *Otumfo* – the powerful one; *Oboadee*- creator; *Tweaduapon*- dependable.⁵⁰ Not only has the COP adopted these names but also all churches in the country in their process of africanising the church.

There are some notions about women in African myths and proverbs, which affect the place of women in their societies. In dealing with the origin of human beings, and the nature of things, myths, which generally give the origins of things, feature women prominently as passers on of life and very instrumental in the nature of things as they are. In the Akan culture, some aspects of nature are attributes to women. The earth is given the identity of a woman, perpetuating nature, and referred to as *Asase Yaa*, (Earth, whose day is Thursday).⁵¹ The woman shares with God some creative

⁴⁹ Elom Dovofo "The Effects of Religion and Traditional Barriers on Women's Potential for Development" in *Legon Journal of the Humanities*, Ed. Kweku Osam, Vol. II 1998. 85-103
⁵⁰ K. Gyekye, *An essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan conceptual scheme*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1995. 70
⁵¹ E. Dovofo, *op cit*.

powers.⁵² A woman is seen as sacred in the sense that she has the power to procreate, thus, continuing the creation process, which was started by God.

Women are also seen by some myths as the cause of certain problems in world. According to a particular myth, when life began, God lived in the sky close to humans on the earth, providing them with everything. The Ashantis have a myth that best explain this idea. It is said that a woman who liked pounding fufu persistently gave God a knock forcing God to move higher the sky. She later instructed her children to construct mortars to reach God but they were unsuccessful.⁵³ It could be implied from this story that the woman is seen as the reason why God separated Himself from humans and also the cause of the suffering in the universe, a story which is parallel with biblical origin of sin, the cause being the first woman, Eve.

In the traditional African custom, the basic role of women is to ensure the continuity of the community through childbearing and the upbringing. Women are therefore expected to care for the individuals in the home by cooking, washing, providing food, fetching firewood and water etc., while the men engage in jobs like building, hunting, going for wars and settling disputes. These values are inculcated into children right from infancy through proverbs, myths, story telling, rites of passage etc. Some of these may be cited for instance, when a growing male child cries, he is often told to stop since men do not cry. On the other hand a girl who shows strong character is also

⁵² J.S. Mbiti, "Flowers in the Garden": The Role of Women in African Religion in *African Traditional Religions in Contemporary Society*, ed. Jacob K. Olupona, Paragon House, N.Y. 1991. 59-72

⁵³ Ibid. 62

advised to calm down since such characters are seen as masculine. What is expected of both sexes can be found in the kind of toys and games that boys and girls engage in. While the boys are playing “the soldier and the thief” with their toy guns, girls are playing the “mother and child in the home” with their dollies.

Proverbs are thoughts, ideas, reflections, experiences, observations, knowledge and views put into few words. They also determine the place of women in the society, being held up with much wisdom and also as a major determinant of morality. The place and role of women are found in certain sayings like “when a woman makes a drum, it leans against a man’s house.”⁵⁴ By this proverb women are expected to look up to men as a source of encouragement and support. Even though a woman may make a drum she has nothing to do with it, whether carrying or beating it. Women may not be playing the traditional drums in the cultural settings but what they are doing is more than playing drums since they are in very sensitive positions affecting the general society.

A woman who does jobs that are reserved for men is usually frowned upon. Contemporary society has however, produced women of distinction as parliamentarians, engineers, administrators, heads of institutions etc. This social change shows that interpretations of the woman’s place must also change. In view of this change it would be wrong to say that women are weak because these women are facing challenges.

⁵⁴ R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti Proverbs*, University Press, London. 1916. 133

Certain notions have been established about women, for which it is believed they cannot take up leadership roles especially those, which include leadership over men in society. Most of such notions are usually made beliefs in order for the men to be in power. Women are alleged to be deceitful, unpredictable, not trustworthy, and dangerous. Many men would not want to associate with women especially, when they engage on a particular project since women are seen as being dangerous. It is believed that contact with them may lead to destruction and following them is like the footprints in water, which soon disappear. In spite of these ideas about women, it has been established that in reality men who are successful in life owe it to their wives, Sophia Mckeown and the other women in the life of COP, being a clear example.

There are also certain women who have celebrated characters in the history of the African people. One of such women is Yaa Asantewaa who led the Asantes successfully to war. Going to war was a reserve for men only but she was able to break through the norm.

Generally, women do not take part in decision- making especially, in their prime. There is an Akan proverb, which is literally translated, as “the hen knows when it is dawn but allows the cock to announce it.” This suggests that a woman may have the same abilities to think and take certain initiatives just as the man but the prerogative would have to be given to the man. There’s an Ewe proverb, which literally means, “the woman does not speak with authority as a man”⁵⁵ shows that the man is given special authority over the woman. This is similar to the Akan society. The ideas of

⁵⁵ N. K. Dzobo, *African Proverbs: The Moral Value of Ewe Proverbs*, University Of Capecoast, 1973. 91

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⁵⁵ N. K. Dzobo, *African Proverbs: The Moral Value of Ewe Proverbs*, University Of Capecoast, 1973. 91

women are hardly accepted since it is believed that such ideas have no basis to be relied on. Their ideas are often branded as "*women talk*".

The views of women in their old age are much respected than in their prime when they are usually not given the opportunity to affect decisions. When it becomes very difficult to conclude on an issue during discussions one often gives a figurative speech of consulting the proverbial *Abrewa* (the old woman). The decision taken after this consultation is always the right one. One may say that though women are given the opportunity to affect decision-making later in life, it has always been a domain mainly dominated by men. It is said that since it is men, who go to war, it was more likely for women to live much longer than the men, thereby extending their long experiences to the young generation through counselling.

Contrary to women not playing roles in decision-making, in the chief's court decisions are taken in consultation with the queen mother. Also in looking for a suitable person to be made a chief especially, among the Akans in Ghana, it is the queen mother's choice that is accepted. Thus, she is given the privilege of deciding who takes such a sensitive position in the society. This is because she is the traditional mother of the chief and the entire society and thus, knows the one who not only has the legitimate right to the stool but also is also responsible and would hold in esteem, the values of the society.

Custom in traditional Africa does not generally give room to women but some women are given certain opportunities. Most of the women who are given certain leadership roles are given such roles later in their lives. The new paradigm where women have

dared into areas, which were seen as for men only, proves that the society being dynamic must also change some of its ideas to suit the new paradigm.

At birth, male children were generally preferred to females in that when one gives birth to a male child it is referred to as *nipa* (person) among the Akans. This notion is however, not peculiar to only the Akans but rather a general preference for male children in many parts of the world. Aristotle for instance introduced the idea that the female is the result of some form of accident during the gestation period since to him the male seed was the form of the human being. The female baby is thus, a substandard or malformed male baby. This view was very popular (though not held among Africans) until it was discovered that women also contribute in determining the sex of the child.⁵⁶ In most Akan cultures however, a woman's lineage ends if she does not give birth to a girl. Girls are needed to continue the lineage of an Akan family, thus creating a tension, as people prefer boys as against the need for girls to continue the family line.

There is a lot of value placed on women basically due to their natural role of child bearing, thus, having all human life passing through them. There is then much importance placed on marriage, since it is in marriage that the woman is expected to give birth. The unmarried has practically no role to play in the African perspective, so at the birth of a baby girl the society basically looks up to her being married.

The woman is expected to give birth in marriage and bring up her children as good citizens, a measure by which her value is judged. In marriage women are advised to

⁵⁶ Drury, *op cit*, .35

be very submissive, making sure the husbands are properly catered for. Most women do not normally take initiatives or do anything without their husbands' permission. The man is expected to provide the household with food; the duty of the woman then is to cook what the man has provided. Women however, work very hard sometimes even more than the men do. They work as farmers and traders thus most often are not just receivers of what the men have provided but also support their homes in many ways. Women also have the right to own property.

In the African culture, there are a lot of rituals that go with marriage since it is seen as a very important stage in human life. The puberty rites for instance, prepare the young man or woman for the next stage in life and if one attains the marital status the person is recognised as a true man or woman

In marriage it is believed that there is a transfer of spiritual power from the father of the woman to the husband.⁵⁷ In that case the *sunsum* or the protection over the woman is transferred from the father to the husband, who attains authority over her and to whom she has to submit.

Women are made to go through a lot of rituals notably puberty and widowhood rites. Both men and women undergo divers kinds of rituals in their communities but those of the women are more pronounced than those of the men. For most African women, mourning is an extremely important period, which must be undergone for the departed

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S. G. Williamson, *Akan Religion and The Christian Faith: A Comparative Study of the Impact of two Religions*, Ed. Kwesi Dickson, Ghana Universities Press, Accra. 1965. 88

husband to enable him rest in peace and also terminate the coital rights of the deceased husband. This period sometimes lasts for a year and may include very demeaning acts like shaving of the widowers' hair. They sometimes have very negative impact on the women, as most often there are violations of their human rights. On the side of the men they are advised to remarry early in order to dissuade⁵⁸ their dead spouses from visiting them. This suggests that the souls of departed women do not require demeaning practices on the part of their living husbands in order for them to rest in peace whilst that of men require a much longer period of mourning. Modernisation, Christianity and the awareness of human rights is having its influence on some societies thus leading re examination of those rituals.

In African religious activities, the role of women during rituals is very significant. Though some as slaves, others serve in high capacities like priestesses, diviners. Women serving in such position are however, not allowed to engage in religious activities during their menstrual periods. The general belief surrounding this is the belief that the menstruating blood is very potent and has the ability to nullify some spiritual power. Due to this belief in the pollutant nature of women, they are not usually in charge of rituals. Menopausal women are therefore, given the opportunity to play certain roles especially, in the shrines and some in rituals. Though this may be a strong point, it has been proved to be a biological phenomenon thus, must be rid off the religious attachment given it.

