

**NOISE MAKING IN CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN WORSHIP: AN
EXAMINATION OF THE PRACTICE AT THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST,
AKWELEY, KASOA**

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DECLARATION

I, Michael Anyesegoa Aketador Aywekanbe, solemnly declare that this dissertation has never been submitted by me or any other person at this University or any other institution for the award of degree. This is my own work in design and execution, that I am aware of the implications of plagiarism as academic dishonesty, and that all sources of reference used have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God for His protection, unconditional love and care, to my wife Mrs. Comfort Aywekanbe and our children David, Precious and Michael (Jnr.) and to my aged mother Madam Kavolong Ayaribisa.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Pages
Title Page	i
Declaration	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Contents	vi

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	2
1.3 Research Questions	3
1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study	3
1.5 Methodology of the Study	3
1.6 Structure of the Study	4
1.7 Literature Review	5
1.7.1 The Biblical View of Worship	6
1.7.2 The Beginning of Loud Worship	8
1.7.3 The Definition of Noise and Worship	9
1.7.3.1 Noise	9
1.7.3.2 Worship	10
1.7.4 The Law and Noisemaking and its Effects	11
1.8 Conclusion	12

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST, AKWELEY, KASOA

2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 History of the Church of Pentecost	14
2.3 A Brief History of the Founder of the Church of Pentecost	15
2.4 History of the Church of Pentecost Akweley Branch	16
2.5 History of the Akweley Township	17
2.6 Conclusion	19

CHAPTER THREE: WORSHIP AND NOISE MAKING IN AKWELEY CHURCH OF PENTECOST

3.1 Introduction	21
3.2 Worship in the Akweley Church of Pentecost	21
3.3 Noise Making During Worship at Akweley Church of Pentecost	23
3.4 Views of Leaders and Members of the Church of Pentecost, Akweley on Noise Making in Worship	26
3.5 The Impact of Noisemaking in Worship at Akweley Church of Pentecost	28
3.6 Conclusion	29

CHAPTER FOUR: IMPLICATIONS AND ANALYSIS OF NOISE MAKING IN WORSHIP

4.1 Introduction	30
4.2 The Legal Implication of Noisemaking	30
4.3 Local Government Bulletin, 3 rd May, 2017	30
4.4 The Effect of Noise Making on the Neighbourhood	35
4.5 Health Implications of Noisemaking	36
4.6 The Impact of Noisemaking on Worship	37
4.7 Conclusion	40

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction	41
5.2 Summary of the Research	41
5.3 General Conclusion	42
5.4 Recommendations	42
5.4.1 The Role of the Metropolitan / Municipal / District Assemblies	43
5.4.2 The Role of the Government	43
5.4.3 The Role of Church Leaders	43
5.4.4 Punishment	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY	45
APPENDICES	48

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; make music to the LORD with the harp and the sound of singing, with trumpets and blast of the ram’s horn – shout for joy before the LORD, the King.”¹

The King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible actually states “make a joyful noise unto the LORD ...” instead of “shout for joy to the LORD ...”² as in the New International Version (NIV). This passage among other Biblical passages seems to set the stage for a new trend in contemporary Christian gatherings in modern Christian worship. The trend of making loud noise during worship in churches and Christian gatherings in modern Christianity is common. In the past noisy worship was the preserve of Charismatic Churches but the phenomenon has caught up with all churches with few exceptions. At a typical Christian gathering especially on Sundays, four main things constitute worship namely; prayers, praises, preaching and offering (or giving). Each of these items is characterized by loud noise that can be heard in the neighbourhood and from afar. With big musical instruments and Public Address Systems (P.A.S) the praises are loud enough to wake up the person who is deeply asleep. The prayer session is accompanied with tongues and clapping of hands. The prayer leader sometimes can be heard urging people to pray at the top of their voices amidst sounding of the tambourines and moving up and down in a disorderly manner by the worshippers. The offertory time is not different as the congregation dance to audible music to put in their offerings. Then the preaching time which supposes to be

¹ Psalm 98:4-6.

² Psalm 98:4-6.

a quiet time to listen to God is greeted with shouts of “Amen, preach on, I receive it” and so on. The preacher him/herself seems to enjoy the excitement as he/she will occasionally request an ‘Amen’ from the audience. Hardly will the preacher preach in low tone and be stationary. He/she moves up and down shouting to emphasize his/her sermon points. At the end of the worship the call to remain silent before the Lord is lost. We are being told in Zephaniah 1:7 to “Be silent before the sovereign LORD for the day of the LORD is near ...”³ It is therefore curious to find out the causes and effects of noise making on the worshippers themselves and their locality during worship. The effects can be positive or negative on the physical and spiritual life of the worshipper. This research therefore focuses on the relevance or otherwise of noise making in contemporary Christian worship by examining the practice at the Church of Pentecost, Akweley branch at Kasoa in the Central Region.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Noisemaking in itself has little benefits to society. Christians call the noise in worship a joyful noise according to the scriptures as quoted earlier. If it is a joyful noise what are the benefits to the direct participants and the indirect participants in the neighbourhood? On a number of occasions people had to confront Christian worshippers on account of the noise which was distractive to their sleep or focus. “The violent confrontation as a result of ban on drumming & clapping between the Ga traditionalists and born-again Christians in Accra from 1998 – 2002”⁴ are not forgotten by many. This indicates that noise making in the church is not joyful at all to many people. This study seeks to dig deeper into the reason behind the increasing

³ Zephaniah 1:7.

⁴Marleen De Witte, “Accra’s Sound and Sacred Spaces” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, Volume 32.3, (September 2008): 690-709.

noisemaking in contemporary Christian worship and the effects thereafter on the participants and the locality.

In the efforts to find solutions to the practice of noisemaking in the church, the researcher will ask the following questions that will help deal with the issues.

