

CHRISTIAN SERVICE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, KUMASI

Department of Theology



**SCHISM IN PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC CHURCHES:
A CASE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTRE- KUMASI BRANCH.**

**PROJECT WORK
(LONG ESSAY)**

**BY
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MAY, 2015.

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BY

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A long essay submitted to Christian Service University College, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Theology with Administration.

MAY, 2015.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Long Essay has been prepared by myself, that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree, that the work is a record of what has been done by myself, that all quotations have been distinguished by either quotation marks or indentation and all the sources of information have specifically been acknowledged by means of footnotes.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated

To my wife Felicia and my children (The big six) Freeman, Brian, Peter, Blessing, Shantel and Tony.

To my Lecturer Rev. Dr. Robert Owusu Agyarko.

To all the Lecturers of Christian Service University College.

Thank you for standing behind me when I needed you.

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ABSTRACT

The world is witnessing today many denominations with different brand names as a result of the rapid increase in schism or church breakaway. The work deals basically with the analysis of the causes of church split and the various remedies that the church can use to solve the issue. The study also deals with the factors that led to the split of Kumasi branch of the Christian Life Centre church in 2001, and its implications for the church. The Pentecostal and Charismatic churches could be sited as the area where church breakaway can be witnessed the most.

Qualitative method of approach was employed in this work. This kind of research was by definition, the systematic and objective observation, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events. The study was conducted using both primary and secondary data. The data collection instruments used was questionnaires

Findings of the study reviewed various epochs through which the church has developed and the issues that led to the split in the church. The study also found out that the actual issue that led to the split of the church was purely monetary in nature. This is because it was as a result of inappropriate handling of church funds.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

According to the Cambridge dictionary, schism is a division into two groups caused by a disagreement about ideas, especially in a religious organization.¹ In the early church, “schism” was used to describe those groups that broke with the church and established rival churches. The term originally referred to those divisions that were caused by disagreement over something other than basic doctrine. Thus, the schismatic group was not necessarily heretical.² Eventually, however, the distinctions between schism and heresy gradually became less clear, and disruptions in the Church caused by disagreements over doctrine as well as disruptions caused by other disagreements were eventually all referred to as schismatic.³

The most significant medieval schism was the East-West schism that divided Christendom into Western (Roman Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) branches. It began in 1054 because of various disputes and actions, and it has never been healed, although in 1965 Pope Paul VI and the ecumenical patriarch Athenagoras I abolished the mutual excommunications of 1054 of the pope and the patriarch of Constantinople.⁴ Another important medieval schism was the Western Schism between the rival popes of Rome and Avignon and, later, even a third pope. The greatest of the Christian schisms was that involving the Protestant Reformation and the division from Rome.⁵

¹“Cambridge Dictionary Online” <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/schism> (accessed on 13th of April, 2015).

² Encyclopedia Britannica “Schismin Christianity, a break in the unity of the church” <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/527428/schism> (accessed on 15th April, 2015).

³Encyclopedia Britannica “Schism, in Christianity, a break in the unity of the church”.

⁴Encyclopedia Britannica “Schism, in Christianity, a break in the unity of the church”.

⁵Encyclopedia Britannica “Schismin Christianity, a break in the unity of the church”.

After the 16th century protestant reformation, the local church has experienced and witnessed a number of breakaway in various denominations. In Ghana for instance there is profound transformation and rapid increase in the number of Churches with different names in every city, town and village. Consequently, one can argue in one way or the other that this is happening as a result of the tremendous development of believes in doctrinal differences, leadership and administrative style, Church orders and practices.

Reflecting on this division or Church split is identified as one of the contributing factors to the expansion of the Church. Many Church denominations like the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church, etc emerged as a result of dissention (disagreement) in one way or the other.

The church that serves as a background of the study, the Christian Life Centre, Kumasi has also suffered the same issue of schism. Christian Life Centre Church experienced a tremendous shaking in 2001, when the Church was located at Club 600 building in Kumasi. This was under the leadership of Bishop John Davis Freeman as the National Overseer and Senior Pastor over the Kumasi Church. Rev. Raymond Appiah was then the immediate associate pastor, who joined Christian Life Centre in the year 2006, when he was admitted into Atlantic Ministerial College.⁶ This division resulted as a result of misunderstanding that broke up due to mismanagement of church funds by the associate pastor of the Kumasi branch of the church.

Although, schism or church split could be one of the means through which the church of our lord Jesus Christ can spread in fulfilling the great commission in Matthew 28:19-20; the question is, does Christians' understanding of schism meet the purpose of God? The question cannot be clearly answered by either yes or no, even though many people have

⁶ Atlantic Ministerial College was then called School of the Word, which was established by the House of Faith Ministries, under the leadership of Rev. Alfred Nhyamekye.

been saved and well equipped in some breakaway churches as a result of schism. There are other questions that could be asked when it comes to the understanding of schism nowadays.

The researcher therefore focuses on the ways or the approach with which many Pentecostal and Charismatic church ministers adopt in establishing new churches. This is to find, if not all, some of the causes of the split in the Pentecostal and the Charismatic churches as well as the advantage and disadvantages of the breakaways.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The nature of schism in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches gives room for the society to have wrong conception about the word schism. This makes people in and outside Christianity place negative tags on church breakaway. The impact of schism in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches is also not clearly spelt out and that categories its viewers into “supporters” and “oppositions”.

Unlike the mainline churches that have solid structures, it seems they have advantage over the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in terms of structures. This may one way or the other justify why the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches experience high rate of church splits.

Likewise, weak structures within the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches leads to the problem of leadership succession plan, which in turn give way to breakaway.

Again, the tradition of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches emphasizes on the spiritual things more than the physical aspect of the church. This usually punches holes for splits so long as the church is made up of physical human being and not angels.

The Pentecostal and Charismatic churches appear not to balance educational literatures with the charisma hence frequent breakaway.

It seems that, the ways and means through which many pastors breakaway to start their own churches or ministries, to some extent is as a result of poor management and administrative structures exhibited by church leaders. Instead of starting new churches through evangelism, crusade, or even house to house witnessing, such pastors, though not all, would influence the church members within their mother church to follow them in establishing their own church.

For instance, sometimes the potential members like singers, prayer warriors, instrumentalists and others are influenced to leave their mother churches and follow such pastors. In addition, some of these pastors would sometimes, criticise their senior pastors and tell stories about their senior pastors to members of the church, so that they lose confidence in him to follow those pastors to start their own church. Others also make people know that they are being maltreated by their senior pastors, just to gain favor.

1.3 Research Question

The study seeks to find answers to the following question:

What are the factors that led to the split of Christian Life Centre, Kumasi branch in 2001 and its implications for the denomination?

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the studies

1. The main aim and of the study is to examine the nature of the schism in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and its impact on Church.
2. To examine key factors that contributes to rapid rate of schism among Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.
3. It also examine the impact of schism among Pentecostal and charismatic churches.

1.5 Scope and Focus of the Study

It is quite obvious that a study like this will not be able to cover all the issues of schism in Pentecostal and charismatic churches. As a result, it is limited to the Christian Life Centre, Kumasi. The scope will cover the Kumasi Metropolis in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Additionally, the researcher focused on church split and its related issues on head pastors and associate pastors' relationship in the Pentecostal and charismatic churches.

1.6 Research Methodology

The research work is purely a qualitative study and employs a historical approach. This kind of research is by definition, the systematic and objective observation, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events. It is of particular relevance to theological study, which itself is based on traditions which have changed and evolved through history. Moreover, Christian theology has some bearings on the significance of a particular historical event. Historical research aims to search for solutions to contemporary problems in the light of previous historical events.⁷ This approach was employed in this research due to its relevance to this study.

1.6.1 Methods of Data Collection

The researcher also employed various means of sources to gather data for the work. This sources include the following, primary sources and secondary sources.