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Mercy A. Oduyoye, "Women and Ritual in Africa" in *THE WILL TO ARISE: Women Tradition and the Church in Africa*. Ed. Oduyoye, M.A. ; Kanayro, M.R.A. , Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1992. 15.

Younger men are preferred to perform certain religious duties rather than older women. This attitude of preferring younger men who may even be inexperienced to women has some bearing in the church. There are times that men receive more attention even though such men may not have the material and spiritual qualities to lead the people of God.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH IN GHANA

Women are seen playing leadership roles in the church in Ghana. The mainline Churches with the exception of the Anglican Church have begun to allow women to develop their potentials leading to some becoming pastors or leaders of their churches. There are women being admitted into the clergy in the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. In the Catholic Church, however, women are not admitted into the clergy to be priest but women become Nuns having special roles to play in the Catholic Church. The African Independent Churches (AIC) have women among the clergy, some being founders. The Pentecostal churches do not have women in the clergy but some Charismatic churches have and also encourage women to be in the clergy. For the purpose of this work the charismatic churches would be discussed since they tend to have a lot in common with the COP in terms of their beliefs.

The Ghanaian form of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity was sparked off by the activities of William Wade Harris and some other African prophets.⁵⁹ These activities however led to the emergence of the AIC. The liturgy, worship and structures of the AIC are usually based on traditional and Old Testament principles

⁵⁹ Debrunner, *op cit.* 270

and which have been different from the mainline churches from which some of them broke away.

Women have played significant roles in these churches, being leaders and founders of some churches. An example is Grace Tani of the Faith Healing Church.⁶⁰ The AICs are characterized by a lot of African elements, which hitherto were not part of the Mainline churches. Most of them give a lot of place to the women, though women have some restrictions especially during their menstrual period.

The classical Pentecostal churches, such as COP, The Apostolic Church and Christ Apostolic Church, while they do not have any restrictions on women in respect to their menstrual periods do not however have women in their leadership positions. Being the main thrust of the work this would be looked at with respect to the COP, in the next chapter.

On the contemporary scene, charismaticism, a new wave of Christianity also found in Africa gives room to women to operate to their full potentials in the church. This phase of Christianity has affected other forms of Christianity especially in terms of music. It is uncommon to find congregations in the Catholic and other Mainline Churches without any charismatic element in their form of worship. In an era of enhancing the role of women in the society, the charismatic churches have also taken steps to address these issues.

⁶⁰ ibid.



The Charismatic churches seem to be more liberal on the role of women in the church. There is a background in the Old Testament (Joel 2:28) of God's promise of pouring down His spirit on all flesh as the young men and women prophesy. This promise is seen as being fulfilled in the New Testament in Acts 2. More so, the admonition of Paul in Galatians 3:28 that in Christ there is no distinction is such a strong point for the Charismatic churches. To them God made man and woman in his own image, in other words women are also made in the image of God. Women are therefore not second-rate humans hence they are allowed active role in the church.

They see the same Holy Spirit coming on all flesh and empowering all with the gifts of the Spirit to be witnesses of Christ, proclaiming the death and resurrection of Christ till He comes. To the charismatic, since there is no special Holy Spirit for men and women, women could aspire to higher positions and even become superior to men if they have the calling and are qualified to take such positions.⁶¹

Women play senior and lay leadership roles. Women serving as senior leaders include founders, head pastors and associate pastors. In the charismatic churches it is not uncommon to see women as pastors. Some of these women are made pastors by virtue of being the wives of the founders; also ordinary women identified as having talents and potentials are made to develop such talents.

In recent times wives of most pastors in the charismatic churches are called pastors. This may be seen in the light of those women working together with their husbands.

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This is sometimes honorary title, since such people do not go through any formal pastoral training. However, for other women to become pastors they usually go through training. These women, due to their potentials are given the opportunity to handle the responsibilities associated with such offices.

One woman who has been outstanding in leadership in the Charismatic churches is Rev. Christy Doe Tetteh. This woman is the founder of the Solid Rock Chapel International. Though women take up very sensitive positions in the Charismatic Churches, Rev. Christy is the only woman who has been confident and bold enough to establish and lead a church. As pastors, these women serve as the spiritual leaders of these churches.

There are women who also serve as lay leaders: deaconesses and heads of various departments. As women increase numerically in these charismatic churches, they tend to dominate most of the departments of the church. Women with their domestic experience of caring for the family, extend these qualities to the church, thus performing duties that are related to welfare, counselling, and caring for children.

There is nonetheless the fear that when a woman rises to such a high position she might not be submissive, but to some that is a question of one's character. There however, seems to be confusion between the submissiveness of women and their ability to fulfil their God given talents. A woman being submissive does not mean she must not explore her capabilities. Her submissiveness is related to the home where she has to submit to her own husband. (Eph. 5:22-24) Her husband is to treat her as Christ would treat the Church, preferring her to his own body. This flow of authority

between a man and his wife has been mistaken by some as a flow of authority between men and women, which affects their status.

One is to be treated as a child of God and not looked at with the mirror of maleness or femaleness. Since every child of God is to be a representative of Christ on earth every one whether male or female should be allowed to serve God in freedom.

Women seem to be more pronounced in the New Testament than Old Testament though there are specific scriptures restraining women from active life of the church. There is also limited place for women in the Akan culture though few women take sensitive positions like the queen mothers who influence the choice of a chief in the society. In the general history of the church in Ghana women have played some sensitive roles but the charismatic churches have however, taken lead in encouraging women into these roles. This chapter serves as a background for the next chapter, which looks at the place of women in COP.

CHAPTER FOUR

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST

Women as leaders are able to affect the society positively due to the biological roles they play. Children tend to be closer to their mothers and thus the woman who is encouraged to take leadership roles becomes confident in herself and can easily influence her children into leadership, in the words of Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey that “if you educate a man you educate an individual but if you educate a woman you educate a nation”. Women leaders would have a lot of impact on the society. This chapter examines charismatic gifts of women in the COP and the administrative roles they execute. It also looks at the specific duties of the women in the church.

PENTECOST WOMEN AND CHARISMA

Catherine Wessinger in the *Encyclopaedia of Women and World Religion* defines charisma as the direct experience of the sacred that imparts knowledge and revelation, and is often associated with the power of healing.⁶² She further explains that, in Christian Pentecostal belief, it is the contact with the Holy Spirit, which leads to claims of ‘divine revelation’. It is important, to note that, with respect to charismatic gifts, there is not much difference between men and women. It is believed that all can express these gifts since the Spirit gives to any one who desires and works for it. The question then remains as to whether COP women are free to express their charismatic gifts?

⁶² Catherine Wessinger; “*Charisma*” in *Encyclopaedia of Women and World Religion*, Ed. Serenity Young, Macmillan Reference; NY. 146-147

Most of the songs of the church were received through prophetic inspiration through women such as Mrs. Ankamah and Mrs. Eunice Addison.⁶⁹ These songs are mostly sung during retreats and conventions of the church. The following is one of the songs composed by Mrs. Eunice Addison.

Sweep over my soul, sweep over my soul
Sweet spirit, sweep over my soul
My rest is complete when I sit at thy feet
Sweet spirit, sweep over my soul.

The song means that a successful Christian life depends on one's ability to allow the Holy Spirit to lead him or her. It also requires obedience to the commandments of God. This success in Christian life is referred to as the "rest" in the Lord, an experience of peace in all aspects of life and a state of being able to overcome problems.

God has blessed some women of the church with the gift of poetic wisdom. These women have the gift of singing praises to the glory of God. One of such women is Christiana Afua Gyan, popularly known, as Afua Kuma. She was a traditional midwife and a native of Obo-Kwahu in Eastern Region who through her remarkable gift gave praises to Jesus Christ.

These praises were tape-recorded and have since been documented and published in both Twi and English versions. The English version has the title *Jesus of the Deep Forest*.⁷⁰ The following are some of her praises.

Chief of all chiefs,
He says the chiefs are the
wise men of the land.

⁶⁹ *Brief history of the Women Movement* in a brochure on International Women Leadership Conference of the COP held on 24th–28th July 1996, Univ. College of Education, Winneba.

⁷⁰ Afua Kuma, *Jesus of the deep forest* translated into English by Fr. Jon Kirby.

So let us bring our troubles there,
and let his judgement stand.
The one who lays his worries there
and says, "Lord judge for me!"
is the only one that God can help;
God's wisdom sets him free.

Salvation has taken our souls captive
and carried us off to a new land.
Along the way we met with asofo;
grace and blessing alone have we received.

We have come to this earth
only to work and wear ourselves out.
But in Jesus we find our rest.

The helpless infant, the wise child, the asofo:
you are the one whom Jesus has blessed, saying,
"The enemy's army is yours. Take it!"

When night has caught you on a journey,
do not be afraid.
If you meet with evil men, do not fear.
Jesus is a cutlass going before you;
He guards the rear with a mighty curved sword.

He takes us to the city of the great chief,
where large beads and precious stones
roll about in the streets.⁷¹

Though not about women, there is a manifestation of African poetic forms in Afua Kuma's glorious praises. They express the fact that life may be meaningless without Jesus. Some of her praises also give expression to the occupations of the people and shows how the people relate to Jesus in all aspects of their lives.

This woman sees Jesus in her experience as a farmer and midwife as well as in the experiences others such as Chief, Lawyer, Protector, Field Marshall, in fact she sees Jesus as everything that makes life meaningful and successful. She touches on

⁷¹ Ibid. P25

In the Bible, some women are said to have had personal encounters with the sacred thereby receiving some charismatic gifts. This experience of the sacred or personal encounter with the Holy Spirit empowers one to work for the Lord, thus making the experience of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost important.