1.3 Research Questions

- I. What is the Biblical basis for noise making in Christian worship?
- II. What are the benefits of the trend in contemporary Christian worship?
- III. What do the laws of Ghana say concerning noise making in general?
- IV. What are the negative effects of noise making?
- V. How does noise making portray the church to the public?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aims and objectives of the study is to examine the relevance and importance or otherwise of noise making in worship at the Church of Pentecost, Akweley, Kasoa.

- I. The study looks at the positives and negatives of the phenomenon.
- II. The research makes recommendations that seek to correct any misconceptions regarding the absence or presence of noisemaking in Christian worship.

1.5 Methodology of the Study

This is a phenomenological study which in gathering data the researcher employed two main sources of getting information. First, the researcher interviewed leaders, the youth, and people in the locality and the elderly in the Church of Pentecost at Akweley. During the interviews the researcher participated in some of the worship, services of the church and made personal observations as primary source. Secondly,

the researcher searched for information from newspapers, journals, books and the internet as secondary sources. The views of health experts and local authorities were sought on the effect of the menace on human health.

1.6 Structure of the Study

The researcher has put together a five chapter work as the final product. Chapter one sets the stage as the introductory chapter and background to the entire study. This chapter also contains statement of the problem, Research Questions, Research Methodology, the Aim and Objectives of the study, structure of the study and Literature Review. Their views were reviewed and examined regarding noise making and worship especially in the church. The second chapter looks at the township of Akweley near Kasoa in the Central Region, the history of the Church of Pentecost at Akweley and the genesis of noise making in contemporary Christian worship. The third chapter focuses on the mode of worship at the Akweley Church of Pentecost. This takes into account the general perceptions and experiences of the various groupings in the church on noise making during worship. Chapter four deals with the implications of the phenomenon and makes careful analysis of the same. This chapter also weighs the positives and negatives of noise making in worship.

Chapter five ends the main work by making a summary of the work. The summary captures the main highlights of the research and then makes recommendations on the way forward. The chapter also discussed the findings of the work which serves as the basis for the recommendations. The chapter then serves as a conclusion of the main work.

1.7 Literature Review

The researcher consulted works of other scholars on the topic. There is much work on noise making in Christian worship by others which are relevant to this study. There was an examination of the biblical view on worship as well as other writers. The researcher also fished for information from the internet, newspaper articles, journals and theses. The Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAS) bye-laws of Ghana regarding noise making were considered. The Literature review which is crucial to this study helps bring out the various views on the practice of noise making in the modern church. Of course this section of the study exposes any loopholes or gaps yet to be filled on the topic.

Two words are of principal importance in the evaluation of previous research findings; namely worship and noise making. According to Jack W. Hayford “wherever ritual spiritual life was found in a congregation, their worship was serving as a means to meet human need.”⁵ Hayford believe that apart from worship which is being directed to God, it also serves to meet human need of inner or spiritual satisfaction of the worshipper. Another human need worship satisfies according to Hayford is that true worship touches the heart of unbelievers and thus convicting them of sin and draws them to God. Here, worship serves as evangelism.⁶

Again, in calling for reformation in worship, Hayford has this to say “A warmth of emotion, expressiveness or spontaneity in worship is challenged as being fanatical, superficial or insincerely casual.”⁷ He wants revolution in worship, but this kind of emotionally charged worship in the church is not actually beneficial to all. Marleen de Witte observes from a ghanaweb source that “the sound emanating from church

⁵ Jack W. Hayford, *Worship His Majesty* (Waco Texas: Word Books Publishers, 1987), 49.

⁶ Hayford, *Worship His Majesty*, 55.

⁷ Hayford, *Worship His Majesty*, 21.

buildings and meeting grounds is perceived by some as ‘excessive noise’ and a nuisance and a great worry’ for surrounding residents, especially so at night.⁸ Per this observation, it is pretty difficult to determine whether worship, the revolutionary type can serve as evangelism to draw people to God as Hayford proposes. This calls for deep thinking on the part of the worshipper as to how to be balanced in worship in order to make it acceptable to God without offending his/her locality.

1.7.1 The Biblical View of Worship

Making a case for singing in the Bible, Jack W. Hayford who in the earlier chapters of his book calls for revolution in worship has this to say in the last chapters of same book;

“I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with understanding ... in the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to you.”⁹ In his view, congregational singing must have meaning to the spirit and give understanding to the intellects.¹⁰ The full statement of I Corinthians 14:15 actually paired praying and singing together that should give meaning and understanding to both the spirit and intellects. Now, in contemporary Christian worship prayers and singing form the noisiest part to the extent that nobody understands clearly what is going on due to the excessive noise. Joseph De Buglio who is music and worship expert in an article describes the situation as;

Stage is too loud, the bass player and drummer are out of control, the vocalists can’t hear each other and so on In the end, what really mattered was with the worship experience itself. The congregation was just not singing and members could hardly remember the sermon 5 minutes after worship was over. Hearing

⁸Marleen De Witte, *Accra's Sound and Sacred Spaces*, 690-709.

⁹ 1 Cor. 14:15; Heb: 2:12.

¹⁰ Jack W. Hayford, *Worship His Majesty*, 21.

the minister in loudness was never an issue but understanding what was said-was.¹¹

Per this observation, the biblical perspective of worship comes to mind which must be that “.... True worshippers will worship the father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the father seeks.”¹² Here Jesus used the words “spirit and truth” in worship whereas Paul in I Corinthians 14:15 used similar words “spirit and understanding.” Both Jesus and Paul seem to suggest one thing: worship must make sense or have meaning to the worshipper and his/her acquaintances and more importantly to God. In his defense of Pentecostal worship which brought about the vigorous and noisy worship in Christian worship in contemporary times, Thomas F. Zimmerman traced the history of the phenomenon to the day of Pentecost. Hear him; “when the multitude gathered at the first Pentecostal outpouring, some were angered, some were in doubt, and some mocked.”¹³ It was at that point where Peter offered an explanation in terms of the prophecy of Joel:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before that great and notable days of the Lord come and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.¹⁴

In his view, some Christian worship especially the chaotic type sometimes will not make sense unless it is explained.