1.6.1.1 Primary Source

Most of the information which embodied the main argument in the work was gathered through the use of questionnaires and interviews. The researcher designed questionnaires to solicit view from respondent on the subject under study. Some of the questionnaire included both ended and close ended questions. Interviews were also conducted to solicit

⁷A. L. Strauss & J. M. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 2nd ed., (California: Sage Publications, 1998), 10.

views from senior members of the church under study. The researcher interviewed some leaders of the church which included Bishop Davis Freeman and in Christian Life Centre, Kumasi; Mrs. Emelia Frimpong now in Christ Apostolic Church, Kumasi. This was done in order to be abreast with some details of the split and how the issues were solved. As a member of the church from its initial beginnings, the researcher also dwelled on personal experience and an eye witness account to give major aspects of the primary information especially on that of chapter three which deal with historical background and the split of the church.

1.6.2 Secondary Source

In looking at the focus of the study, the researcher also relied upon some relevant literatures that were of very much importance to the study. The researcher consulted different secondary sources encompassing books, thesis, journals, articles et cetera relevant to this work. In addition, relevant use was also made of dictionaries, church documents, reports and minutes. The secondary sources helped in a way to collate and analyze the various views on the historical issues of the church.

1.7 Literature Review

As part of the review, the researcher reviewed available literatures that have some bearing on the issue under study. In order to achieve the aim, the researcher did the review under three thematic headings, which include, church split, emergence of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and literatures on church growth.

1.7.1 Church Split

In his book, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism* by Cephas Narh Omenyo gave a historical reference to split that happened in churches like the Apostolic Church, the Christ Apostolic Church and the Church of Pentecost. He argued that these churches were the

fruit of Mr. and Mrs. James McKeon's mission in Ghana.⁸ However Omenyo did not make any mention of the main issues that caused the springing up of the churches he mentioned which the researcher would seek to address. Again, following the chain of schism from the mother church Apostolic Church Gold Coast/Ghana down to her offspring; Christ Apostolic Church, Gold Coast/Ghana Apostolic Church, The Apostolic Reformed Church, Pentecostal Christian Church now New Covenant Church, The Lord is there Church now Divine Healers Church, Church of Christ Spiritual, The Church of Pentecost, Christian Action Faith, International Central Gospel Church, World Miracle Church now Perez Chapel and other offspring, David Tetteh Tenobi has done a great job to compile all the relevant causes of the break away and formation of the aforementioned denominational churches.⁹

On the contrary, Rev. Tenobi failed to address the factors that contributed to the rampant rate of church split in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. He again did not deal with the advantages and the disadvantages of schism which this study seeks to deal with. Reading through the whole book, the researcher was looking for any educative chapters or pages to help the upcoming ministers and members of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches on how to leave and start their own God-given ministries. Unfortunately there was none hence; the researcher seeks to educate the general public on the ethical way to start one's own God-given ministry.

1.7.2 The Emergence of neo-Pentecostal/charismatic churches

The upsurge of the neo-Pentecostal and charismatic movements in Africa beginning from the 1970s has constituted a foremost development within contemporary African Christianity.

⁸Cephas Narh Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism* (Uitgeverij Boekencentrum Zoetermeer, 2002), 77-98.

⁹ David Tetteh Tenobi, *A Historical glimpse of the Holy Spirit Revival, (Called Pentecostalism) of the Church*, (Accra: Danchrist Printing Press, 2010).

In Ghana and other part of West Africa, scholars like Asamoah-Gyadu,¹⁰ Paul Gifford,¹¹ Cephas Omenyo¹² and others have examined neo-Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity in Ghana.

Paul Gifford's book; "Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy"¹³ explores Ghanaian charismatic Christianity (or neo-Pentecostalism) in relation to economic and political processes. Its aims are, first, to identify this new Christianity and its religious vision, and second, to analyze its sociopolitical role in effecting modernity. Acknowledging the great diversity of Accra's new churches, Gifford offers a study that is both extremely rich in data on leaders, adherents, theology, discourse, practices, Bible use, media activities, music, finances, and organization. It addresses the whole charismatic spectrum, from prophets and healers who focus on deliverance from demonic forces to teachers who stress human responsibility and development.¹⁴

In the light of examining new development in charismatic Christianity in Ghana, Asamoah-Gyadu's book on *African Charismatics: current development within independent indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, examines Pentecostal/charismatic renewal in an African context. He argues that Ghanaian Pentecostalism in its modern Charismatic form has become the most visible expression of renewal within indigenous Christianity.¹⁵ The book first articulates the contribution of the older African initiated churches (AICs) to local Christianity, arguing that, in spite of a present decline; the AICs have left an enduring theological imprint on indigenous Christian expression. It also

¹⁰ *African Charismatics: Current Development within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005).

¹¹ Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004).

¹² Birgit Meyer, 'Praise the Lord.' Popular Cinema and Pentecostlite Style in Ghana's New Public Sphere, *American Ethnologist* 31(1): (2004), 92-110.

¹³ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 2004.

¹⁴ Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity*, 84 – 107.

¹⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 1- 96.

accounts for the rise of the new independent churches, the charismatic ministries. The book further explores how the emphases of the new Ghanaian charismatics-internationalism, transformation, prosperity, healing and deliverance-provide useful insights into the nature of modern African Pentecostal spirituality. Asamoah-Gyadu makes mention of media materials and how it has affected the rise of the CMs in Ghana.¹⁶

However, one key contention between African scholars and their Western counterparts has to do with the origins of this form of Christianity. For instance western scholars like Paul Gifford, Rijk van Dijk,¹⁷ Birgit Meyer and David Maxwell link emergence of this new-wave Pentecostalism to the wind of globalization blowing into the continent from outside. However, Ogbu Kalu, Omenyo, and Asamoah-Gyadu holds the view that the forces that brought these groups into existence emerged internally.¹⁸ Kalu notes, “it must be stressed that the events in Africa had little to do with what happened in the United States from the 1960s onward”.¹⁹

1.7.3 Factors for Church Growth

Several scholars discuss various factors which account for church growth and under varying headings. Donald A. McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, for example, in discussing the concept of church growth, identify ten dynamic but which the authors point at as ‘far from exhaustive’ growth principles.²⁰ This is because the authors, McGavran and Arn, believed that new church growth principles were yet to be discovered and called for

¹⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 157.

¹⁷Rijk Van Dijk, “Time and Transcultural technologies of the self in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora”, In *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin-America*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 216- 234. See also Rijk Van Dijk, “Pentecostalism, cultural memory and the state: Contested representations of time in postcolonial Malawi”, In R.P Werbner (ed.), *Memory and the Postcolony*, (London: Zed Books), 155 – 182.

¹⁸ Ogbu Kalu, U., *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). See Asamoah Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 9-35.

¹⁹ Kalu, *African Pentecostalism*, 99.

²⁰ Donald Anderson McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 15.

further search for such yet to be discovered growth principles.²¹ For McGavran and Arn, any attempt to achieve the growth of the church must follow these principles. These growth principles may also be described as factors for growth or steps to take when considering how to grow a church.

In their work, McGavran and Arn consider these factors and discuss them under the heading, 'Steps for Church Growth'. These steps include discovering church growth principles, respecting biblical principles, yielding to God's unswerving purpose, giving priority to effective evangelism, rightly discerning the body, rightly discerning the community, finding new groups and ways to disciple, churches reproducing themselves through Planned Parenthood, structuring for growth and risking for growth.²²

Pointer discusses similar factors under the heading: 'Signs of Growth'.²³ He identifies constant prayer, respect for biblical authority, effective leadership, mobilized membership, continuous evangelism, community life, compassionate service, openness to change and released resources as 'signs of growth'. Pointer discusses them as signs because they are observable phenomena that accompany genuine church growth.²⁴ Like McGavran and Arn, Pointer indicates that these signs are not exhaustive and explains that though a growing church may exhibit several of these signs; it may not necessarily exhibit all of them.²⁵ He argues that churches grow when they pray constantly, respect the authority of the Bible, appoint effective leaders, mobilize their membership, worship God in eventful services; engage in continuous evangelism and compassionate service,

²¹McGavran and Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth*, 15.

²²McGavran and Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth*, 15.

²³ Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?*, 55-88.

²⁴ Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?*, 58.