On the day of Pentecost, among the followers of Jesus who had this special experience were women and these women must have expressed a lot of charismatic gifts, even though this does not come out clearly in the account of The Acts of the Apostles.

In the COP, charismatic gifts, especially the baptism of the Holy Spirit, are regarded as the requirement for one to function properly in the church. People with charismatic gifts have helped in the growth of the church. In the history of the COP, charismatic women revealed great spiritual prowess in their various areas of operation. There were COP women who preached the gospel in the market and other places, accounting for the expansion of the church to other towns and villages. According Christine Leonard, when Sophia McKeown wanted to teach the women sewing, they were soon seen to be more interested in preaching in towns and villages.⁶³ Thus, the women felt rather called into doing this work of God: preaching and praying among others. In this sense the women took the initiative to incorporate themselves into the active life of the church.

Women have been at the genesis of Pentecostalism as it was on the day of Pentecost and with most Pentecostal revivals. At the beginning of the Pentecostal movement

⁶³ Leonard, *op cit*, 55

women had the freedom to preach, but this freedom changed by the 1920's as noted by Barfoot and Sheppard (1980). Scholars have given various reasons, which account for women having the freedom to preach during the early Pentecostal days. A major one, being that during such revivals there is much emphasis on evangelism that is coupled with an extreme sense of urgency. For this reason all available resources are amassed and the qualification that one needs is the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It means there is not much emphasis on gender.

According to Barfoot and Sheppard, this practise however, changed as the movement spread and became institutionalised in various societies. As Pentecostals apply the scriptures to specific cultures, they become suspicious about the changing traditional role and place of women. This they think would lead to a collapse of the home and the society at large. More so with time the sense of urgency, which was associated with the movement, decreases implying that the utilisation of all available resources also decreased, as people become more interested in social and cultural approval.

Looking at women in COP there is a clear example of the above phenomenon. During the early years of the COP, women did not only support church growth financially, but like Agnes Ozman, it was easier for them to receive the Holy Spirit. They were also involved in opening assemblies of the church at other places since they were free to make best use of their potentials in Christ.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Ibid. 54-56.

As the church grew there were fewer opportunities for women to be leaders as the society generally considers the woman's place to be essentially in the home. Women's role in the church is not very different from what pertains in the home.

The women were very useful to McKeown in his missionary work. They were said to have prayed for the church, pastors and other field workers, which is an important factor for church growth. According to McKeown⁶⁵, the men were not forthcoming and so, he had to take advantage of the available resources, which were the women, and the outcome was great. Resorting to women then becomes the last option out of the norm. One woman, Maame Sarah of Goka in the Brong Ahafo Region⁶⁶ is cited as being of tremendous help to the church. She is said to have served as an interpreter but had to give it up to the men and later organized women in Saltpond for prayers, through which they were blessed with many spiritual gifts to edify the church. McKeown saw women as more trustworthy and honest with money than men. Mrs Christina Obo was appointed the first treasurer of the Church⁶⁷. This role has however been taken over by men, one who holds this position is called an Area deacon. The constitution provides that he should be an Elder of the church. The Area deacon is responsible for the finances of the church at the Regional/ Area, District or Local levels.⁶⁸ The changing of roles: men taking the place of women point that women are now being given fewer roles and in a sense being marginalized.

⁶⁵ Ibid.55

⁶⁶ *Brief history of the Women Movement* in a brochure on International Women Leadership Conference of the COP held on 24th –28th July 1996, Univ. College of Education, Winneba.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Article 13, COP Constitution.,45.



Most of the songs of the church were received through prophetic inspiration through women such as Mrs. Ankamah and Mrs. Eunice Addison.⁶⁹ These songs are mostly sung during retreats and conventions of the church. The following is one of the songs composed by Mrs. Eunice Addison.

Sweep over my soul, sweep over my soul
Sweet spirit, sweep over my soul
My rest is complete when I sit at thy feet
Sweet spirit, sweep over my soul.

The song means that a successful Christian life depends on one's ability to allow the Holy Spirit to lead him or her. It also requires obedience to the commandments of God. This success in Christian life is referred to as the "rest" in the Lord, an experience of peace in all aspects of life and a state of being able to overcome problems.

God has blessed some women of the church with the gift of poetic wisdom. These women have the gift of singing praises to the glory of God. One of such women is Christiana Afua Gyan, popularly known, as Afua Kuma. She was a traditional midwife and a native of Obo-Kwahu in Eastern Region who through her remarkable gift gave praises to Jesus Christ.

These praises were tape-recorded and have since been documented and published in both Twi and English versions. The English version has the title *Jesus of the Deep Forest*.⁷⁰ The following are some of her praises.

Chief of all chiefs,
He says the chiefs are the
wise men of the land.

⁶⁹ *Brief history of the Women Movement* in a brochure on International Women Leadership Conference of the COP held on 24th–28th July 1996, Univ. College of Education, Winneba.
⁷⁰ Afua Kuma, *Jesus of the deep forest* translated into English by Fr. Jon Kirby.

So let us bring our troubles there,
and let his judgement stand.
The one who lays his worries there
and says, "Lord judge for me!"
is the only one that God can help;
God's wisdom sets him free.

Salvation has taken our souls captive
and carried us off to a new land.
Along the way we met with asofo;
grace and blessing alone have we received.

We have come to this earth
only to work and wear ourselves out.
But in Jesus we find our rest.

The helpless infant, the wise child, the asofo:
you are the one whom Jesus has blessed, saying,
"The enemy's army is yours. Take it!"

When night has caught you on a journey,
do not be afraid.
If you meet with evil men, do not fear.
Jesus is a cutlass going before you;
He guards the rear with a mighty curved sword.

He takes us to the city of the great chief,
where large beads and precious stones
roll about in the streets.⁷¹

Though not about women, there is a manifestation of African poetic forms in Afua Kuma's glorious praises. They express the fact that life may be meaningless without Jesus. Some of her praises also give expression to the occupations of the people and shows how the people relate to Jesus in all aspects of their lives.

This woman sees Jesus in her experience as a farmer and midwife as well as in the experiences others such as Chief, Lawyer, Protector, Field Marshall, in fact she sees Jesus as everything that makes life meaningful and successful. She touches on

⁷¹ Ibid. P25

occupations that people in her area are engaged in, such as *teaching, hunting and weaving* among others. She points out that all these people in their various occupations need the help of Jesus to succeed in whatever they do.

There are other women apart from Afua Kuma who give similar praises during church services. Such praises dole out as encouragement and blessing to members and also as an avenue to unbelievers to come to the knowledge of Christ as their saviour and later join the church.

There were and still are other women who have edified the church in their lives and ministry. Charismatic gifts that are normally found among COP women include prophecy, visions, word of knowledge, discernment and teaching. Women are free to express gifts that seem to be spontaneous and are seen as direct from God through whom guidance has been sought for the church. However, with other gifts like teaching and healing, women are unconsciously not encouraged to fully express them.

A woman who however, wishes to rise up to her potential may not be given the necessary platform, as it would have been in the case of a man. They are not to preach, especially on Sundays. Thus they are limited to teaching their fellow women and children. In this case, it may be said that their potentials are not being fully utilized. With this practice, we can say that, women in the church are not helped enough to develop their potentials

There are some women who do not allow themselves to be limited by this mentality and desire to develop their potentials. There are thus, some female members of the

church, who are very renowned speakers at conferences. Mrs Eunice Addison and the late Mrs Esme Siriboe are examples of such speakers. Mrs Siriboe was affiliated to some Para-church groups, for instance the Women's Aglow. Currently such women include Mrs. Hannah Addutua-Amakye and Mrs Abigail Kyei both of the Pentecost International Worship Centre (PIWC), Accra.

There are others who have built themselves up spiritually and have even opened some prayer camps with both members and non-members alike patronising them. Such camps have been of tremendous help to the growth of the church. The opening of such camps is the initiative of the individuals themselves. It is, therefore, noteworthy that some women in the COP have also established their own healing camps, managing it themselves, and as their male counterparts, they do not break away from the church.

These are women with gifts of healing through which many have been blessed, healed and released from many problems. Mention must be made of Maame Dede of Kade and Maame Grace Mensah of Edumfa in the Eastern and Central Regions respectively. Maame Dede was able to perform a lot of spectacular miracles including raising the dead. Maame Grace also exhibited and still does exhibit the power of God through healing and prophecy. She established a prayer camp, which is still in existence with a lot of patronage.⁷² Mrs Kate Tenkorang also established the Ablekuma Prayer Centre in Accra. This may be seen as a reaction of some women for

⁷² Brief history of COP Women's Movement, in International Women Leadership Conference held on 24th –28th July 1996, Univ. College of Education, Winneba.

not being used in the church, since they have got great potential and wish to glorify God with their God-given gifts.

The church sees these camps as local assemblies or branches of the church and thus, regulates their activities. Personnel from the church visit them from time to time to monitor their activities to make sure they practice the basic ethos of the church. They are responsible to the church and also pay their tithes and other financial contributions to the church.

WOMEN'S ROLES IN COP

As established above, women in the COP are not devoid of charismata. They are however, restricted in its use. To elaborate on this point it is important to discuss the role that women play in the COP. This will be done looking at their formal roles as church agents, the organisations that centre on women and their general participation in the administration of the church. These three dimensions of our discussion are not mutually exclusive but are interrelated as one may affect the other.

WOMEN AS CHURCH AGENTS

Women being important instruments of church growth in the COP do this based on the leadership roles given to them. In the COP the leadership positions are pastors, elders, deacon and deaconesses. Whereas the positions of pastors and elders are reserved for men only, women may become deaconesses, (same position as the deacon who is a male), with the basic function of being in charge of the physical assets of the local assembly.