¹¹ Joseph De Buglio, “A True Story About a Church Drummer”, *Sound Acoustics* N3A3 (2011): 23.

¹² John 4:23.

¹³ Aspects of Pentecostal-Charismatic Origins Vinson Synan, 12.

¹⁴ Acts 2:17-21.

1.7.2 The Beginning of Loud Worship

The issue of noisy worship can be traced to the Old Testament among the young nation, Israel at the time. Before then, worship was done around altars as in the case of Abraham in Genesis 22:9. Later, when the Israelites were delivered from slavery in Egypt and after escaping through the Red Sea, Moses and his sister Miriam led the people to loud music / worship to the Lord.¹⁵ This is how J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu captures the mood in one of his rich historic books: “Thus we read in exodus that following deliverance through the Red Sea the children of Israel” “sang this song to the Lord ... The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God and I will exalt him.”¹⁶ Asamoah-Gyadu continues: “Elsewhere, the Psalmist also worships God as the source of his being: I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”¹⁷ The aggregate meaning of all these submissions is that Yahweh must be worshipped not only because he is the creator God but also because he is the source of the salvation/ liberation of his people.”¹⁸

Here, Asamoah-Gyadu is making a case for the necessity of worship which is not in doubt be it the loud or the silent type. Much later, in the New Testament era notable noisy Christian gathering that shocked and annoyed curious observers was the Pentecost event which has been discussed earlier. Peter had cause to explain that event in plain language to the spectators lest the spirit filled young believers be mistaken for drunkards.¹⁹

Pentecostal and charismatic churches who are the champions in noise making in worship seem to draw their inspiration and doctrine of vibrant worship from these

¹⁵ Exodus 15.

¹⁶ Exodus 15:2.

¹⁷ Psalm 139:14.

¹⁸ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity, Interpretation from an African Context* (Oxford: Regnum Books International), 119.

¹⁹ Acts 2:12.

biblical passages above among several others. They believe this form of worship is the spirit manifestation. Describing the Pentecostals form of worship, Asamoah-Gyadu quoted Hollenweger as having stated that:

(The) most important element of an oral worship is the active participation of every member in the congregation, even if this amounts to several thousand people dancing, singing, praying, individually and collectively, playing all kinds of instruments.... And appreciating or judging the sermon with inspiring shouts or critical remarks and questions ... The Pentecostals thus demonstrates that the alternative to a written liturgy is not chaos, but a flexible oral tradition, which allows for variations with the framework of the whole liturgical structure ...²⁰

This captures the scene of a typical Pentecostal worship service. Both Asamoah-Gyadu and Hollenweger attributed the emergence of noise making in contemporary Christian worship to the Pentecostals. Another researcher who considered the Pentecostals as the architects of exuberant worship is Marleen De Witte. She also observed that; “These (Pentecostal) churches have entered the Ghanaian scene with an overt strategy of public presence and are highly visible and above all, highly audible in the city’s public space.”²¹

1.7.3 The Definition of Noise and Worship

Since two words are the focus of this study it is important to define the two words in order to give proper direction to the study. The two main words are ‘Noise and Worship’

1.7.3.1 Noise

Marie Suzanne Thompson in a piece defining noise stated: Noise is most commonly understood to be an audible problem. It is that which is deemed to be unwanted,

²⁰ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 219.

²¹ DeWitte, *Accra’s Sound and Sacred Spaces*, 694.

unpleasant, or undesirable: It is used to refer to sound that is considered ‘bad’ for some reason.²²

This definition summed up what the word ‘noise’ means. She continued that: Noise “is associated with pollution, disorder and destruction. Noise is that which is to be excluded, abated or suppressed – it is to be kept out or driven out.”²³

Simply put, noise is a negative word just as the sound that qualifies it and it is not helpful to society. That is why Marleen’s research reveals that “The sound emanating from church buildings and meeting grounds is perceived by some as excessive noise and a nuisance and a great worry for surrounding residents especially so at night.”²⁴ In short, anything that constitutes an unwanted sound is a noise.

1.7.3.2 Worship

According to Cephas N. Omenyo,

Worship that is strictly solemn and reflective (meditative) can be rather rigid, frigid and inhibitive (repressive). Worship that is purely celebrative can become trivial and thus degenerate into mere merry-making. The word of God, which demands of us to be reverent, sober and reflective before God is the same word, which summons us to come to his presence with singing and to enter his courts with praise to make “a joyful noise to the Lord.” The two elements (the solemn and reflective on one hand, and the celebrative on the other) are complementary. The solemn and the reflective (meditative) elements help us to grasp and to revere God’s awesome presence and power. The celebrative element on the other hand, helps us to reach out and to hit the heights of joy that the victorious life in Christ offers us.²⁵

Thus, worship in the Christian context simply means to be reverent, sober and reflective before God on one hand, and/or to come before Him with singing and

²² Suzanne Thompson Marie, *Beyond Unwanted Sound; Noise Affect and Aesthetic Moralism*, (PhD Thesis: New Castle university, 2014), 21.

²³ Marie, *Beyond Unwanted Sound*, 21.

²⁴ De Witte, *Accra’s Sound and Sacred Spaces*, 694.

²⁵ Cephas Narh Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Publishing House, 2002), 212.

praises in a joyful noise. Of course there are other forms of worship in the Christian context such as obedience, serving and giving but these are more of individual practices rather than cooperate worship which is defined above.