²⁵ Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?*, 58.

develop genuine community life; allow spirit-directed change and release the resources of God for God's mission.²⁶

On discovering church growth principles, McGavran and Arn explains that a church growth principle is the universal truth which, when properly interpreted and applied, contributes significantly to the growth of churches and denominations. However, to discover a church growth principle, one must observe where the church is growing, where God is blessing the efforts of his servants with factual, actual church growth, where the number of members is increasing and new congregations are being born and where men and women are introduced to Jesus Christ, committing their lives to him, and becoming responsible members of his Church. Thus, to know how to grow a church, one must critically study churches which are growing so as to discover the biblical principles which account for the carefully observed growth.²⁷

When one sees where God is blessing the church with growth, it is important that one investigates why and how the growth is occurring.²⁸ Thus when one observes and studies the various factors, efforts, prayers, witness, passion, teaching, education, biblical base and outreach from which this growth emerges and then carefully analyzes and truthfully describes the findings, one is bound to find one or more church growth principles.²⁹

1.8 Significance/ Relevance of the Study

The research work will be essential for academia. It will help to educate people about the advantages and disadvantages of church split. It will also help in shaping the minds of the

²⁶ Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?*, 58 .

²⁷ McGavran identified four questions which should preoccupy a generation of church scholars. These are What are the causes of church growth?, What are the barriers to church growth?, what are the factors which can make the Christian faith a movement among some populations? And what principles of church growth are reproducible?

²⁸ Norman A. Horner & James M. Phillips (eds), *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement* (Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1994), 516.

²⁹ McGavran and Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth*, 16.

faith community on the way to start one's own God-given ministry without creating any conflict by "tearing away" the mother church.

1.9 Organization of the Study / Structure of the Work

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the study which covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aims and objectives, scope and focus of the study, research methodology, literature review, significance of the study, and organization of the work.

The Chapter two deals with the historical background of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana.

The chapter three takes a closer look at the historical background of the Christian life centre. Specifically, the researcher looks how the church emerged in the Kumasi metropolis, what brought about the split and the various consequences on the church.

The Chapter Four on the other hand deals with the analysis of issues that emerges out of chapter three.

The last chapter is the summary, recommendations and conclusion of the work.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND OF PENTECOSTAL/CHARISMATIC CHURCHES IN GHANA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the historical background of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana. The chapter further looks at the various strands of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana. The chapter also discusses the beginning of the Pentecostal revival in Azusa Street and the influence it had on world Christianity.

2.2 Pentecostalism and Its Worldwide Influence

Generally, the history of Pentecostalism globally, started as “... an evangelical charismatic reformation movement.”³⁰ Its root is traced to Topeka, Kansas in 1901 and to Charles Fox Parham; a former Methodist Preacher. Parham, on experiencing the reality of glossolalia (speaking in tongues) in his Bethel Bible school formulated a basic Pentecostal doctrine, which is the doctrine of tongues speaking being the initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit. While he taught people that tongues were a supernatural impartation of human languages for the purpose of world evangelization, Parham also advocated that “missionaries need not study foreign languages, since they would be able to preach in miraculous tongues all over the world.”³¹

Pentecostalism was, however, launched as a worldwide movement through William J. Seymour, an African American student of Parham and a Holiness preacher from Houston, Texas. Seymour preached that glossolalia was evidence of Holy Spirit baptism and as a

³⁰ Vinson Synan, in Walter A. Elwell (ed). *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 899- 902.

³¹ Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 years of Pentecostal and Charismatic renewal, 1901 to 2001*, (Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001). Synan wrote the explosive growth of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians throughout the twentieth century, telling the stories of the people who were most involved.

result of this was expelled from his first Los Angeles parish.³² He, however, continued preaching until he and a small group experienced glossolalia. A lot of people were attracted to the meeting so he had to hire a bigger mission space, a run-down building of the African Methodist Episcopal church at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles. The Azusa street revival, which lasted for about three years (1906-1909), embraced people of all classes, race, sex, and promoted leadership of women.³³

Stanley Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas, attest to the fact that, “the 20th century witnessed the emergence and Phenomenal growth of the Pentecostal, charismatic and neo-charismatic movements.”³⁴ According to them, “these three waves of Pentecostalism, which constitute one of Christianity’s greatest renewals, have impacted every segment of the church in virtually all countries of the world with new vitality and fervor”.³⁵

However, Burgess and van der Mass argues further that, when the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, was first published in 1988, it was narrow on its reportage on the development of the nascent movement, both “temporally and spatially.”³⁶ This was according them, happened as a result of the fact that that edition of the dictionary only placed emphases on “20th century developments in the United States (US) and Western Europe, where white Pentecostal historians have traditionally placed the origins of these movements.”³⁷

³² Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 39.

³³ Synan notes that “The major milieu out of which Pentecostalism sprang was the worldwide Holiness movement, which had developed out of the nineteenth-century American Methodism”. He further goes on to outline how it spread to many nations of the world”...usually under the auspices of Methodist missionaries and travelling evangelists”.

³⁴ Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (eds.), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Revised and Expanded Edition*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), xvii.

³⁵ Burgess (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, xvii.

³⁶ Burgess (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, xvii.

³⁷ Burgess (ed.), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, xvii. The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements not only include a wealth of information on pre-20th –century Pentecostalism, it’s also places special emphasis on these movements outside the U.S and Western Europe. Indeed, it is in these other nations and regions that modern movements of the Spirit have experienced their most phenomenal growth.

2.3 Pentecostalism in Ghana

Despite the substantiation that; not all the upsurge of Pentecostal renewal phenomena, globally, may be linked concomitantly to the North American initiatives, it will, however, be appropriate to place neo-Pentecostalism or Charismatism, as it is popularly referred to in Ghana in context.

Neo-Pentecostalism or charismatism in Ghana is part of the broad global phenomenon of Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism, as it manifested in Ghana, is broadly defined to embrace the African Independent Churches (AICs), the evangelical Pentecostal movement also known as the classical Pentecostals and a third strand which is, the “Charismatic Renewal movement or the neo-Pentecostal movement”.³⁸

2.3.1 The AICs

The African Independent Churches (AICs), the first strand of Pentecostalism in Ghana was a phenomenon, not restricted to Ghana but is seen as part of a continental religious stirring.³⁹ The AICs have left an indelible theological mark on the history of African Christianity. No wonder Anderson describes them as *African Reformation*.⁴⁰

The name as it is designated in Ghana is of historical significance in the sense that the churches against which these AICs defined themselves maintained historical and theological connections with Western mission bodies. They are often seen as distinguishing themselves by their African indigenous origin as they express themselves in their rituals and doctrines. “In general, these churches are characterized by their

³⁸ Emmanuel K. Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, (Accra: Blessed Publication, 2001), 57.

³⁹ J.K Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostalism in Context: An intercultural perspective on 20th century ‘Waves of Renewal’ within West African Christianity”, In *African Journal of Pentecostal Studies*, Vol. 1, Dec. 2002, 4 – 33. See also Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 21. See Andrew Walls, “The Evangelical Revival, The Missionary Movement, and Africa”, In Mark Noll et al (eds.) *Evangelism: Comparative studies of popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700 –1990* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994), 319.

⁴⁰Allan H. Anderson, *African Reformation* (Asmara: Africa World Press. 2001), 4.

prophetic leadership and, particularly, their emphasis on healing, thus obeying the injunction of the Bible to heal by prayer and anointing”.⁴¹ In Ghana they are also called “Spiritual Churches (Sunsum sore)”.⁴² They are of the same phenomenological types as “Aladura” (“praying churches”) in Nigeria and Zionist churches in South Africa.⁴³

William Wade Harris, a Liberian and an acclaimed Prophet of God is said to be the “progenitor of the spiritual church movement”.⁴⁴ Harris arrived on the then Gold coast (now Ghana) in 1914 and he is said to have made very significant inroads in mission work because he had a God given ability to operate in the realm of the supernatural.⁴⁵ Larbi list a number of spiritual gifts, Harris had or possessed. Harris emphasis on the supernatural was not at the expense of the traditional forms of doing things. For instance, he did not discourage the use of traditional herbal medicine, which the earlier European missionaries had completely condemned and discarded as animism.⁴⁶ He however “placed its potency in the context of prayer to the High God”.⁴⁷ He used the liturgical forms of the people which were familiar in their traditional worship but insisted on a radical turn away from fetishism.⁴⁸

From this backdrop Dovlo rightly describes the AICs as churches that bridged the gap between the African Traditional worldview and Christianity by using the Gospel to make suitable responses to the needs of adherents and clients.⁴⁹ One can argue that Harris, though well acclaimed for his genuine efforts at the conversion of the people, he played a

⁴¹Gerrieter Haar, “Standing up for Jesus: A survey of new developments in Christianity in Ghana”, In *Exchange*, Vol. 23:3, Dec.: 1994, 221 – 240.