The Pastoral Ministry

As noted above in COP the pastors comprise of only men, no woman has yet been ordained as a pastor of the church. The term pastor is thus mainly a reference to men. Men, who are seen as having charisma or having been called into the ministry are chosen and sent to the bible school to be trained and equipped for the ministerial work. As a matter of fact, the Pastors do not do the ministerial work alone but do them with their spouses. Yet training is given to only men. A woman who may be a member of the church, whose husband is called into the ministry, is left without training: but immediately her husband graduates from the bible school, she automatically becomes a pastor's wife and has to face the challenges that come with it. She becomes a mother and role model to the members and performs certain duties such as counselling yet this woman does not have any formal training to this effect.⁷³

They may be expected to learn to do this on the job, but it has its own consequences on both the pastor's wife and the church members, including the pastor himself.

The tradition from which McKeown came, did not allow him to work extensively with women since they were not supposed to be leaders. At best if a woman feels called into the ministry, she can only help in that capacity if her husband is a pastor since the woman helps him in fulfilling the pastoral duties.

⁷³ Beauty Agbavor, *The Pastor's wife in the Presbyterian church of Ghana and Church of Pentecost*, Long essay presented to the Dept. of Religions. 38-39.

Thus though in the church, both men and women are endowed with charismatic gifts, it is only the men whose gifts are enhanced since they are ordained into the pastoral ministry of the church.

It has been observed that in a bid to identify the potentials for the pastoral ministry, the local assemblies give the chance to more males to harness their spiritual capabilities than females. The more difficult spiritual tasks, (which they often term as “men’s” work) for instance, deliverance, are assigned to the men. Male members turn to rise faster spiritually than their female counterparts with whom they joined the church as new converts. Men are usually introduced to lead prayer sessions among other responsibilities earlier in their Christian lives than women. Women are somewhat left to their fate.

Women in COP are not usually found in the deliverance ministry of laying on of hands to pray for the sick and casting out of demons. At best they are found supporting, by praying but are not seen laying hands on the oppressed to set them free especially, during church services. Some women who have dared into these domains of men are those who have the prayer camps.

Also when there are opportunities for some women to lead, they always would want to leave it for the men since they are not used to it and are not encouraged to play such leadership roles. Among these women, it is believed that leadership belongs to men; women have no place when it comes to leadership.

The constitution of the church with reference to 1 Cor. 12: 28 and Eph. 4: 11-13 states “approved men are called to these offices by revelation, prophecy or recommendation by the Executive Council.”⁷⁴The references given do not however include any clause relating to gender. In the text, it is stated that *some*⁷⁵ were given apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors and teachers. The church seems to interpret this five-fold ministry as exclusively for men. The requirements for admission into full time ministry of the church⁷⁶ have as its main text: 1 Tim 3: 1-7, which calls on men desiring for the office of a bishop. The following are some of the requirements as stipulated by the church’s constitution.

- “The person must be born again and be baptised in the Holy Spirit.
- He must qualify in terms of 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1: 6-8.
- He must possess a clear voice without impediment in his speech.”⁷⁷

These show that the church looks particularly for men to take up the position of a minister.

An interview of a cross section of some members and leaders of COP brought to light various reasons for this state of affair. These are grouped into four major headings as follows.

- Biblical
- Church Doctrine
- Culture
- Nature of Women

⁷⁴ Article 7 The COP Constitution. P.22
⁷⁵ Italics mine
⁷⁶ The COP Constitution, *op cit.*
⁷⁷ *ibid*

Biblical

Most responses to our interviews on the place of women in COP have biblical undertones; however there were some, which were explicitly related to the bible. In giving biblical reasons, some were of the view that leaders of God's people were only men and also the fact that it is emphatically stated in the bible that the man must be the head of the woman. The woman is therefore, seen as a helpmeet to the man in order for the man to accomplish his duties on earth. There was a common saying that, 'a woman could lead sinners to Christ but cannot pastor them since Jesus asked Peter who was a man to look after his flock and not a woman'. With reference to the New Testament, Jesus is seen as working with women but he entrusted the leadership of the church to men. Women are to help in some minor ways, for instance, as ushering, teaching children, counselling etc.

It is, therefore, not surprising that only men are admitted into the pastoral ministry of the church. There are, however, other Pentecostal/ Charismatic churches that allow women to take high positions. Like the COP, people generally, in the charismatic churches are encouraged to improve upon themselves. In this vein women have transformed from being only housewives to earning some income to support their husbands by engaging in trading, catering, dressmaking among others. But unlike the COP, some charismatic churches encourage women to dare into other areas that seem to have been the preserve of the men, especially the pastoral ministry. Women are to rise from being "bench warmers" and live up to the responsibilities of their ministries. This seemingly liberal position of the charismatic churches as noted earlier is also given a biblical reference. These varying stances may be due to the doctrines formulated by the church.

Church Doctrine

Similar to the biblical stance is the church doctrine. The COP in its doctrine does not allow women to become church leaders. Women do not assume any position above that of a deaconess. They may be doing the work of an elder, but are not recognized as such. There have been instances where women have led some congregations. Mrs Christina Obo is said to have presided over the Merry Villas assembly in Accra, excelling in her work more than the men. This has been the tradition of the church such that though women helped in the establishment of the church, it's been said that the men were not available. In these circumstances, as in every other church, men were not available, and as soon as a man appears, leadership roles were shifted to him. Like history repeating itself, there's a young lady presiding over the Kradente assembly of the Chinderi District of the Kete Krachi Area in the Volta region. This woman is called a "presiding deaconess." Though she is doing the work of a presiding elder, seeing to the immediate spiritual needs of the assembly over which she presides, she is not given the same recognition as her male colleagues doing the same thing. One can predict with certainty that when a man comes on the scene, leadership may be shifted to him. There may be equally thousands of COP women out there who would have the capability of being in leadership but the only criteria disqualifying these women is the fact that they are women.

A woman who otherwise could have been a minister, being a blessing to both the men and the women would not, because the church doctrine does not allow it to be so. For a woman, it is the church that determines whether she could be in the pastorate or not. Like Rev. Christy Doe Tetteh there are other women pastors who have blessed both

men and women of their time just as the Deborahs and the Yaa Asantewaas of the biblical and African histories respectively by their leadership.

People hold this view because they have come to know it as the stance of the church. The question then is whether this opinion will change if the church should make available these positions to the women. The respondents who saw this as a reason had about 60% of them thinking that it could be changed if the church should change this kind of doctrine. They also saw this doctrine being affected by the culture.

In spite of the church doctrine of having men in leadership, necessity seems to bring women into leadership. The fact that women are doing the job means that we have to do away with prejudices and doctrines, which tends to marginalize women. In other words the church must be interested in the competence needed for the work that must be done.

Culture

Culture being the solvent of religion, the COP being contextual from its very inception has been very conscious of its culture. In the Ghanaian, particularly the Akan culture, women do not usually form part of the decision-making process. They are also not allowed into leadership roles.

Some respondents are of the view that the Ghanaian culture has had an influence on women not becoming Pastors. In Ghanaian or African culture for that matter, women are not seen taking part in decision-making process, even with decisions that affect women. At most times, women are relegated to the background due to the general

value placed on them. Generally their ideas or suggestions on issues may not be taken seriously. Women can only be taken seriously if they are in some sorts of office. They are sometimes regarded as second-class human beings having roles of giving birth and taking care of children, cooking and managing the home in general in fulfilling their primary customary role as the sustainers of their communities.

The COP in its development is a typical example of a church growing among indigenous people. Their cultural backgrounds affect their understanding of the gospel.

It is very important to preach the gospel and teach people by respecting social as well their cultural values, which do not go against the tenets of Christianity. This makes the gospel more meaningful to them. This has been the practice of the COP.

To Kwame Bediako, "Christianity is, among all religions, the most culturally translatable, hence the most truly universal, being able to be at home in every cultural context without injury to its essential character."⁷⁸ In the African culture, one also sees some similarities with the culture pertaining to biblical times. As noted earlier the Jewish/ Semitic culture for instance influenced Jews such that even in the synagogues, women sit behind the men. The place of women in the traditional culture is for instance seen to have some similarities with that of the Jewish culture especially, when it comes to leadership. This, to some may have had some influence on the

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Kwame Bediako, *Jesus in African Culture, a Ghanaian Perspective*, 1998, Asempa Publishers. 43

practice of the church. To the Church, however, this is due to biblical teaching and that is why women are not ordained above the position of deaconess.

In the African culture women are usually the perpetrators of the cultural opinions on women, making sure that especially rites that relates to women no matter the consequences are meted out to them. In the same way most women in COP have come to accept their position in the church. This is because they have seen the role of women as stereotyped such that they cannot cross carpet to take on the role of men in the church. Women transfer their submissiveness to the church by submitting to the men and depending on them to take most initiatives.

Such attitudes make women not to realise their self worth since they are not able to explore their potentials to the fullest. They are not ready to improve themselves because they see themselves in such a male dominated institution and accept the status quo.

It must however, be noted that when it comes to applying culture to a particular situation, people are usually selective, in that they opt for that which suit their ideas best. In the past women were not given formal education and no proper place was given to them, but times are changing hence culture must be looked at critically in order to have a corresponding view of today's woman.