1.7.4 The Law and Noisemaking and its Effects

Writing under the caption “We are Losing Fight Against Noise Pollution” in the Daily Graphic, Kwame Asare Boadu quoted the relevant portion of the 1992 constitution of Ghana on environmental pollution. He wrote:

The Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 36 {9}) of the 1992 constitutions states that, “The state shall take appropriate measures needed to protect and safe guard the national environment for posterity and shall seek co-operation with other states for the purpose of protecting the wider international environment for mankind”. In the National Environmental Policy (2014) document, then President John Dramani Mahama in a loaded foreword, wrote inter alia,

The National Environmental Policy reaffirms our commitment to manage the environment to sustain society at large. The policy, therefore, seeks to provide strategic direction to unite Ghanaians in working towards a society where all will have access to sufficient and wholesome food, clean air and waste, decent housing and other necessities of life that will further enable them to live in harmony with their natural surroundings.²⁶

Boadu continued;

Noise pollution is given space in the policy. One definition of noise pollution says it takes place when there is either excessive amount of noise or an unpleasant sound that causes temporary disruption in the natural balance. This applies to sounds or noise that are unnatural in either their volume or their production Experts have warned that environmental noise above accepted level can result in hearing defects and associated health implications.²⁷

²⁶ Kwame Asare Boadu, *The Daily Graphic*, Wednesday, May 31, 2017, 26.

²⁷ Boadu, *The Daily Graphic*, 26.

Per this article, the law is clear on noise pollution but the implementation is yet to be seen. It is not only in Ghana that there is a law governing environmental issues including noisemaking. In faraway India, there was a rather bizarre court case involving a church on noise making. In the Harvard International Law Journal, Samantha Knights captured the case this way. “The facts of the case are striking, triggered as it was by the rape of a 13-years-old girl whose cries for help went unheard due to loud music coming from loudspeakers used for religious performances and devotional songs. Later that day, she set herself alight and died from her injuries. An engineer filed a public interest petition calling for more rigorous enforcement of the relevant regulatory laws.”²⁸ Based on this case and another, Knights stated that; “The (India) High Court had directed the police to ensure that the church turned their music down”. ... (stating that) in a civilized society, religious activities disturbing the peace of others cannot be justified (noting that no religion prescribes or preaches that prayers must be performed through voice amplifiers or by beating drums ...”²⁹ Thus, the laws are not necessarily against noisemaking but excessive noise making in worship.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter took care of the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aim and objectives of the study, methodology of the study, and structure of the study and literature review which covered the works of some well known scholars on the topic. This led to the discovery of the biblical view on noise making in worship, the beginning of loud worship, the definition of the main words of

²⁸ Sacred “Space and the City: Religious Building and Noise Pollution” *Harvard International Law Journal*. Volume 49, May 28, (2008): 54.

²⁹ Knights, *Harvard International Law Journal*, 53.

the topic: noise and worship, and the law and noise making and the resultant effects.

All scholars seem to agree on one thing – there must be moderation in worship.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST, AKWELEY, KASOA

2.1 Introduction

In chapter one, background to the study, statement of problem, aim and objectives of the study, methodology and structure of the study and literature review which touched on the work of scholars on the topic or its related topics were considered. This included the biblical view of worship, the beginning of loud worship, the definition of noise and worship, and the law and noise making and its effects. In this chapter, the background of the Church of Pentecost, Akweley, near Kasoa is looked at. A brief history of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana and the Akweley town is considered.

2.2 History of the Church of Pentecost

The Church of Pentecost was started in the year 1953 by a splinter group from the then Apostolic Church. Pastor James Mckeown led the group to form the Gold Coast Apostolic church (now the Church of Pentecost) when he was dismissed from the Apostolic Church. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu indicated that the grounds for Mckeown's dismissal had to do with faith healing in Apostolic Church in Ghana and "matters of church government in the field where Mckeown was working and his reservations over the Apostolic Church's belief in directive prophecy."³⁰

Later, misunderstanding between Mckeown and his former church over the use of the name "Apostolic Church" forced Mckeown and his group to name their church, Church of Pentecost. James and Sophia Mckeown were missionaries sent to the Gold Coast by the United Kingdom Apostolic Church. They were to serve with the

³⁰Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 25.

Apostolic Church of the Gold Coast. E. Kingsley Larbi stated that “When Mckeown arrived in the country on 4th March 1937, he worked with Anim’s movement for two years before separating from him. Most of his early workers were men who had been with Anim.”³¹ This separation led to a long dispute between Mckeown and the Apostolic Churches resulted in the need for a new name for McKeown’s group and Asamoah-Gyadu put it this way; “After a series of intractable conflicts and court cases, leading to interventions by the Ghana government, Mckeown’s group finally adopted the name Church of Pentecost in August, 1962.”³²

2.3 A Brief History of the Founder of the Church of Pentecost

(Pastor) “James Mckeown was born on 12 September 1900, in Glenboig, a village of Lanarkshire in Scotland. His parents originated from Antrim, Northern Ireland.”³³ James stopped schooling at age eleven to help his parents on their farm. History has it that James had Pentecostal experience during childhood when his father took him to join an Elim Pentecostal Church in 1908. James himself recounted his experiences as captured by Larbi, “I had been in the Pentecostal work since a boy in Coat-Bridge in 1908. My father got into the work and I was quick to follow all the upheavals, hearing them discussed in the home and being forced to attend all the conferences in Kilsyth and many other places around Coat-Bridge. It had become part of me.”³⁴ James Mckeown thus grew up a Pentecostal and later sent to Ghana then Gold Coast by Apostolic Church, U.K. to work with Apostle Peter Anim in the Gold Coast Apostolic Church in 1937. Mckeown and Anim worked together for two years and had to part ways on doctrinal grounds. Mckeown then led a group which left Anim to follow him

³¹ E. Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 176.

³² Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 26.

³³ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 175.

³⁴ Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, 175.

to form the Apostolic Church, later renamed the Church of Pentecost. Mckeown and his group started their ministry with strong emphasis on prayer, discipline and evangelism which helped in no small measure in the growth of the Church of Pentecost.