⁴² Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostalism in Context*, 4 – 33.

⁴³ Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 21. See Walls, *The Evangelical Revival, The Missionary Movement, and Africa*, 319.

⁴⁴Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 58.

⁴⁵Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 60.

⁴⁶Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 60.

⁴⁷Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 61.

⁴⁸Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 62.

⁴⁹Elom Dovlo, “New Religious Movements in Ghana”, *Journal of Religion and Theology in Namibia*, Vol.4, 2002, 1 – 34.

part in the blend of Christianity and the traditional religion that emerged in Ghana especially in the AICs.

Walls attesting to Harris' prophetic calling cite Shanks as saying that Harris was a prophet of modern times who was convinced of his prophetic call.⁵⁰ He is said to have pointed people to the God of the scriptures, baptized with water and, by prayer and exorcism, triumphed over the spirits.⁵¹ The influence of Harris' work prevailed in Ghanaian Christianity and served as a precursor to the formation of some spiritual churches. The AICs, despite their decline have left an indelible theological imprint on other mainstream churches.

2.3.2 The Evangelical/Classical Pentecostals

The emergence of the second strand of Ghanaian Pentecostalism has, however, not been directly linked to the AICs. It seems rather to have been linked to Western Pentecostal influence. They are the Western Mission- Related Pentecostal denominations. Larbi calls them 'the mainline' or 'evangelical Pentecostal denominations'. They are also called the 'classical Pentecostal churches'.⁵² These were also of indigenous initiatives but were linked up with foreign Pentecostal missions early in their formation.⁵³ For instance, Ghana's Church of Pentecost (CoP), one of the foremost classical Pentecostal churches was established in the 1930s and had links with foreign missions like Faith Tabernacle in Philadelphia for a short and a more lasting link with United Kingdom (UK) Apostolic church.⁵⁴ Characteristic of Pentecostalism generally, the classical Pentecostals in Ghana believed in the supernatural. In particular, divine healing and supernatural solutions to

⁵⁰ Walls, *The Evangelical Revival, The Missionary Movement, and Africa*, 319. Walls recalls how Harris read the Bible in a way quite different from the missionaries but could make it intelligible within his own frame of reference. He called people to repentance and persuaded many to abandon their traditional African religious practice. The researcher can attest to the influence of Harris on Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity by the number of Churches in the Central and western region of Ghana that bear his name; Harris church.

⁵¹Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 62.

⁵²Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 69.

⁵³Asamoah- Gyadu, *Pentecostalism in Context*, 2002, 7.

⁵⁴Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 175.

many problems in life of diverse nature were sought through prayer. One spectacular feature that came to be associated with some of the classical Pentecostal churches, especially CoP, was the “prayer camps and prayer centres”. Some of the leaders of these prayer camps and healing centres broke away eventually to establish their independent ‘deliverance ministries’ as they are now mainly referred to. Besides the schisms, the phenomenon of deliverance has been so much publicised by the neo-Pentecostal ministries and has even had tremendous impact on the traditional historic churches.⁵⁵

2.3.3 The Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement

The neo-Pentecostal or charismatic movement constitutes the third strand of Pentecostalism in Ghana. Scholars have noted that, there are two ways in which these movements can be distinguished from the mainline missionary established churches and the classical Pentecostal churches. Walter Ihejirika opines that, “the prefixes ‘African’, ‘new wave’ and ‘neo’ are used to distinguished these new churches from established classical Pentecostal denominations like the church of Pentecost and the Assemblies of God, and to underscore the fact that they are historically younger and have remained autochthonous founder-led congregations”.⁵⁶ In another sense, the term ‘African modern Pentecostalism’ or (‘new-wave Pentecostalism’ or Neo-Pentecostalism’) is also used to “designate the indigenous protestant Christian denominations that emphasize salvation by faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ through personal conversion, the authority of scripture in matters of faith healing, and the speaking in tongues.”⁵⁷ Charismatic/Pentecostals emphasizes on the importance of the baptism of the Holy Spirit

⁵⁵Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 90.

⁵⁶ Walter C. Ihejirika, “From Televisuality to Socioal Activism: Nigerian Televangelists and their Socio-Political Agenda” In PradipNinan Thomas and Philip Lee (eds), *Global and Televangelism*, (NY: Pelgrave MacMillan, 2012), 173. See also J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu, “Pentecostal Media Images and Religious Globalization in Sub-Saharan Africa”, 65.

⁵⁷Ihejirika, “From Televisuality to Socioal Activism: Nigerian Televangelists and their Socio-Political Agenda, 174.

in the life of every “born again” Christian.⁵⁸ Olupona’s description of this new phenomenon is worth noting:

Charismatic churches are evangelical churches founded by African leaders who have adopted radical spiritual conversion, often called “born again”, through baptism of the Holy Spirit, recalling the day of Pentecost. As in the prophetic independent African churches before them, the charismatic churches emphasize speaking in tongues, divine healing, and miracles. In addition, they profess that the material success and prosperity of their members are signs of divine grace and benevolence.⁵⁹

This Charismatic renewal, has at the same time, impacted other strands of Christianity in both Nigeria and Ghana.⁶⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu has argued that “this new type of Christianity, as a result of its media presence, continues to have a much more diffused impact on African Christianity in particular and popular culture in general”.⁶¹ The presence of the new Pentecostal/charismatic movements has literally transform the religious culture of Christianity in Africa, leading to what may be referred to as religious ‘Pentecostalization’ and ‘Charismaticization’ of African Christianity.

This strand manifests in three forms; the first being the independent charismatic churches (and it is on these churches that the issues that are being assessed in this research are centered). In Ghana, they refer to themselves as the ‘Charismatic ministries’. Secondly, the non-denominational or trans-denominational fellowships like the Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship International (FGBMFI) and Women’s Aglow. These are

⁵⁸ J.K Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Development within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005), 12. Asamoah-Gyadu deals with the rise and nature of charismatic ministries, beginning with their roots in the conservative evangelical movement and the basic theological differences between this fresh wave of Pentecostalism and their older counterparts, the Sumsum sore.

⁵⁹ Jacob, Olupuna, “Africa, West (Survey),” In Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Mass (eds.), *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements. Revised and Expanded Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 11-21.

⁶⁰ Hackett, Rosalind, I.J., “Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana”, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28(3): 1998, 265.

⁶¹ J.K., Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostal Media Images and Religious Globalization in Sub-Saharan Africa*, 66.

also referred to as the Para-church Movement making up the second wave.⁶² The third are the renewal groups within the traditional western missionary churches. An example of such is the Charismatic Renewal movement. Larbi adds a fourth one, which are the Prophet/Healer-centered Pentecostalist Prayer Camps.⁶³ This is currently designated as Neo-prophetic or deliverance ministries in Ghana.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity and its influence on Christianity. It has shown that, Pentecostal Christianity, which has become the representative face of African Christianity, has developed and strengthens various aspect of African Christianity. The chapter especially looked at the various strands of Pentecostals in Ghana and also highlighted their theological beliefs.

⁶² Asamoah-Gyadu, *Pentecostalism in Context*, 11, Asamoah-Gyadu categorizes them in terms of waves, a metaphor likening the emergence of Pentecostal innovation and creativity in Africa in terms of waves on the seashore.

⁶³Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 89.

CHAPTER THREE

BACKGROUND OF CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTRE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter takes a closer look at a brief historical background of the Christian Life centre. The chapter also discusses the major issues that led to the schism or the split of the church. The chapter again highlights the various heightened point of the split that happened in the church. Since the researcher has been part of the church from its initial beginnings, all the information given in this chapter are solely from an eye witness point of view.