Nature of Women

Respondents on this view felt that women cannot be made pastors looking at the busy schedule of pastors. On the nature of women, they are said to be physically weak and

emotionally unstable in addition to their numerous duties in the homes. In the church, Pastors have a lot of responsibilities and challenges. Most Pastors in the rural areas would have to walk long distances to get to certain stations but women are rather weak and may not have the required stamina to do so. This point may not be valid since women especially; those in the rural areas would have to travel long distances to farms and markets with very heavy loads. Even in the urban centres more women are seen to be carrying loads more often than men do. To some, women may also not have the ability to come face to face with certain difficult situation such as losing a child while one is performing duty. Men on the other hand are seen as having that emotional stability to deal with diverse situations.

Emotional instability of women is more of strength than a weakness. The emotional nature of women makes them more caring. In other words their nature makes them respond quickly to issues just like Jesus in His ministry on earth. Thus the emotional nature of women would make them better pastors.

Some also expanded the idea that women are limited in their knowledge. This, however, may not be applicable in modern times since women can now rub shoulders with their male counterparts with some excelling in some fields which had been reserved for men such as doctors, engineers, pilots etc.

Looking at the duties of women in the home, respondents said that women are so burdened in their homes that it may be difficult for them to add to it the call to ministry. Women would have to undergo time of pregnancy and childbirth with its attendant challenges. To these people, women also have the duties of bringing up

children. The question was how would women combine the duties of a pastor with that of being a wife?

It has been alleged that women in leadership positions do not have time for their children making it impossible for them to carefully, supervise the physical and spiritual growth of their children. Most of the respondents, who felt women could not be made pastors, were of the view that women have a lot of responsibilities at home. They claim that, it would be difficult to combine the two. This could however, be seen as a question of time management.

In the secular and traditional circles women find themselves in difficult and time consuming jobs, yet they try to have time for their families. More so if we argue that women have a lot of responsibilities at home then it would also imply there would not be any woman leader in COP. These people tend to have a lot of meetings; some of these deaconesses may spend less time at home due to church work. This would also mean that these women have less time to supervise their children leading to the neglect of duties at home. Just as every position has its own accompanying challenges, we must not lose sight of some of the challenges of women as leaders and how it affects other aspects of their lives. It must be noted that there are married women engaged in various occupations who are able to excel in performance by combining these duties effectively.

This notion of responsibility at the home is also required of men, since their presence is equally needed in the home to have a good family life. There have been wayward children due to the absence of the parents – ministers from home. These children

have indirectly had single parenting. These pastors, who may be very good ministers, may not be good managers of their homes, thus in a strict sense, they do not qualify as church leaders as spelt out in 1Tim. 3:1-13 on the qualities of a leader of God's people, a text, which is also prominent when the church is choosing people for pastoral duties.

It looks like the society has placed a lot of accountability on women such that it is felt that the success of their homes depends solely on them. For this reason, it is deemed impossible for women to combine their domestic responsibilities with pastoral work in the church. This may however, be overemphasising of the role of women in the home. In an era where women are found in all sectors of the economy, with women beginning to have equal opportunities as men, both men and women play their roles as parents and spouses.

Most of the women in COP have actually accepted the place of women as a place outside the ministry. Most of the teachings on women portray their role. They are taught how to relate to husbands and in-laws, bringing up children and living with stepchildren and acknowledging that they are helpmeet to husbands by submitting to them. They are especially, taught to call their husbands "Lord" to show their submission. This godly character in the home is to flow into all other areas of their lives. Thus, in the church, they are supposed to serve just as they take care of their households. It is believed that women becoming pastors for instance would mean forsaking their social responsibilities, leading to a break down of the society.

It could be argued that women in their old age should be made Pastors, as is the case with some priesthood in our traditional communities. As women attain this stage of their lives they usually attain menopause and the responsibilities in the home are lessened. However, if women only after their menopause were given certain responsibilities they would otherwise not have been given, would mean that they become honorary men as Dovlo⁷⁹ has suggested. The self worth of the women would not be improved since the ministerial work would still be in the image of the male. For if women could become Pastors only at a time they have attained menopause, they may not be able to function properly as they definitely would not be strong enough to work, as compared to their prime.

Women becoming ministers, is not meant as a claim to be the same as men, for they both have biological differences which have their own strengths and weaknesses. It would rather mean that everyone having the opportunity to explore his/her God-given talents and ability without looking at it from a gender point of view.

In the secular society women are able to take up leadership positions without any misgivings by the church, which it sometimes finds prestigious, to have such women in the pews. However, these women do not generally make use of such qualities (especially, their leadership qualities) that they have in the church but for domestic duties. As a matter of fact Christianity must permeate all aspects of life, thus making it contradictory for women of COP to be seen using their skills outside the church with liberty but not allowed to do so in the church.

⁷⁹ Elom Dovlo, *Op Cit.* 97.

On the question if women could ever be made pastors in the church, most of the respondents 80% gave a negative answer since they felt that the church is so strong on this issue and thus it would be impossible to have them as even leaders. The other 20% were of the view that it is possible though it may take some time. They see things as changing gradually in the church and thus there may come a time when women would be admitted into the pastoral ministry.

Women in some Charismatic and Mainline Churches as noted have broken the myth of the exclusiveness of the male clergy. These women have been seen as being equally capable. Although this is on a small scale, it has somehow raised the self worth of women as they now occupy sensitive positions in their churches.

Charismaticism though has the effect of breaking the restrictions on females in the society, does not necessarily make a woman feminist. The struggles to enable women reach their potential does not restrict women to the roles of wife and mother, neither would they have to neglect such roles.

The Deaconess

The deaconess is basically the female church worker. Like the deacons (male), they are to prepare the place of worship, keep it clean and tidy before and after service. They help in ensuring order during services. The church chooses people who are spiritually mature to serve in the church. In the COP however, the woman must also be physically mature since she is considered a church mother, whilst the deacons are rather very young. It is very typical of COP members to call their deaconess “mama”. She serves as a role model to other women especially, the young ones. She does this

by leading a commendable life and also training mostly the young women to lead godly lives.

Apart from distinctive offices as church agents, the role of women in the COP can also be assessed through movements and organisations within the Church.

WOMEN ORGANISATIONS

Apart from limited participation in church life as agents of the church, women are also organised to play various roles within the Church or belong to Church organisations where they perform services. Three major organisations which serve the women's interests and in which women occupy positions that advance the whole church may be identified in the COP. These are:

- The Women's Movement
- The Gender Department of PENTSOS
- The Widows Ministry

The Women's Movement

This is the major and most prominent movement that addresses particular needs of women of the church. This movement by its name suggests that it is basically for women and seeks to tackle challenges that are women related and harness ways in which women would be of much benefit to the church. It is a union of women in the church with the responsibility of contributing to the growth of the church. It is also meant to help the women to identify their potentials and make them aware of their responsibilities.

The idea of the Women's Movement dates back to 1939, after Mrs. Sophia McKeown joined her husband.⁸⁰ She gathered the women and inspired them to live up to the Scriptures and taught them how to sew and do other house works. This idea, however, only materialised in 1945 on the arrival of Adam McKeown, the brother of James McKeown. He organised the women into a movement and from the perspective of the COP, it was a new and blessed development in the history of the church. With the establishment of the Women's Movement, women could then preach, at least, to their fellow women during their meetings.

The movement with its slogan, 'Holiness unto the Lord', has grown over the years to become one of the major movements in the church. Coming together, they could serve the church in many other ways. The following are the functions of the movement:

- To pray for the growth of the church.
- To organise seminars, workshops, lectures and symposia in all aspects of life including:
 - i) Marriage enrichment, wives' responsibilities at home, child welfare, care and education.
 - ii) Business management and techniques.
 - iii) The teaching of basic principles of law relating to the family succession, marriage etc.
- To promote the welfare of widows, orphans and the needy etc.
- To carry out evangelism: preaching, witnessing and winning souls for the Lord.

⁸⁰ Christine Leonard, *op cit*

- To train women to be responsible married women in the church and the society.
- To develop the talents of women and the total womanhood to enhance the social, physical, spiritual and intellectual status of women.⁸¹

Before discussing how these functions are fulfilled it may be useful to compare them to the functions of the Men's Fellowship. This reveals that men hold more leadership positions than women. The Men's Fellowship functions include:

- Leadership and responsibility in the Church and the State.
- Current affairs both national and international levels.
- The teaching of basic principles of domestic Law: the making of wills and agreements for the purchasing of real and personal properties.
- The Church of Pentecost history.⁸²

Comparing the two sets of functions, it is realised that the church is more interested in training men for leadership positions than the women. Looking at the other functions such as teaching the men to make wills and women on laws of succession also suggests an influence of culture where men are expected to own properties. Things have changed and women are also in position to acquire properties but there is no such provision for them. These provisions in the constitution suggest that men drew it or they formed the majority.

Returning to the objectives listed above as the guiding principles of the Women's Movement, the movement organizes prayer sessions and huge conventions from time

⁸¹ Article 11.2 The constitution of COP. 39

⁸² Article 10 on the function of the men's fellowship in the COP Constitution

to time where the women pray for themselves and the church. Most of the branches of the movement in the various districts of the church meet every Wednesday morning to pray for the church. The local leaders of the various assemblies in the region come together every first Tuesday of every month to pray for the activities of the church. Women, from the inception of the church, have engaged themselves in various prayer sessions especially, for the church, which is a major factor in church growth. In addition to this, other women as well as men became members of the church through the activities of the movement.

The Movement serves as an avenue for the women to learn more about the ministry of women in the Bible. In doing this, the women are able to apply examples of these biblical women to their lives. Pentecost women have learnt to support the church with everything that they have, a lesson they learnt from the Bible especially from the New Testament. Women in the New Testament are seen as being of tremendous help to the early church. Some of them gave their substance to the apostles and also to the church. Women like Lydia offered their homes for fellowships to be held there, and Eunice trained Timothy to become very useful to the early church, becoming an apostle later on. The women of the church are encouraged to learn about the virtues of the women in the bible and apply them in the homes. They often touch on certain essential issues, which are hardly talked about.