2.4 History of the Church of Pentecost Akweley Branch

An attempt to start the Church of Pentecost at Akweley began in the early 1990s. After two unsuccessful tries the church was finally established in October 1995 with fifteen members. According to Elder Frederick Brown Hammond the group made up of fifteen members was first meeting in a small room in his house.³⁵ Eld. Hammond himself is one of this pioneering group of fifteen. He said that the group had to move out of his home due to the small size of the room which was generating too much heat as a result of the growing numbers of the group. They then moved to a certain Mr. Nketiah's house where they lasted less than two years. They relocated to Mr. Appiah's house and lasted about one and half years. Mr. Appiah evicted them from his house because of the excessive noise they made during worship especially at weekends when he (Mr. Appiah) needed quiet time to relax with his family which he left for work in Accra during working days. At this time, the group was able to acquire its own land and managed to put up a temporary structure on it. But unfortunately this plot of land was water logged and unsuitable for church building. They were unable to meet there during the rainy season. Another relocation was necessary. This time a brother of Eld. Hammond gave his plot of land close to the roadside for their temporary put up while they looked for a good place. It turned out that Eld. Hammond's brother ended up selling his parcel of land to the church with

³⁵ Interview with Eld. Frederick Brown Hammond, Church of Pentecost, Akweley on 9th March, 2018.

Eld. Hammond himself generously adding his own plot nearby as an offering to the church. The Church of Pentecost now has a huge and magnificent building on these two parcels of land from the Hammonds.

The church was started for some few members of the Church at Kasoa who were living at Akweley and could not attend church regularly at Kasoa due to the distance. The presiding elder in charge of Kasoa branch who over saw the planting of the Akweley branch in 1995 was Eld. Samuel Ayinka. He was assisted by three pioneer members namely; Eld. (then Mr.) Hammond, Mr. Samuel Donkor and Madam Grace Donkor. Eld. Emmanuel Fiakpunu took over from Eld. Ayinka about four years later. The church has since been handled by three different presiding elders before its current leadership under Eld. Dr. Joseph Somoah whose tenure saw the completion of the building project. The church building project was started by Eld. Edward O. Darko and his team of leaders with Pastor Opoku Kissi as the district pastor. That was after Pastor Raymond Hagan and Pastor W.W. Asamoah had led the church (and the district at large) at different times. The church is now headed by Eld. Dr. Joseph Somoah with Pastor Akwasi Adjei as the district pastor.³⁶

2.5 History of the Akweley Township

Akweley is a town situated along the Kasoa – Bawjiase road in the Central Region of Ghana, a distance of about five minutes drive from Kasoa township.

Politically, the town is under the Awutu-Senya East Municipal Assembly when the then Awutu Senya district was split into two; Awutu Senya West and Awutu Senya East. Perhaps the town owes its importance to the relocation of the famous Kasoa market to Akweley. Many people now refer to the market as ‘New Market’ due to its

³⁶ Interview with Eld. Frederick Brown Hammond, Church of Pentecost, Akweley on 9th March, 2018.

relocation to the new place (Akweley) about fourteen years ago from Kasoa township along the Accra – Cape Coast road.

Traditionally, Akweley area belongs to the people of Gomoa Fetteh which is a distinct territory from Awutu and Senya. It is because of this traditional difference and boundary that the chief and his elders of Akweley want the political name; Awutu Senya East Municipal Assembly changed to Gomoah Fetteh District or Municipal Assembly an issue they are currently litigating in court.

According to the account of the chief of Akweley, Gomoaba Nana Okuragya Tawiah II, some indigenes of Gomoa Fetteh settled at Akweley in the 17th Century. The place was then a forest. With time, the people began to increase in number. Chiefs who were usually fetish priests emerged at various stages of the people's history. But the traditional (chief) priest who became famous of all was Adawu who married many wives. The son of his last wife who was no doubt the beloved wife married a Ga woman named Akweley the name given to Ga female twin.

Akweley was a trader who sold charcoal by the newly constructed roadside in around 1973/4 (Acheampong's era). The place where Akweley sold her charcoal became the centre of attraction as travelers preferred to board and alight from commercial vehicles at that spot. Many traders who plied their trade between Kasoa – Bawjiase – Asamankese markets would sometimes leave their belongings with this woman. Upon their return, they would call to the driver on whose 'trotro' they were traveling to stop at Akweley so they could pick their items. As time went on, Akweley became known and famous not as a person but as a town. Before the town became known as Akweley it was known as Gomoa Nyame B[kyere. In fact the town is still known traditionally and formally as Gomoa Nyame B[kyere but the operative name known to the public

from the 1970s remains Akweley. The ‘almighty’ Akweley herself passed on to glory only four years ago.³⁷

Socially, the town can boast of two public basic schools and many private basic and pre-schools. There are two health centres namely St. Joe’s Hospital and Sanford World Clinic. There is a police station inside the market. Among all the social centres, it is the market that makes the town most popular. Thousands of people troop in from all walks of life to undertake various forms of businesses at the market on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Religiously, there are at least two mosques in the town and many churches including but not limited to the Church of Pentecost, Anglican Church, Methodist Church, Presby, Assemblies of God, the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, Roman Catholic Church, Baptist Church among a host of others. And of course there is the shrine in the chief’s palace.

Ethnically, the town is now made up of mixed tribes with Akan speaking tribes dominating followed by Gas and Ewes. Northerners form the minority tribes. There are other nationals like Nigerians, Burkinabes etc. who can be spotted in the town. There are several banks dotted all around the new market including GCB Bank, HFC Bank, Beige Capital and many Micro Finance Institutions.