3.2 The Founding of Christian Life Centre

Christian Life Centre was established by Rev. Frank and Mrs. Hazel Houston in Australia in July 1977. The founders were from the Assemblies of God Church in Australia. Rev Davis and Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman were sent to plant and pioneer the Africa vision of the church in 1992. The Freeman's family responded to the vision of Frank & Hazel Houston of reaching out to the continent of Africa through church planting, and arrived in Ghana in March 1992.

Bishop John Davis Freeman and his wife, Rev. Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman started the first Ghana branch in the city of Kumasi, Asanteman Senior High school campus in October 1992 with Rev. Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman, Rev. Rockefeller Owusu Sarfo and Prophet Samuel Yomparb as the associate pastors; and Elder William Kwame Poku, Rev. Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman, Lawyer John Brefo, Maaba Inkum, the late Rev. John William Kwaku Addai, Mr. Monach and Madam Rosline Hetty Appiah as the pioneer Board of Elders.

The church was started with initial membership of fifty (50). Rev. Rockefeller Owusu Sarfo, popularly known as Pastor Rocky and his wife Mrs. Felicia Owusu Sarfo had then returned from United Kingdom to start their ministry at Kumasi Old Tafo with few members⁶⁴. Bishop Freeman and Pastor Rocky knew themselves at UK already so they agreed to join together in the same Christian Life Centre Church hence Pastor Rocky's maiden church, Christian Faith Church was affiliated with Christian Life Centre Ghana.

At that time, Christian Life Centre was one of the fastest growing churches in the city of Kumasi. The church was blessed to work with musical stars such as Rev Dr. Thomas Yawson, Taggoe Sisters, Geogia Agei, Kwame Poku & wife ("Ko ne no nsan nkye") and others.

Rev. Jonathan Wilson was then the African Missions director so he used to visit Christian Life Centre Ghana for major programmes including City wide crusades and leadership seminars. Pastor Jonathan used to be accompanied by Mark Horan, Robert Ferguson, Diana Wilson, and Francisca Greeny. There was a strong force of unity, love and growth so Asanteman Senior High school was in those days the sight of attraction because of the location of Christian Life Centre.

3.3 The Beginning of the Split

The Kumasi branch of Christian Life Centre Church experienced a tremendous shaking in 2001, when the Church was re-located from Asanteman Senior High school premises to Club 600 building in Kumasi. This was under the leadership of Bishop John Davis Freeman as the National Overseer and Senior Pastor over the Kumasi Church. Rev.

⁶⁴ Rev. Rocky's pioneer members included Emelia Frimpong, Kingsford Annor, Peter and his wife Efua, maame Foriwaa, Kwame Sarfo and Pardmore Owusu Obeng.

Raymond Appiah was then the immediate associate pastor, who joined Christian Life Centre in the year 2006, when he was admitted into School of the Word.⁶⁵

Rev. Davis Freeman used to travel to Australia frequently every year for Hillsong international conferences, because Christian Life Centre is affiliated to Hillsong Church at Australia, the then Christian Life Centre Sydney. Bishop Freeman could travel without any ulterior intent because of the trust he had in Rev. Raymond Appiah. Rev. Raymond, popularly known as Pastor Ray, was a dynamic preacher in the word of God so he had influence on the Kumasi church with good reputation, integrity and won the people's approval.

At one point in time, Pastor Ray requested a saloon private car from the then board of Elders to be used for the smooth running of the local church due to his overload responsibilities. The board of elders asked him to sell his Volkswagen (VW) old type German car so that they would add the remaining amount to it and buy him the expected saloon car. Upon this advice from the board of elders, he sold the VW car for one hundred Ghana cedis (one million old Ghana Cedis ₵1,000,000), and used the money for his personal use.

In July 2001, Bishop Freeman travelled to Australia for his usual Australian visit. USD \$ 15,000 was transferred by the Australians into the Kumasi local savings Accounts for the National missions projects including most pastors' quarterly salaries. Pastor Ray went to the Standard Chartered Bank at Adum⁶⁶, took some of the money for his personal use.

⁶⁵ School of the Word is a Bible School established by the House of Faith Ministries, under the leadership of Rev. Alfred Nhyamekye.

⁶⁶ The church had both savings and current accounts with Standard Chartered Bank account at Adum, when Comfort Effah (Now a pastor in the Methodist Church) was then the local treasure to the church accounts.

On returning from Australia in August 2011, Bishop Freeman knowing that USD \$ 15,000 had been transferred into Kumasi Church Accounts, went to the bank to check the Account balance. To his surprise, USD \$ 5,000 had been withdrawn from the Accounts.

3.4 The Split: The Reaction of the then Board of Elders

The Board of Elders in those days consisted of; Rev. John Davis Freeman (Now Bishop), Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman, Elder William Kwame Poku, Lawyer John Brefo, Maaba Inkum, Madam Rosline Herty Appiah. As part of the plans to solve the issues, Pastor Raymond was called to meet with the Board of Elders in the Kumasi Church for him to clarify his side of the story, after Bishop Freeman had officially informed the Board.

He however, disclosed to the board that he had really indeed taken the money from the church's account. Although the issue had not been announced, there were a lot of rumors going on in the Church, and almost the congregation was waiting for the reaction of both the Board of Elders and Bishop Davis Freeman and his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman. However, Rev. Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman was so aggressive that whenever she saw any Church member standing in two, three or in groups, she would get closer to find out their reactions and thought whether they were in favour of Pastor Raymond or the Board of Elders' decision on the matter.

In a second meeting on the same issues, the board took a decision to suspend Pastor Raymond for six months. Whether Pastor Raymond accepted the suspension or not, depended on the remorse and reaction of him and cross section of the congregation, despite the fact that it was not yet announced before the whole Church.

The Australians called Bishop Freeman to find out what was going on in the church, although Bishop wanted to deal with the situation internally. This was due to the call Pastor Raymond had made to Australia to get back his in-law's 4x4 Toyota caravan

saloon car. Bishop Freeman was compared to brief the whites on the whole incident and having heard of the details, a letter was sent by Fax from the brethren at Australia stating an indefinite suspension of Pastor Raymond Appiah from Christian Life Centre fraternity.

3.4.1 Pastor Raymond's Indefinite Suspension- The Peak of the Tension

On one Sunday in August 2001, during the Church's normal Sunday service, it was officially announced to the whole congregation by Bishop Davis Freeman that "Pastor Raymond Appiah has unlawfully misappropriated some funds amounting to \$ 5000, sold his in-law's 4x4 Toyota caravan saloon car, bought an Opel Vectra saloon car, informed the whites in Australia to persuade the local Board to retrieve his in-law's car back, while he was ready to travel to South Africa". Since it had become a rumor in the Church spreading like "refuse fire", it was not breaking news to the congregation. They were only waiting to hear the reaction of the Board of Elders and their decision on this issue.

3.4.2 The Reaction of the Congregation

Since the announcement of Pastor Raymond's indefinite suspension, the whole congregation began to disintegrate into "supporters" and "oppositions". Cross section of the congregation was anticipating that they did not agree with the decision of the Board of Elders on two main reasons. In the first place, they did not agree on the Board's decision to retrieve the Opel Vectra from Pastor Raymond because he had already been promised by the Board. Secondly, the same group made it known to the rest of the public that Pastor Raymond Appiah should not have been suspended indefinitely, so he should have been restored back to his normal Pastoral duties in the Church as the immediate associate Pastor in the Church. This group who were termed as the "opposition" was again anticipating that the indefinite suspension from the Australians was a camouflage, and that it was Bishop Freeman and his wife's own decision to influence the rest of the Board of Elders, hence they did not believe in the discipline. On the contrary, the other

part of the congregation who were the “supporters” was in favour of both the Australians’ indefinite suspension and the local Board’s to that decision. They saw this whole incident with an ethical and moral eye and that to them, it was not appropriate to do such a thing which did not demand any compassion. However, both this group and the local Board of Elders saw Pastor Raymond’s own reactions and his remorse that he had not even regretted from what he had done so he did not need any compassion. As an eye witness to this great shaking in the Church, the researcher witnessed on one Sunday when Pastor Raymond came to Church to place his bible on his usual chair, Rev. Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman took the bible and placed it on the floor to mean that whiles he was suspended, he should not have sit in front of the leaders’ chancel but he should have been in the pew rather.