Most Pentecost women have through the teachings at the Movement's meetings, won their husbands to the church. They are taught to be good wives in order that their lives will be a challenge to their husbands. Like Abigail in the Bible, they are admonished to be women of noble character in spite of their husbands' character or behaviour. In

the local branches, the various groups are named after the women in the bible in order to emulate their examples. Thus, there are groups like Abigail, Esther, Deborah and the like.

It is interesting to note that some of these women in the Bible played major roles in their time, but, since women are not given the opportunity to lead in the church, the leadership skills of women like Deborah, leading the Israelites to war, are not emphasized. However, in line with the practice of the church, women are encouraged to be very supportive in the church activities. Most of the teachings are based on marriage and how women are to relate to and support their husbands.

With regard to the role women played in the New Testament, the church sees the role of women as that being basically to support their men as it was in the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles. Until 1993 the Women's Movement had male leadership, women being their deputies. In that year the church established the women's directorate giving the opportunity to women to become general directors of the Women's Movement. The change in leadership was actualised in 1994⁸³ with Mrs. Perpetual Owusu becoming the general women's director, a position she has held to date. This change may not have affected the function but seems to be a mere change of titles since the Movement still has a man who serves as a patron of the Movement. He is an experienced minister who acts as the chairman of the executive committee of the movement and is responsible to the chairman of the church.⁸⁴

⁸³ Minutes of 5th Extra- ordinary Council meeting held at KNUST, Kumasi. 24th – 27th March 1994. 12

⁸⁴ Article 11 on the executive committee of the Women's Movement in the COP Constitution. 39

According to the constitution, “ the Women’s Movement shall be run by an executive committee of seven members appointed by the General Council on the recommendation of the Executive Council as follows:

- 1 Apostle, Prophet or an experienced minister as Patron
- 1 Women’s Director
- 1 Deputy Women’s Director
- 2 Ministers’ wives
- 2 other women”⁸⁵

The patron though the only man in the executive has responsibilities which suggest that women cannot be their own leaders. Among his functions as a patron, he shall:

- Be responsible to The Chairman of the Church.
- Have general supervision of the Women’s Movement
- Be an advisor to the Women’s Director and other officers of the Movement
- Chair the Women’s Movement Executive Committee meetings and in his absence, the Women’s Director shall preside.
- Chair Women’s Movement General Conventions.⁸⁶

Women in the church have given the church tremendous help leading to its growth and expansion, especially as members of the Women’s Movement. Women who are not in any form of income generating ventures are advised to engage in some sort of petty trade in order to help their husbands economically. To help the women be able to support their families and themselves financially, they are taught how to make some handicrafts. These become income-generating ventures for these women. The

⁸⁵ ibid
⁸⁶ ibid. 40

movement engages in projects to support its members. There are projects such as Piggery, Soap Making and Day Care Centres at the district and regional levels. In addition to being virtuous, teachings at the meetings touch on health, home management, and marriage, i.e. they cut across the whole spectrum of life. Resource persons are taken from within or without the church to take members through such lessons. These programmes attract other women who in the long run become members of the church.



The Director of the Women's Movement, Mrs. Perpetual Owusu (far right) inspecting some income generating products of the Movement.

The Movement also provides some social services to its members and also to the society. In relation to their social services, the Movement occasionally visits some hospitals and the socially challenged centres. During such visits, they present some foodstuffs and clothing to the inmates of such centres on behalf of the church. The movement is also set to add her voice to some problems facing the society. They have thus engaged in campaigns to create awareness on street children and HIV/AIDS. In

addition to the widows ministry (to be discussed later) the women's movement is supporting the needy especially orphans by providing them school uniform and granting them school fees. They recently donated school uniforms to 20 orphans in the northern region. In order to help more needy orphans the movement has sought for the support of some members of COP in United States of America⁸⁷. At the moment particulars of about 200 orphans are being processed for support.



The Women's Movement engaged in one of its campaigns to create public awareness on HIV/AIDS.

Pentecost Vocational/ Technical Centre

One distinctive area in which the Movement is actively engaged in social services is through the Pentecost Vocational/ technical Centre. Recently, the Movement embarked on a national project: establishing a vocational institute at Gbawe, near Accra, to give an opportunity for the youth to be equipped with professional skills.

⁸⁷ Interview with the Women's Director.

This is one of the major projects of the movement. The movement identified the need in 1985 to take care of the social vices among girls and also to provide employable skills to women. The centre, one of the four of the vocational/ technical schools of the church, seems to be doing well.

This centre opened on April 28 1998 with 15 students, but the student population has been increasing steadily in that as at the end of 2000 the number had increased to 249 students⁸⁸. These students take up courses like catering, dressmaking and hairdressing and they prepare the students to take the National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) examinations.⁸⁹ The centre had a 100% pass of students presented for the examinations with six distinctions in the year 2000.⁹⁰

In order to make these young people more marketable, the students being trained in particular skills are exposed to other vocational skills through a programme known as “extra curricular activities”. These activities are held on Fridays to give the students the opportunities to be conversant with the basics of programmes of the Centre.⁹¹ Thus the catering students, for instance, would have the opportunity to learn about hairdressing and dressmaking. This is aimed to make them acquire additional skills to enable them be versatile in employable skills.

The centre in addition to training young girls, have an Adult training Programme to train older women with employable skills.⁹² This adult courses run thrice in a year.⁹³

⁸⁸ End of year report- 2000- Pentecost vocational training centre

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Interview with the headmistress of PVTc.

⁹² End of year report- 2000 – Pentecost vocational training school.

⁹³ Interview with the headmistress of PVTc.

At its first speech and prize-giving day, an Apostle of the church noted that any nation, which does not see enhancement of its womenfolk, stands the risk of damnation⁹⁴.

The Women's Movement thus seeks to orient its women to be like the women in the Bible in order to be of benefit to the society. They are also trained to be good managers of their homes and help their spouses to look after their families.

The Gender Department

This is one of the departments of the Pentecost Social Services (PENTSOS); the social services wing of the church, which has been registered as a Non-governmental organisation. Since PENTSOS has among its aims to emphasize the education of the Girl- child and empowerment of women, the Gender department was set up to implement it.

Gender in the context of PENTSOS is an acronym meaning Gender, Development, Relief. This sector works in close collaboration with the women's movement especially in areas that affect women in the church. In other words, they set out to empower women in communities in which COP operates so that they can contribute towards the welfare of their families and society in general. This department however, has its present focus on the general development of women and children especially, the needy. It is believed that the pastors satisfy their spiritual needs so the sector empowers women economically through skill training, with literacy programme being an integral part.

⁹⁴ Daily Graphic, Wednesday, 9th May 2001, 14



The Widows' Ministry

One woman, Betty Ayagiba who is a widow herself, initiated this ministry. Looking at the ordeal she went through she decided to gather widows to help them with basic income generating activities in order to help them economically. With this organisation she has been able to help such women support themselves and also has drawn most of these women to become members of the church as membership is not restricted to members of the COP. Meeting the needs of these women, they become so emotionally attached to the church that they eventually become members. They also become agents for church growth through the testimonies they give to their immediate families.

The church has since put this woman on her payroll and working hand in hand with the women's movement and the Gender sector of PENTSOS. She has so far brought together over 35 groups of widows in the three northern regions of Ghana.

WOMEN IN OTHER MOVEMENTS

With the exception of The Men's Fellowship, women are members of all the other groups/ movements in the church. Women are thus, in the youth ministry, witness movement and the children's movement but leadership in these movements seems to be the preserve for men. The executive committee of the witness movement is made up of seven members: four ministers and three elders. The regional or area leaders are two ministers as leader and an assistant. The district leader must be an elder and the local leader is supposed to be a male though not specified. The executive committees of the youth ministry and children's movement have a low representation of women. In the youth ministry there is one woman (deaconess) as part of the highest decision

making body, with the children's movement having two women (deaconesses). The directors, regional/area, district and local leaders for these movements are pastors, elders, or male members of the church.⁹⁵

Women constituting a greater percentage of the church's membership form greater numbers in these groups of the church. However, since the church is male oriented in leadership, it looks out for the men to fill in the leadership positions though there could be some women who could equally be good leaders if trained.

PENTECOST WOMEN AND CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Though women constitute about 70% of the church membership,⁹⁶ there are a lesser percentage of them in the administration of the church as outlined in its constitution. People with charismatic gifts are those who are chosen to become leaders of the church, and thus see to the administration of the church. To climb high the administrative ladder one needs to be a minister or pastor, but, as noted earlier, women do not qualify to be part of this body. With the qualifications given the only criteria disqualifying women into the pastoral ministry is the fact that they are women. The highest position that a woman can attain is to be a deaconess, who can have a hand in the administration of the local assembly and be part of the local and district presbytery.

As mentioned earlier, ordination of any member as an elder or pastor gives one the opportunity to take on the duty of taking part in the administration of the church.

⁹⁵ Ibid. Article 9, 11.

⁹⁶ Foli, *op cit*.

However, as these positions are limited to only men, it follows that administrative positions are not open to women.