2.6 Conclusion

Chapter two traced the history of the Church of Pentecost at Akweley and by extension the history of the ministry of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana. This also led to the uncovering of the origin of the people of Akweley. All the three entities have a very interesting historical background. And just as there are a mixture of ethnic

³⁷ Interview with Gomoaba Nana Okuragya Tawiah II, Chief of Akweley on 7th March, 2018.

groups in Akweley, there are many tribes that formed the entire membership of the church. The current membership strength of the Church of Pentecost at Akweley stands at three hundred adults and about one hundred and eighty children.

CHAPTER THREE

WORSHIP AND NOISE MAKING IN AKWELEY CHURCH OF PENTECOST

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter centered on the history of the church of Pentecost at Akweley, Kasoa.

Apart from that, the histories of the Akweley Township as well as the beginning of the church of Pentecost in Ghana were also traced. This chapter seeks to examine the practice of worship and noise making in the Akweley Church of Pentecost.

3.2 Worship in the Akweley Church of Pentecost

Sunday morning service is considered the main worship time for the church. Aside that, there are other worship meetings throughout the week which include the Bible study, all nights prayers and morning devotion meetings. There are occasional special worship programmes such as Easter and Christmas conventions, revivals and praise and worship nights. The weekly programmes are as follows; Monday: youth meeting, Tuesday: women ministry meeting, Wednesday: prayer meeting, Thursday: Evangelism ministry meeting, Friday: Teaching and Prayer meeting.

Apart from the main Sunday morning service none of the above mentioned worship meetings is able to draw 80-95% of membership to a single meeting. The only other exception may be the occasional special worship programmes namely Easter and Christmas conventions.

The church of Pentecost at Akweley attaches importance to the worship of God hence they devote almost every single day of the week for a sort of meeting gearing

towards worshipping God. The researcher has participated in some of the weekly programmes including the Sunday service. No weekly programme lasted more than one and half hours apart from Sunday's worship service. It is therefore prudent to focus on the Sunday morning worship if one is to get a clearer picture of worship in this church.

The outline of the Sunday worship programme is as follows:

- (a) Sunday school for about 30 minutes
- (b) Opening prayer led by one person
- (c) Praises led by the praises team
- (d) Testimony Time called by the M.C
- (e) Worship Time led by one person who reads relevant scriptures
- (f) Prophecy Time (if any)
- (g) The sermon
- (h) Tithing followed
- (i) Welcome of visitors
- (j) Special announcements
- (k) Offering time
- (l) General announcement
- (m) Closing prayer and benediction

The above outline constituted a typical Sunday worship service of the Church of Pentecost at Akweley.

The church run two services: English and Twi. The English service starts at 7:30 am-9: 30am and Twi from 9: 45am-12:30pm. The outline above is in reference to the Twi service although the English service follows a similar pattern.

3.3 Noise Making During Worship at Akweley Church of Pentecost

The researcher participated in Sunday morning worship service on 18th March, 2018 and observed the following during the services. The church runs two services; the English service which starts at 7:30-9:30am and the Twi service which starts at 9:45am-12:30pm. The English service has the minority in terms of membership. It is the Twi service that is the biggest. Therefore references here are in respect of the Twi service.

The service commenced exactly at 9:46am with the master of ceremony (M.C) urging all to come in and sit down. He continued with a worship song which participants sang along as they took their seats.

There was a singing or worship team which led the singing part of the service. The lead vocalist from the praises team then led the congregation to pray on various topics. At this time the researcher was seated among the women and one of the elders approached and confided in him to join the men as women and men are not seated in a mix in the church auditorium.

At the beginning of the praises the noise level or the tone of singing was a modest high but an elder stopped the singing and urged the congregation to appreciate what God has done for them during the week (up to Sunday) by singing loudly and vigorously. The congregation responded accordingly with such a loud singing accompanied by the blurring sounds of the musical instruments which got itching feet on the floor dancing in circles. Some were touched to put in their offering even before the offertory time.

The master of ceremony then invited those with testimony to come forward and one after the other people came forward to sing and thank God for seeing them through

one problem or the other amid loud applause from the crowd. Those who had testimonies came in front of the congregation with their respective zones. The church is divided into zones based on the geographical area where members live.

After the testimony time, a deacon was called to lead worship. He began with a series of biblical quotations on worship and emphasized on the importance of worship. This was supposed to be a time of sober reflection with worship songs but there was a respectable loudness perhaps due to the large number of participants and the use of microphones. In the middle of the worship there were prophecies from two women to the effect that God will bless His children. The two women were given the microphone to prophesy loudly to the hearing of all. This gave way for the sermon.

One of the key elders was invited to deliver the sermon for the day exactly at 11:05am. He started with a song which the seated congregation sang along and the preacher urged them to stand up and sing and dance to the glory of God. After the singing, members resumed their seats and the preacher requested a wave from them and all and sundry waved at him with a long shout of 'Amen', screaming and clapping. He continued with another song. In all he led the audience to sing at least three songs before he started advising the members to do well to bring their fellow members to church next Sunday as he believed many were absent that day. He rebuked members who say bad things about the church to desist from the act because the church especially leadership cannot satisfy everybody. So if the church could not meet certain expectations of some members, they should take it easy knowing that at the right time everybody will be served. The congregation responded to this by urging him to "say it more".

The response of the audience seemed to excite the elder as he got down from the podium urging members to clap and make joyful noise to the Lord. He used a total of 25 minutes for the singing, advising and interacting with the audience before he turned to the Bible reading from John 15:5-7. He urged the members to continue to remain in Christ and bear fruits in every sphere of life or else they will be cut off or cursed making reference to Matthew 21:15-25. He finally ended the sermon with another song and prayers at 11:50 drawing a very deafening applause from the crowd.

It was time for tithing which was accompanied with a congregational singing as members put in their tithes involving almost everybody.

Then came the time for the general offertory and it was preceded by an exhortation by an elder on the need to give generously towards a project at the district level. The church is divided into four zones and the offertory was taken by zones seated in groups to give their offerings. It was a near “commotion” as the zones tried to undo each other in act of giving especially when the amount raised by each zone was announced. Undoubtedly the zone that raised the highest amount received the loudest cheers.