3.4.3 The Actual Split

The other opposition group used to approach Bishop Freeman as often as they could, to demand their right to maintain Pastor Raymond Appiah and also to give the car back to him, yet all effort was to no avail. As a result of their denial to accept their demand and appeal, they began to advice Pastor Raymond to take a decision on establishing his own ministry so that they follow him. Pastor Raymond stopped coming to Church and started his own Church which he named “Living Word Temple” at the premises of Freeman Centre, opposite Wesley College of Education. Most of the Church members and the leaders followed him.

3.4.4 Aftermath of the Split

When Pastor Raymond started his Living Word Temple Church, the local Church of Christian Life Centre started decreasing in the size of its larger population gradually. The reason was that most members were joining the newly breakaway Church. However, Bishop Freeman did not relent his effort on this shaking, he organised continuous revival

programmes and leadership seminars in the Church, including open air crusades with the then evangelist Morgan who was a popular outspoken speaker in the Kumasi environs. This strategy helped to maintain most of the members in the Church. Lawyer John Brefo, one of the Board of Elders, expressed his interest in the Opel Vectra to buy, so he negotiated with the Board of Elders and agreed to buy it on credit hence, he made the payment on three installment bases with a couple of Months and took the car.

On Sunday, 6th October 2001, there was a major revival programme which was organised by Bishop Davis Freeman to mark two major events. The first event was to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Kumasi branch of the Church. The second major event was to induct Rev. Peter Williams Antwi and his wife, Mrs. Felicia Antwi as the senior Pastors and resident Pastors over the Kumasi Church. After that major programme, Rev. Mrs. Elizabeth Freeman traveled to Australia with two of their children, Jonathan and Precious on 30th December 2002. In May 2003, Bishop Davis Freeman and their last born, Priscilla also followed the wife to Australia for another missions trip. Their going back to Australia happened to co- incidentally met with the split of the Church because the whites had then decided to suspend their sponsorship to the Ghana and African Churches as well. They said having support the Churches for ten years, they would not be able to continue again. The only negotiation the whites could offer with Bishop Freeman was to allow him and his family to go back to Australia and restart a new Church that could help in sponsoring the Africa vision hence came about the trip to Australia by the Freeman family.

3.5 Under the Leadership of Rev. Peter Williams Antwi

After the departure of the Freeman family, there was a reshuffle in the leadership of the Church under the leadership of Rev. Peter Williams Antwi. He recruited new faces into the local Board of Elders. Continues revival programmes were organized alongside with

leadership seminars with renowned speakers including Rev. Dr. Thomas Yawson, Tagoe sisters, with prayer retreats to strengthen the Church from the just ended crises. Since Rev. Antwi was like a new driver in front of a steer, he did much consultation from their General Secretary Rev. Mike Ofori Amankwa for indebt leadership skills and strategic means for Church growth. However, there was frequent communication between Bishop Freeman and Rev. Peter on what was going on in the Church as often as he could. Between the year 2005 and 2006, over eight hundred seated auditorium was erected at their newly acquired one acre land situated at Ahwiaa New Jersey under the leadership of Rev. Antwi. The church was then relocated to their new auditorium at Ahwiaa in April 2005.

3.6 Conclusion

On the whole, this chapter has looked at the historical background of the church. The chapter also discussed the various issues and the misgivings that led to the split of the church. The researcher takes this into consideration in other to place the study in its proper historical context and then analyze the challenges and impact as a result of church schism or breakaway. The issues discussed in this chapter will go along away to serve as a point of departure to analyze the concern at stake in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SPLIT OF CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTRE, KUMASI BRACHC: AN ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Introduction

Churches do not split suddenly and without warning. There are usually signs of impending disaster. The challenge is to recognize these warning signs, or storm conditions, early and then act with godly wisdom before a storm hits with devastating force. This chapter deals with analysis of the various causes of church split and remedies the church can use to solve them.

4.2 Cause of Church Split

In order to establish whether or not schism contributes to church growth, the researcher first and foremost would like to discuss some of the causes that might contribute to schism in a church. As already indicated, schism is when a church breaks away from another church as a result of misunderstanding especially due to doctrinal issues. However, not only that, there are some other factors that might also contribute to church split or schism.

From what happened at the Christian Life Centre, the researcher has observed that a majority of the issues that leads to church schism or church split within the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches are not usually linked to doctrinal issues. Most of it had to do with internal wrangling and misunderstanding on leadership issues or monetary matters. These issues include disagreements over budget expenditures, mission expenditures, incurring of debt, facility expenditures, and building projects.

From what happened at the Christian Life Centre (CLC), the researcher can conclude in one way or the other that the situation had to do with the pastor. At CLC the issues of

mishandling of church funds by Pastor Raymond and the subsequent misunderstanding arising from the situation lead to the split in the church. In an interview with Elder William Kwame Opoku, he indicated that the church (CLC) would have settled the issues amicably and internally, had it not been Pastor Raymond's decision to "cross the boundary" by contacting the Australians to come into the issue. After Pastor Raymond had been suspended there were a lot of acrimonies among the members with regards to his suspension.

Secondly, the researcher has also observed that church split or schism sometimes typically originate from power groups within the church. The power group may be a formal body, such as deacons or elders. Or they could be an informal group that still wields great power in the church. In CLC, after the announcement of Pastor Raymond's indefinite suspension, the whole congregation began to disintegrate into "supporters" and "oppositions". Some cross section of the congregation was anticipating that they did not agree with the decision of the Board of Elders on two main reasons, that the Board's decision to retrieve the Opel Vectra from Pastor Raymond because they had already made a promise to that, and secondly, the same group made it known to the rest of the church that Pastor Raymond should not have been suspended indefinitely, so he should have been restored back to his normal Pastoral duties in the Church as the immediate associate Pastor in the Church. As already indicated, this group called themselves the "opposition" was anticipating that the indefinite suspension from the Australians was a camouflage, and that it was Bishop Freeman and his wife's own decision to influence the rest of the Board of Elders, hence they did not believe in the discipline. On the contrary, the other part of the congregation who were the "supporters" was in favour of both the Australians' indefinite suspension and the local Board's to that decision.

The resultant factor is that the other opposition group advised Pastor Raymond to take a decision on establishing his own ministry so that they follow him. The Pastor heeded to that and left the church to establish his own ministry of which some of the members of CLC left to join him till date.

In addition, the researcher can also argue that some church members are mostly a part of several church splits. In other words, they have sown the seeds of dissension in different congregations where they have been members. They must sometimes be cautious about accepting new members who are not vetted with their former church. Problem church members tend to recycle. At CLC, when Pastor Raymond started his Living Word Temple Church, the local Church of Christian Life Centre started decreasing in the size of its larger population gradually. The reason was that most members had left to join the newly breakaway Church. Sometimes, some of these issues can really be very disturbing and has led to decline of so many churches.

4.3 Dealing with Schism in the Church

Church splits or schisms are healed through repentance and humility coupled with teachable spirit. If there is disagreement, the best would be for both sides to repent of anything said or done in an unloving manner during the disagreement. Repentance includes seeking forgiveness from the party offended by another's behavior. In humility, each should accept the other's apology, committing to go forward in the bonds of Christian love. There might be some particular cases where leaving a group would be appropriate. For instance, if the leadership of a church abandons scriptural stands on key issues like the deity of Jesus Christ, the virgin birth, God as Creator, the inspiration and authority of Scripture, or other foundational doctrines, then it is appropriate (and perhaps obligatory) to leave that group.

As already highlighted, the causes of divisions in the church are many, but ultimately the main reason for a church split is that someone has taken his focus off from Jesus Christ and begun to use the church organization for his own ends. In the case at CLC, one sees an attempt in one way or the other for someone to get a self ends meet. The church is to be more organism (living thing) than organization. The apostle Paul uses the analogy of the body to describe the church. In 1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12, he calls the church the body of Christ. We are to be the body which does the will of the Head, Jesus Christ. If everyone in the body is focused on doing the will of God and on worshipping Jesus Christ in love and humility, then there may be disagreement, but the disagreement will be worked out in a loving and appropriate manner.