This position is defended in a brochure compiled by the Women's Movement for the International Women Leadership Conference 1996. The theme for the conference was "Women Changing Their World through Development of Leadership Skills". According to this document, "God had planned to use women to help James McKeown as he used the Phoebe, Priscilla, Tryphosa, Tryphena, Marys and Lydia, to help the early Apostles to establish and expand the Christian Church"⁹⁷. It further states "According to the Policy of the Apostolic Church which sent James to Africa, he was to look for men to work with. He had young men like -----". The women prayed for the church, pastors, and other field workers"⁹⁸

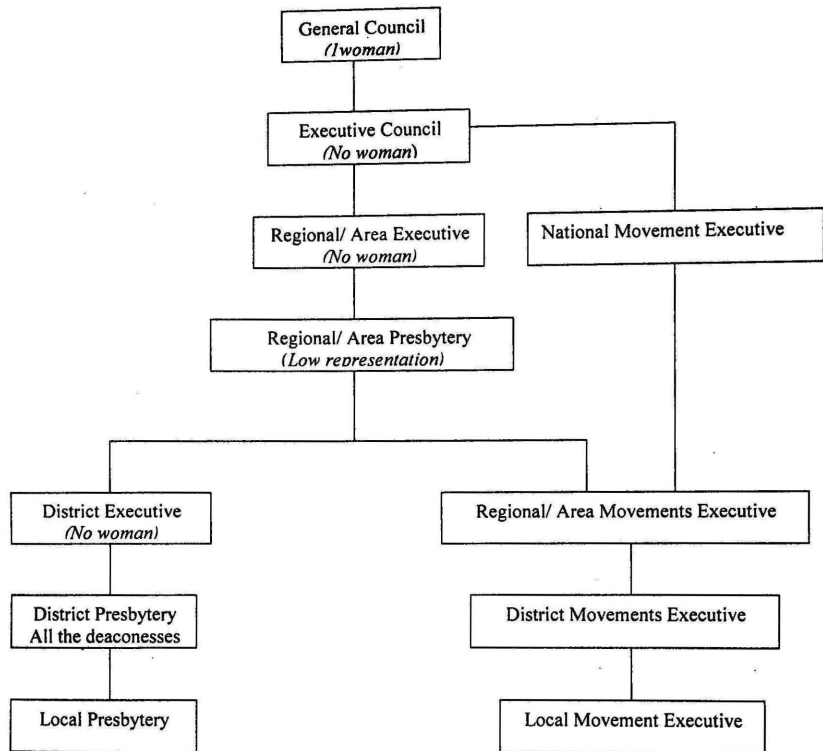
This is seen to be in line with Paul's injunction on women not to preach. (1 Cor. 14: 34) It is thus very rare to find a woman preaching, especially, during Sunday services if the day has not been specifically dedicated to the women. Even when such opportunities are given to them, during special women's programmes they are attributed to the grace of Christ. They seem to forget that the grace of Christ has been sufficient for all especially, the Gentiles in which both men and women did not have any place in the Temple.

⁹⁷ International Women's Leadership Conference '96 Brochure. 22
⁹⁸ Ibid.23

Though women assume leadership roles over their fellow women they are not given the responsibility to lead the entire church. In the local assemblies of the church, the deacons or any matured male member may take over affairs in the absence of the elders who are the local leaders of the church. The deaconess cannot however, take advantage of such an opportunity though she is a member of the decision making body of the local church.

The Women's Movement has opened an avenue for women to become at least their own leaders. Thus, a woman in addition to being a deaconess, could also be a local, district or regional and recently national director of the movement. The movement also functions under the umbrella of the church, doing everything with the approval of the Executive Council, the main decision implementing body of the church who are also responsible for the administration of the church. There are, however, no women representatives on this council, even though women form a greater percentage of the membership of the church. The chart below shows the representation of women in the hierarchical governance of the church.

**REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE DECISION-MAKING CHART OF
THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST**



The National Women's Movement Director is a general council member with a vote⁹⁹. This is, however, a new phenomenon since until recently women, if present at all they were only present on the opening day as observers, it was an all-men affair. Some women are also allowed to be observers at the council meetings but do not have the opportunity to vote on issues. The women's Director is the only woman whose voice is heard in the church when it comes to major decisions affecting the church.

The Regional or Area presbytery, which comprises of a number of districts also have women but a very small number of them. There are three representative deaconesses from each district and three ministers' wives representatives.

In the local and district presbytery are all the deaconesses present in the local and district of the church. As the chart ascends from the local level, the number of women reduces to the point that only one woman is represented at the General Council.

Though the presbyteries, which are seemingly the highest policy or decision-making bodies, the executive seem to have a greater power invested in them. Interestingly in the Executive Council, Regional/ Area and District Executive where decisions are implemented, there is no woman representative. The implementation of a decision is as crucial as its making, hence if women may be at its making but not at its implementation, it is likely that views and concerns of women may not be addressed with the urgency that they may require.

⁹⁹ Interview with the General Secretary.

The story is not very different when it comes to the movements. It is clear that the Men's fellowship and the Women's Movement have all males and female majority respectively. The witness movement no representation of women in its national executive, which usually runs down to the regional/ Area, district and local executive with some few exceptions where women serve as treasurers at the local levels. The youth ministry have one woman while the children's movement have two women respectively, on their national executive. These have influence on the regional/ area, district and local executives, though they may be one or two. Perhaps the special attachment of children to women has resulted in women becoming local leaders though the constitution points to male leadership in that respect.¹⁰⁰

A woman with a charismatic gift may be called a deaconess and could affect the decisions of the church locally but her voice does not go beyond that level no matter how dynamic she is. She may indirectly have an influence if she becomes a pastor's wife, a role she plays under the umbrella of her husband. Some women in the church also seem to have accepted their limited roles, since some usually shy away from leadership roles, such as chairing a committee or preaching, suggesting to the men to take them over.

Women in such high leadership position in the charismatic churches influence the decisions of their various churches, a phenomenon which is almost absent in the COP. Women in COP rather, most of the time play the "Martha" role, always in the background rendering basically catering services. They may become preoccupied

¹⁰⁰ Article 12.10 The COP Constitution .46

with these catering services so much that they may not really participate in meetings they were part of.

The practice of developing men alone has made some women depend so much on the men, especially, the deacons, elders and pastors in the church. When these women face certain challenges in life they rush to the men for help especially, for prayers. There have been instances where women have rushed their sick relations to deacons, elders and pastors of the church for prayers, not because they cannot pray but they feel the prayers of the men are probably more powerful. I recall how at one evening prayer service, the sick were asked to come forward to be prayed for. The elder leading the session quoted James 5:14-16 thereby asked the men to stretch their hands over the sick.

The over dependence on the men who are assumed to be spiritually strong may have caused the women not have confidence in themselves. Since women generally form the greater percentage of the membership of the church, but only men are in the leadership, it follows that the men who can adequately see to the spiritual needs of the women are comparatively few. This may account for the greater number of COP women than men patronising the COP prayer camps.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we looked at the roles women in the COP play with reference to the theological foundations from which the church draws most of its beliefs on women as discussed in the previous chapter. From the early days of the COP, McKeown saw the women as being of much help. He saw the women as more trustworthy and honest to be trusted with money. (They do not play this role any more). More so, he felt that if

the women were given the chance they could do exploits. In his own words, he commented: "I don't know what the women in St. Paul's day were doing wrong, but I retained my own mind and judgement. We did not let them run away with it, just gave them their place and the gifts of the Spirit were in use."¹⁰¹ The idea of McKeown, however, could not be maintained due to the practices of the church. This is because as rightly pointed out by Leonard it would be difficult for us today to realise how McKeown's revolutionary attitude to women in the church since the Apostolics of the time gave little scope to women,¹⁰² causing the church to prefer men to women.

This chapter has critically assessed the status of women in the COP. Pentecost women just as their male counterparts have equal access to Holy Spirit and its gifts. However, due to the traditions of the church, which are influenced by factors as biblical interpretation and cultural values, women are limited in their roles. Women in COP have received the power of the Holy Spirit yet they cannot be full witnesses of the gospel. They are playing second-rate roles, being at the background. Women are also not included when major decisions affecting the church are to be taken.

¹⁰¹ Christine Leonard, *op cit*, 54
¹⁰² *Ibid.* 55

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS

SUMMARY

Women have been very instrumental in the history of Pentecostalism in the 20th century. Some women have served as founding members of some of these churches, in the same way as some have been responsible for the success story of the COP. However the COP joined the general trend of these movements, actively involving males in their activities due to social and cultural approval.

Looking at the history of COP, women have been very involved in all aspects. The work and mission of McKeown, which finally led to, the establishment of the church has been attributed to the role his wife who encouraged him to take up the challenge, which he had earlier on refused. Perhaps God used his wife to indirectly bring forth this present big church.

Once McKeown seceded from the home church and established as an independent body, with the name The Church of Pentecost (COP), he tried to set up a self – governing and self-supporting church. It was the women who actually worked with him to make him a Giant in Ghana as described by Leonard. As with the beginnings of many Pentecostal movements, all human resources were used irrespective of sex. According to Leonard the women experienced the Holy Spirit more than the men, since the yardstick was the working of the Holy Spirit in a person.

There are other churches that have begun to give equal opportunities to both women and men in church administration. The AICs give a lot of room for women to operate

though the limitations on women are not very different from that of the religion. Some Mainline Churches also admit women into the clergy and women do have certain responsibilities. The Charismatic churches are however noted for the place they give to women since they actually go into encouraging women not to see certain duties as the preserves of men. They do not put any cultural or religious barriers on women, thereby encouraging those who are gifted to reach as far as their abilities can. The COP does not give such leadership opportunities to their women. They thus directly or indirectly rely on the men who are seen to be spiritually stronger.

Women in COP have accepted the patriarchal organisation of the church as their lot. Some women, who developed their potentials, did that by associating themselves with other Para-church organisations like the Women's Aglow.