Interestingly, sitting arrangement by zones for the offering time was mixed with both genders (sitting together) and this arrangement did not change until the service was over. The zonal leaders urged their members to give. The elders 12 in number who were sitting on the platform got down to join their respective zones for the giving exercise. In fact the service was a bit disorganized this time.

It was time for announcement and the secretary announced a series of upcoming events. Perhaps it was only during this time of announcement that one can sense a resemblance of silence as members paid attention to what is being announced.

The service came to an end at 12:50pm with a prayer and benediction by an elder. Participants numbered 273 adults as announced by the secretary.

The entire service was characterized by what Samuel Amaning Kwarteng (Rev) describes in his thesis as Pentecostal experience. He states “the congregation shout at the top of their voices... In addition to shouting are clapping of hands amid drumming and dancing...Instead of sticking to one place and pray the congregation would be moving about clapping their hands while praying.”³⁸

3.4 Views of Leaders and Members of the Church of Pentecost, Akweley on Noise Making in Worship

After the service the researcher engaged some of the leaders and members of the church in a series of interviews on their views on noise making during worship. In all eight persons were contacted; three elders, two elderly persons and three young persons. They were first asked if they could remember the sermon of the day. For the leaders and the youth, it was not a difficulty remembering the sermon as they wrote it down but for the elderly it was a real challenge to recollect a sermon they have heard only 20 minutes ago. One of the elderly actually struggled to remember only the advice given by the preacher during the introduction of the sermon to the effect that members should not say bad things about the church “and each other.”

Asked what they make of the noise during the worship, the leaders and youth believe noisy worship is biblical as it was noise that brought down the wall of Jericho (referring to Joshua 6:1-27). They believe that vigorous worship breaks spiritual walls and makes people forget their worries which they brought to church.

³⁸ Samuel Amaning Kwateng, *The upsurge of Contemporary Pentecostalism in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana* (Bibiiani: Bethel Congregation, 2014), 24.

The elderly were of the view that the noise during worship helps keep people awake who are fond of sleeping during church service. Either party agreed that noisy worship serves a purpose of a sort.

But can't we worship God without making loud noise? The elderly and the elders thought that should have been the real worship – the sober and reflective type but they added; that type of worship will be boring to many especially the youth. One of the elders remarked that any time the church want to control the noise level during worship the youth attendance reduces drastically. He referred to a certain time of the year when traditional rulers place a ban on drumming and noise-making. He said that during such times church attendance drop remarkably especially on the part of the youth. The youth leader who is one of the three young person's interviewed shared the same observation and told how difficult it is to keep the youth active in the church during the ban on drumming and noisemaking.

The youth leader shared the strategies he normally put in place to keep the youth in the church at such times. The strategies included going on excursion and engaging in games. He was emphatic that if the church makes a mistake going silence (worship without noise) for three months many of the youth will leave the church to join other churches. For the youth every acts of worship should be action packed or it will be considered boring.

Robert E. Webber disagrees with this kind of worship when he writes “worship in the church of the third century is best understood against the background of hostile culture” ... (At that time) Worship remained relatively simple in an intimate context. But when the churches gained their freedom aided by emperor Constantine in the early fourth century, huge buildings were donated to churches for worship”, Webber

continues; “with gifts of buildings in which to worship, the worship of the church shifted from intimacy to theater.”³⁹ Indeed many churches in contemporary times can easily be mistaken for a comedy show in a theater or at worse a political rally. The excitement resulting in shouts, screams, clapping, jumping and dancing goes beyond intimacy with God which is the whole essence of worship. Pastors are now more popular and worshipped than God a situation that is making the church lose touch of real worship.

3.5 The Impact of Noisemaking in Worship at Akweley Church of Pentecost

Physically speaking participatory and active worship has positive impact in the church. As the personalities interviewed above indicated in 4.3 this type of worship makes the church lively and attractive to the youth who formed the majority of the church. Another section of the church which is in love of this vigorous worship is the women who usually dance more in circles during praises. One of the elders who is a medical doctor made a point to the fact that an action oriented worship helps people who are stressed and depressed as it helps them release tension through their participation in the worship.

But the worship in the church room or auditorium is just one part of worship. Christian worship goes beyond the congregational worship. James Quansah writing on what it means to worship God in spirit listed seven points he considered as holistic worship. It means:

1. “Develop a great love for the Lord Jesus Christ
2. You will talk to people about Him
3. Your church attendance and devotion to the things of God will greatly improve

³⁹ Robert E. Webber, *Worship, Old and New* (Michigan, Zondervan, 1994), 95.

4. You will worship God in songs with reverence
5. Your prayers will be full of adoration and thanksgiving to God
6. You will love studying and meditating in the word. In other words, you will develop a strong desire for the Word of God.
7. You will develop hatred for sin.”⁴⁰

It is this kind of holistic worshipper that the leaders of the Church of Pentecost desires hence they devote almost the whole week (from Sunday-Friday) for meeting with the various groupings in the church in order to nurture an all-round Christian worshipper and not the church room theatrical show kind of worship.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the worship style of the church of Pentecost at Akweley. This led to soliciting views of some of the leaders and members of the church on noisemaking in worship and its impact. The immediate negative impact noticed during the interview was the inability of the elderly people to remember the word of God in less than 30 minutes after it was preached. Although the elderly persons themselves did not attribute their forgetfulness to the euphoria during worship, it can be inferred that was largely a contributory factor.

Even the young person's tried hard to remember and with the aid of the notes they took during the sermon.