The Bible underscores the importance of “unity” and “oneness.” Unity with others is “good” and “pleasant” (Psalm 133:1). Unity is absolutely essential because the church is the “body of Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:27), and a body cannot be in disunity or disharmony with itself. If disunity occurs, it essentially ceases to be a body and becomes a disjointed group of individuals. Jesus’ plan for His church is people unified in the faith.

The secret to unity begins with how we view ourselves within the body and how we view others. The key verse that addresses this is Philippians 2:3: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” All disunity in a church can be traced back to the simple truth that too often we act selfishly and consider ourselves better than others. Paul goes on to explain further in the following verse: “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

Churches that experience disunity, schism or split are in conflict and turmoil and are generally filled with people looking to their own needs, their own desires, and their own ambitions. Such behavior is characteristic of unbelievers, not those with the mind of

Christ. Worldliness, not godliness, is the hallmark of the disunified church, as Paul reminded the Corinthians: “For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?” (1 Corinthians 3:3). In the case at CLC, one can argue that there was also disunity not only in the members but also among the leaders which consequently led to the breakaway.

But Paul tells us that we are to consider others’ needs before our own. In all modesty, humility and lowliness of mind. “...with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:2-3). A church filled with such people cannot help but have peace, unity and harmony. The truly humbled person sees his own faults in light of the perfections of Christ; he does not seek to see the faults of others, but when he does, he speaks the truth in love and desires their sanctification so they will be built up in the image of Christ. He sees his own heart and the corruption that lies hidden there, along with impure motives and evil ambitions. But he does not seek to notice the errors, defects, and follies of others. He sees the depravity of his own heart and hopes charitably in the goodness of others and believes their hearts are more pure than his.

Most importantly, as Christians, we are to see one another in the light of the cross. Fellow Christians are those for whom Christ died a horrible and painful death so that He might exchange His righteous perfection for their sin (2 Corinthians 5:21). How can we not extend to fellow members the love, compassion, and grace of our heavenly Father? How can we demean, criticize, and defame those covered with the precious blood of Christ? Were we not slaves to sin when He called us, hopelessly lost, dead in our own transgressions and sins (Ephesians 2:1)? But we are now slaves of Christ, slaves to righteousness, and as slaves of the Master, the task before us is not to quarrel and demand our needs be met but to reflect His grace and love to those who are also His by His

mercy. A church full of such people enjoying their “common salvation” will be a true, biblical church unified in, and earnestly contending for the “faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3).

4.4 How can healing occur after a church split?

Divisions that lead to church splits are a sad and all-too-common occurrence in the body of Christ. The effects of a church split, regardless of the cause, can be devastating. Church splits distress and dismay mature believers, disillusion new believers, cause havoc in the lives of pastors and their families, and bring reproach upon the name of Christ. But there is hope; churches that split can experience healing and restoration.

Churches are like hospitals, full of wounded and sick people, but in the church the sickness is sin and the wounds are those we inflict upon ourselves and one another because of sin. One sin that causes multiple problems is a lack of forgiveness. In an interview with Elder Charles Boadu, he indicated that no Christian is perfect, and no pastor or elder or deacon is perfect. When all these imperfect people get together, disagreements, hurt feelings and misunderstandings are inevitable. He disclosed that if expectations of others are too high, disappointment is inevitable and can cause further feelings of hurt and resentment.⁶⁷

In an interview with Evangelist Albert Amoh, he also argued that members’ response to one another should be to forgive one another in kindness and compassion (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13) and in Christian love, which covers a multitude of sins, followed by an increased commitment to serve one another (1 Peter 4:8-11). According to Evangelist Amoh, once we are committed to forgiving, loving and serving one another, we will see each other’s differences in a new light. But if we react to differences of

⁶⁷Interview with Elder Charles Boadu, on 12 April, 2014.

opinion by taking sides and gossiping, the split will widen, more harm will be done to the church members, and our message to the world will be further compromised.⁶⁸

In an interview with Bishop John Davies Freeman, he disclosed that a church schism or split may happen when someone seeks to manipulate people and/or events for his own ends. An example is what took place at the CLC. The situation clearly showed that there was pride in rule-keeping, and those who do not keep the same rules are ill-treated.⁶⁹ At CLC it had to do the rule of keeping church funds. Again, there was also an idea that seem to indicate that someone wanted to wrestle leadership from the elders and rallies a group of people around himself to accomplish a coup d'état.

In some churches, that witnessed, church split, some of the issues had to do with difference of opinion regarding music and worship style. Evangelist Amoh argues that sometimes, the excuses for the conflict are numerous, but they all stem from the same root cause—pride and selfishness.⁷⁰ James 4:1-3 says, “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.”

Again, in trying to bring about healing after church, the researcher is of the opinion that the church should consider that not all who sit in church week after week are truly Christians. Not all who name the name of Christ belong to Him, a truth He made clear in Matthew 7:16-23. We can identify both the true and the false by the fruits they produce. True Christians show forth the fruit of the Spirit who indwells them (Galatians 5:22-23),

⁶⁸Interview with Evangelist Albert Amoh, on 10th April, 2015.

⁶⁹Interview with Bishop John Davies Freeman, on 20th April, 2015.

⁷⁰Interview with Evangelist Albert Amoh, on 10th April, 2015.

while the tares among the wheat sow discord and dissension. We need to be on guard for those the enemy places among us and exercise both wisdom and discernment, utilizing church discipline when necessary (Matthew 18:15-20) and speaking the truth in love in all things (Matthew 10:16; Ephesians 4:15).

Ultimately, the church is only as strong as its individual members, which is why Paul admonishes the church in Rome to behave decently, “not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy” (Romans 13:13). Church members are influenced daily by an immoral culture, and one three or four a week in church is wholly inadequate to counter the culture. The church is so influenced by secular culture that we think, talk and act in its image, instead of in the image of our Head, the Lord Jesus. The world’s standard is one of self-promotion, self-esteem, and self-worship, and other people have value only insofar as they are willing to idolize the way people idolize themselves. Such an attitude always leads to “dissension and jealousy,” the inevitable results of worshipping the god of self. The cure is found in Titus 2:11-13: “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.” God’s grace, shed upon those who belong to Him through faith in Christ, enables us to deny worldly passions, put away immorality and live in godly humility toward one another: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3). This among other things if taken seriously can help a church heal its wounds after a greater split or schism which might dangerously affect the church.

4.5 How should conflict in the church be handled?

There are many areas of a church where conflict can develop. However, most of them tend to fall under one of three categories: conflict due to sin among believers, conflict with leadership, conflict between believers. Admittedly, many issues can cross over and actually involve two or more of these categories.

Believers who sins pose a conflict for the church as described in (1 Corinthians 5). The church that does not deal with sin among the members will open the door to more problems. The church is not called to be judgmental of unbelievers, but the church is expected to confront and restore believers who are unrepentant of sins such as those listed in 1 Corinthians 5:11: “. . . anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler.” Such individuals are to not be accepted by the church until they are willing to repent. Matthew 18:15-17 provides a concise procedure for the confrontation and restoration of a believer. Confrontation should be done carefully, meekly, and with the goal of restoration (Galatians 6:1). Churches that lovingly discipline sinning individuals will curtail a great deal of conflict in the church.

Listening to the other side of the schism that took place at the CLC, which is the side the calls themselves the opposition and supported the Pastor Raymond, most of them were of the view that the church the church did not exercise any restraint on the issues and suspend the Pastor Raymond indefinitely from the church. In an interview with Madam Agnes Adu Poku and Mr. Adu Poku, they were of the view that that the church could have taken time to investigate the matter well and resolve it rather to raise a hand of

suspicion.⁷¹ According to them, since the church did not provide any platform for the issues to be solved, they erred by suspending him indefinitely.

The researcher can argue that at times believers might not be content with the direction or actions of church leaders. This was the case that happened at CLC, there was also a similar case that took place in the history of the early church (Acts 6:1-7). Complaints about the lack of care of a certain group in the church were taken up with the leaders. This was remedied, and the church grew (Acts 6:7). The early church used a conflict to improve the ministry.