Some biblical scriptures have influenced the COP on the place of women in the church. Women in the bible especially, those in the New Testament share a lot in common with our present dispensation. The New Testament traditions had their roots in the Old Testament or Rabbinic traditions. These traditions saw women as essentially properties of men, either of the father or the husband. Women were also restricted in many ways. In the New Testament, Jesus challenged the rabbinic traditions as a way of improving the self-image of women at the time. Looking closely at Jesus' attitude to women, it was realised that though women were not chosen as disciples he did not discriminate in his relationship with them. The woman at the well could be called a great evangelist. Women played very important roles in the life of Jesus from the cradle to the grave. They were the first to carry the message of his birth and the first to be witnesses of his resurrection.

The Holy Spirit came upon both the women and men who were present at his outpouring on the day of Pentecost. All were given the power to be witnesses, but the apostles' views on women had cultural tags on them. Paul, for instance who wrote a great deal of the epistles, which talk about Christian living, actually gave a lot of commands concerning women. In his contemplation however, the place of women were both enhanced and limited, as the result of the influence of Jesus' attitude to women and the culture of his time upon him. These two positions have been the main thrust of the arguments on the role of women in the church.

Culture shapes the mindset of people no matter their religious inclination. It is therefore not surprising that women are not found in most decision-making positions. The Ghanaian culture (for that matter the Akan culture) has been the soil upon which the COP was founded. Having most of its members whether home or abroad being directly or indirectly influenced by the Ghanaian culture. This is because they carry their cultural values with them and are not very comfortable with women being in leadership especially, having authority over men. The COP woman as part of the African woman operates from a culture, different but similar to the biblical culture.

Women leadership in COP is usually not extended beyond the women's movement. The effect of this is that the women themselves even shy away from leadership position unless it has to do with the Women's Movement since they have come to believe that it is the preserve of men. At best they become leaders of the Women's Movement. The decisions and programmes of the Women's Movement need to be approved by the general executive of the church.

For the other movements, women are not usually found among the leadership. In areas where they are found, their representation is often minimal.

The highest point where women's voice can be heard in decision-making concerning the church is the district presbytery a step above the local presbytery. At these presbytery meetings, women can raise issues on the general administration of the church; these powers do not however extend beyond this level. The Akan proverb, which is translated to mean, "the hen knows it is day but allows the cock to announce it" is very true in the life of Pentecost women. The Women's Movement director presently is admitted to the General Council of the church, but her presence might not make any change since as said earlier representation is extremely minimal, close to zero.

In women becoming leaders, fears have been expressed that it would mean they would be sacrificing their household duties and responsibilities. It also meant to some as usurping the roles of males in the church.

There seem to be visible and invisible barriers placed on women and these are most often shaped by the biblical concepts. These concepts are also not very different from the cultural practices. Changing from such positions has become inevitable due to the changing roles of women in the society.

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There seem to be visible and invisible barriers placed on women and these are most often shaped by the biblical concepts. These concepts are also not very different from the cultural practices. Changing from such positions has become inevitable due to the changing roles of women in the society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Women improving their self-image in the church in these times should be the responsibility and effort of all in the church. The church leadership should encourage women to enhance their image. Some of the following could be adopted.

Women should be encouraged to know more about the bible as that would empower them to know the purpose of God for their lives and to live to that expectation. There were a lot of women who were strong spiritually. These women should serve as role models for the present time women. Their lives should be critically studied so as to improve upon them. They should be encouraged to aim at becoming a blessing to the church more than the “Christina Obo’s”. Like the daughters of Zelophehad, women should rise to the challenges of the times.

The inputs of women to the church should be recognised and appreciated as this would serve as an encouragement to other women.

Pastors’ wives should be taken through a thorough training before they are sent into the field to practice as pastors’ wives. The pastors’ wives should also be allowed to engage in their profession as lawyers, doctors, nurses, teachers, traders, etc. Other women should also be enlightened through workshops, seminars and conferences.

Women should not only be seen at the General Council meetings as observers but also be heard. Their representation should be improved. This is because their representation at such meetings would affect decisions that concern the wellbeing of women in the church. Women should also be made members of the district and

regional executive committees, while the admission of women into the regional presbyteries is improved. In looking out for leaders for the various movements, women should not be left out where applicable.

Women just as the men should be given equal opportunities to be aware of and to enhance their potentials. These may be hidden and unless discovered, may not be of benefit to the church. This could begin at the local levels by allowing women to preach, lead prayers and conduct services not only occasionally but also as often as possible. As this is done, those who excel would be allowed to operate at higher and wider levels. This equal access may enhance the chances of women being allowed into pastoral training thereby becoming ministers of the church.

The women's movement should come out with strategies that would encourage women to become independent spiritually. Personal development should be highlighted.

The movement through its activities has produced a lot of women of substance. Presently they are engaged in a lot of social services like the establishment of vocational schools. There is however the need to encourage the women to improve their self-image. This would enable them to experience not only the life of Christ but also confront the responsibilities that go with following Him.

Women should not be satisfied with the *status quo* but should aim at stepping higher in their spiritual pursuits. There is the need for women's active participation in the

church. They must discover their strengths and strive to be what God has called them to be.

CONCLUSION

Religion is often used to determine gender roles and the case of the women in COP has come out as one of such examples. Religion and culture are somehow related. The culture of the Ghanaian society has been able to shape some of the doctrines of the church. Women thus, play passive roles in the church.

The women, who are willing to rise when given the necessary encouragement to face the challenges, would bring out weaknesses or strengths just as it has been for the men. This would help women to be what God wants them to be.

Once a person gets an opportunity to do something the person becomes aware of his/her capability as to whether that particular thing can be done or not. Not all males are effective leaders even though they have the opportunity, which means that, it is a matter of competence and not gender.

Giving equal opportunities to men and women does not necessarily mean disregarding the authoritative teaching of the scriptures in favour of secular agenda but should be a discovering of biblical teaching and practice through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Jews of Jesus' time could not accept his relationship with tax collectors and outcasts as a result of their interpretation of scripture. We must not be rigid to the principles that have guided us hitherto but patiently and prayerfully re-examine our inherited conventions in order to know their relevance to our times.

Like the parable of the talents in Matt 25:14-28, women like men have been given certain talents. In utilizing those God-given talents, women must not hide them due to religious or cultural barriers or using such barriers as excuses to avoid doing what God had called them to do.

If the death of Jesus did remove the barriers and has given everyone who calls on the name of the Lord to have equal access to serve and worship Him, then we must be asking if those barriers include those on women as well.

In spite of the role women play at home, they have been seen capable of assuming spiritual leadership in the church. Times have changed so have the place of women. If Paul were to be living in our days he might have written differently to suit our time.

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DISCUSSIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Apostle A. Amoah, General Secretary, COP	8. 03. 01
Mrs. Perpetual Owusu, Director, Women Movement, COP	13. 03. 01
Mrs. Rosemary Akomeah, Manageress, Gender Dept. of PENTSOS	9. 05. 01
Mrs. Grace Manu, Headmistress, PVTC.	10. 05. 01

APPENDICES

Appendix I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent, thank you for accepting to answer this questionnaire. It is designed to collect information on the various roles played by women in the Church of Pentecost. We assure you that the information you give will only be for academic purposes and will be treated as highly confidential. Thank you.

1. Name (optional):.....

2. Gender: Male [] Female []

3. Age:

15-20	41-50
21-30	51-60
31-40	61 and above

4. Education:

No formal Education []	Vocational/Technical []
Primary/J.S.S. []	Teacher Training College []
Middle []	Polytechnic []
Secondary []	University []

5. Occupation;

Civil Servant	[]
Public Servant	[]
Self employed	[]

6. Marital Status;

Single	[]
Married	[]
Divorced	[]
Widowed	[]

7. How long have you been a member of this church?.....

8. Apart from being a member, what do you do?

Pastor []	Pastor's wife []
Deacon []	Deaconess []
Elder []	
Other (please specify)	

9. Have you heard of some of the women in the history of the church?

Yes [] No []

10. If yes, can you name some and what they accomplished for the church?

.....
.....
.....

11. What do you see as the purpose of God for women?

.....
.....
.....

12. Does the coming of the Holy Ghost give any specific duties to men and women?

Yes [] No []

Give reasons

.....
.....
.....

13. In the Church of Pentecost, what do you see?

a. Men do

1.....
.....
2.....
.....
3.....
.....

b. Women do.

1.....
.....
2.....
.....
3.....
.....

14. In our homes, what do?

a. Men do

1.....
.....
.....

2.....

3.....

b. Women do

1.....

2.....

3.....

15. What are some of the teachings of the church concerning women? Mention three (3)

.....
.....
.....

16. Are there any effects of these teaching on women in the church?

Yes [] No []

If yes, mention three (3) effects.

1.....

2.....

3.....

17. What is the Women's Movement?

.....
.....
.....

18. How does this movement function in this church?

.....
.....
.....

19. What contribution does the movement give in the life of the church?

.....
.....
.....

20. Are there women in the church who have charismatic gifts?

Yes [] No []

If yes, give examples

1.....

2.....

3.....

21. How are such gifts expressed?

.....

.....

.....

22. In your opinion, why are there no women pastors in the church?

Biblical	[]
Church Doctrine	[]
Culture	[]
Nature of Women	[]
Others	[]

Give explanation.

.....

.....

.....

23. Do you think that women can be made pastors in future?

Yes [] No []

Give reasons

.....

.....

.....

Appendix 2

SPECIAL INTERVIEWS FOR LEADERS

1. Could you point out and explain some doctrines of the church concerning women?.....

How did the church come by these practices/doctrines?.....

2. What is the role of women in the general council?.....

3. Why are there no women pastors in the church?.....

4. What is your opinion on women pastors?.....

5. What is the role of the leaders (women leaders) at prayer camps in the church?.....

6. Are there any lessons from the Ghanaian contemporary society on the role of women in the church?.....