However, when churches do not have a clear process for dealing with such concerns, people tend to create their own platforms. Individuals may begin polling others in the church, get involved in gossip, or even develop a bloc of “concerned people.” In the case of the CLC, one sees a development of such groups when the suspension of Pastor Raymond was pronounced. The formation of such groups usually leads to division and acrimony among members and the leaders of the church.

Leadership can help avoid this by leading like selfless, loving shepherds that are examples of servants rather than ones that lord over others (1 Peter 5:1-3). Those who are frustrated should respect the leaders (Hebrews 13:7, 17), be slow to accuse them (1 Timothy 5:19), and speak the truth lovingly to them, not to others about them (Ephesians 4:15). On those occasions when it appears the leader is not responding to the concern, an individual should follow the pattern set down in Matt 18:15-17 to ensure that there is no confusion as to where each stands.

The Bible warns that people in church may have difficulties with conflict. Some conflict is due to pride and selfishness (James 4:1-10). Some conflicts come about because of

⁷¹Interview with Madam Agnes Adu Poku and Mr. Adu Poku, on 25th April, 2015.

offenses that have not been forgiven (Matthew 18:15-35). God has told us to press toward peace (Romans 12:18; Colossians 3:12-15). It is the responsibility of each believer to seek to resolve a conflict. Some basic steps toward resolution include the following:

First, develop the proper heart attitude - Meek (Galatians 6:1); Humble (James 4:10); Forgiving (Ephesians 4:31, 32); Patient (James 1:19, 20).

Second, evaluate your part in the conflict - Matthew 7:1-5 (removing the log from your own eye first is necessary before helping others).

Thirdly, going to the individual (not to others) to voice your concern - Matthew 18:15. This is best done in love (Ephesians 4:15) and not to just get something off your chest. Accusing the person tends to encourage a defensiveness. Therefore, attack the problem rather than the person. This gives the person a better opportunity to clarify the situation or to seek forgiveness for the offense.

Furthermore, If the first attempt does not accomplish the needed results, continue with another person or persons that can help with mediation (Matthew 18:16). Remember that your goal is not to win an argument; it is to win your fellow believer to reconciliation. Therefore, choose people who can help you resolve the conflict. Conflict is best handled when individuals prayerfully and humbly focus on loving others, with the intent of restoring relationships. Most issues of conflict should be manageable if the above biblical principles are followed. However, there are times when specific outside counsel may help.

4.5 Impact of church schism on church growth

Despite the fact that the church schism or conflict might be very detrimental to church growth, there is an undeniable fact that sometimes little good comes out from church splits. In one way or the other, church split also leads to church growth. A cursory look at

the background of most existing churches today in the world is as a result of schism or split that happened in the church. In Ghana for instance, the root of churches like the Church of Pentecost, Christ Apostolic Church, and the Apostolic Church of Ghana can all trace their root from Anim's Faith Tabernacle Church in the Gold Coast.

Usually, when church split takes place, there is always a pressure on both the affected churches to embark on evangelism and church planting to expand the church. Most of these activities usually lead to church growth.

For instance in the case of the CLC, series of revival programmes and crusades was organized to help revive the church again when most of its members left to join the newly church that was established by Pastor Raymond.

On the other hand, Pastor Raymond's newly established church also embarked on a campaign to help grow the church. With a minimum of about 20 people in its initial beginnings, the church can now boast of over 200 members.

4.6 Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has basically dealt with the analysis of the causes of church split and the various remedies that the church can use to solve the issue. The chapter also looked at the various implications of church on the members of the church. The chapter also argued that despite the negative effect of church splits, the church in one way or the other can also experience growth as a result of breakaways in the church. This has led to the expansion of church around the globe and in Ghana as well.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

Generally, this work has looked at the issue of schism in Charismatic churches with a special focus on the Christian Life Centre, Kumasi. (CLC).The study was purely organized under a qualitative and historical approach.

In chapter one of the work, the researcher discussed the various background issues to make the focus of the work very clear. The study again reviewed other relevant literatures that have bearing on the study. In order to situate the church under study in its proper historical context, the work also focused on the historical background of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana. The researcher further took time to discuss the various strands of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana.

In employing the historical method, the study recounted the historical background of the Christian Life Centre. The study has indicated the various epochs through which the church has developed and the issues that led to the split in the church. The study emphasized that the actual issue that led to the split of the church was purely monetary in nature. This is because it was as a result of inappropriate handling of church funds.

The study again also touched on the issues of church split and discussed how church split can be dealt with within the charismatic churches. This was done with a biblical support and opinion of leaders that were in the church.

5.2 Conclusion

Generally, there are a number of conclusions that can be drawn from the study. From the study, the researcher can conclude that when a church – God’s house – is split by

disagreement, the experience grieves God and wounds everyone in the congregation. After all, as Jesus said, a house that is divided cannot stand. In the state of a church split, evil can run free in the church, and twisting God's values. People begin to justify anger as fighting for a principle and excuse slander and gossip as searching for the truth.

Rather than criticizing people when they bother you, individuals must decide to pray for them instead. There is the need to remember that no one is perfect, that Christ loves everyone unconditionally. Pastors and church leaders should realize that mere criticism would not help people change, but prayer has the power to cause great growth and transformation. There should be a regularly intercession for others in the church.

Church members and leaders should refuse to gossip or listen to other people spread gossip. They must understand that words have incredible spiritual power; positive words can do much to heal and encourage, but negative words are potent poison that can destroy people in the church. There is the need to ask God to purify lips and actions. People should refrain from discussing other's faults and failures whenever they can. And whenever it's truly necessary to do so, people should not harbor any malice toward each other. Grace and mercy should motivate one's words and actions toward others in the church. Seek redemption, not revenge.

5.3 Recommendations

From the study, the researcher makes the following recommendations;

- There is the need for churches to always establish solid structures so that, reconciliation team could be established to discuss issues that has to do with misunderstanding in the church.
- Churches should avoid criticizing others when they are at fault but must strive to bring peace and solve issues of misunderstanding without fighting each other.

- Whenever people in church fall into sin or fail expectations, there should be the willingness to forgive them. Church leaders should not allow bitterness to fester in their heart and ask God to grant new grace.
- There is the need for recognition that, just as God has created the universe with a certain structure; He also orders human relationships so that people who hold certain positions are in authority over others. Out of love for God, church pastors and elders must submit to the authorities He has placed in their life.

The researcher also recommends that future research on church split can look at how churches split affects church growth and emotions of people in the church and the community.

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APPENDIX I

PERSONALITIES INTERVIEWED

Elder Charles Boadu, on 12 April, 2014.

Evangelist Albert Amoh, on 10th April, 2015.

Bishop John Davies Freeman, on 20th April, 2015.

Madam Agnes Adu Poku and Mr. Adu Poku, on 25th April, 2015.

APPENDIX II

Qualitative approach methodology

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS DESIGNED TO HELP THE RESEARCHER UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF SCHISM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON CHURCH GROWTH AND ALSO COME OUT WITH ANSWERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE STUDY.

PERSONAL DATA:

Name:

Age: SexMale / Female

Nationality Ethnicity... Akan/Ewe/Ga/Northerner

Marital status: Single / married / divorced / separated / widowed.

Educational background? JHS/SHS/Tertiary/Others (Specify)

Which of the religions do you belong to? Christianity/Islam/Traditionalist

1. Do you know anything about schism or church breakaway? Yes/No
2. If yes, in what way? Starting the same branch/ Starting new branch with some members/ Starting new church with new people
3. What are the main causes of schism in Pentecostal and Charismatic churches?
Doctrinal/ Leadership/Finance/Others (Specify)
4. What negative impact does church breakaway has on the society?
Disunity/Civil war/Mistrust
5. What positive impact does church split has on the society?
Salvation/Employment/Moral standard

6. How do people (Outside the church) feel about church breakaway?
Good/Indifferent/Bad
7. How do you feel about church split? Good/Indifferent/Bad
8. Do you support church breakaway? Yes/No
9. What is the main nature of schism in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches?
Church structure/Church Doctrines
10. Do you think that the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches with no formal church structure have a future? Yes/No
11. Do you have any comment on church breakaway? Yes/No. If yes, give comment
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