⁴⁰James Quansah, *The Marks of True Christian Worshipers* (Kumasi, 2015), 12.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPLICATIONS AND ANALYSIS OF NOISE MAKING IN WORSHIP

4.1 Introduction

In chapter three, the practice of noise making in worship at Akweley Church of Pentecost was looked at. The views of some of the leaders and members of the church on the issue were also captured. This led to the entire outlook of the weekly worship programmes of the church as well as the style of the church's Sunday service. In this chapter an analysis is made on the implications of the phenomenon. Health implications, legal implication and implications on the localities will be analyzed.

4.2 The Legal Implication of Noisemaking

A brief discussion was made on what the law says regarding noisemaking in chapter two (2.5). Besides what the constitution of Ghana says regarding the issue there are bye-laws regulating noise levels at all districts, municipal and metropolitan assemblies in the country. In the Awutu Senya East Municipal Assembly (ASEMA) which covers Akweley and its environs, the bye-laws are clear on noisemaking as quoted below;

4.3 Local Government Bulletin, 3rd May, 2017

F. Awutu Senya East Municipal Assembly (Abatement of Noise) Bye-laws, 2013. In exercise of the powers conferred on Awutu Senya East Municipal by section 79 Sub-section (1) of the Local Government Act, 1993 (Act 462) these Bye-laws are hereby made.

- I. No person shall use any place for the sale of records or other recorded music unless the place has been inspected and approved by the Municipal Environmental Health Officer or an officer appointed by him for that purpose and licensed by the ASEMA.
- II. (1) An application for a license shall be made in writing to the ASEMA.
(2) A license may be issued subject to conditions as may be prescribed by ASEMA.
- III. (1) A license issued under paragraph two (2) shall be an annual license and be effective from the day on which it is issued.
(2) The license so issued shall expire on the 31st of December of the year in which is issued.
- IV. The ASEMA may withdraw a license issued under these Bye-laws where the owner of the premises.
 - (a) Makes an unauthorized alteration to any sound-proof design for listening : or
 - (b) Is convicted of any offence under these Bye-laws or any existing bye-laws still in force.
- V. No person shall play or cause to be played any recorded music in public for advertising purpose so as to cause a nuisance to the public.
- VI. (1) No proprietor or person in charge of a night club, restaurant or drinking bar or other place of refreshment or entertainment shall play music at the place so as to cause a nuisance to the public or residents in the area.
(2) Any music played in any place under sub-paragraph (1) of this paragraph shall be played in such a way that it be heard only within the confines of that place.

- VII. A person may play music at a reasonable pitch up to midnight when
- (a) wake is being kept; or
 - (b) A party is being organized.
- VIII. (1) A person conducting a religious service shall not play or cause music to be played so loudly so as to cause a nuisance to the public and residents in the area.
- (2) A person may play music in a religious service where music is to be played before 6a.m. or after 12pm shall seek permission from ASEMA in writing except during public and statutory holidays.
- (3) A person may play music in a religious institution or in an entertainment hall or make an Address through a public address system so as to be heard only within the confines of the institution or entertainment hall.
- IX. (1) A religious, commercial, educational, industrial institution or an entertainment hall within a residential area shall play or cause any noise or sound pressure within the permissible noise level (Dba) indicated below;

AMBIENT NOISE LEVEL GUIDELINES

ZONE	DESCRIPTION OF AREA OF NOISE RECEPTION	PERMISSIBLE NOISE LEVEL (Dba)	
		DAY 0600-2200	NIGHT 2200-0600
A	Residential areas with negligible or infrequent transportation	55	48
B1	Educational (school) and health (hospital,	55	50

	clinic) facilities		
B2	Areas with some commercial or light industry	60	55
C1	Areas with some light industry, places of Entertainment or public assembly, and places of worship such as churches and mosques	65	60
C2	Predominantly Commercial Areas	75	65
D	Light Industrial Areas	70	60
E	Predominantly Heavy Industrial Areas	70	70

X. A person using a power generator on a premise shall muffle the noise emanating from the engines so as to prevent it from constituting a nuisance to neighbors.

XI. (1) Any person who contravenes any provision of these bye-laws commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not less than 50 penalty Units or in default to a term of imprisonment not less than 4 months or to both.

(2) In the case of a continuing offence the offender is liable to an additional fine of GH¢100.00 in respect of each day on which the offence continues after a written warning has been issued by the Assembly.

SCHEDULE

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| I. Good Friday | V. New Year's Eve |
| II. Holy Saturday | VI. New Year's Day |
| III. Easter Eve | VII. Local Festival Day |
| IV. Christmas Eve | VIII. Islamic Holidays. ⁴¹ |

⁴¹ Local Government Bulletin, 3rd May, 2017, 1058-1059.

During an interview with the Municipal Environmental Health Officer of ASEMA Mr. Godson Mawutor Lodo, it was revealed that of all the noise pollution cases reported at the Assembly, 80-90% are against churches. Mr. Lodo however expressed regret over the Assembly's lack of noise measuring machines which can be used to check or authenticate the claims made against the churches for proper prosecution at the courts. He said that but for the lack of those machines which makes it difficult to prove a case against a noise pollution offender many church leaders will have been languishing in jail by now. It simply mean that, if a person is taken to court for noise pollution there should have been a certain device to measure the noise as evidence for which the person is brought to court. Without such evidence the court can not punish the offender, and this situation worries Mr. Lodo so mush. Mr. Lodo concluded that in this situation the Assembly together with the court often settles such cases with warnings and threats of 'fines' against the offenders.⁴²

The church's contribution to noise pollution is not peculiar to only Ghana. The Daily Graphic carried a very sad but interesting story, relevant to this study. The story captioned: Lightening Kills Rwanda Seventh-Day Adventist Members at Church, reads in part, "... The deadly church incident comes less than two weeks after the closure of more than 700 Rwandan churches for failing to comply with building regulations and for noise pollution."⁴³ This incident makes the issue of noise pollution a global one and must be addressed as such.

⁴² Interview with Mr. Godson Mawutor Lodo Awutu Senya East Municipal Assembly Environmental Health Officer on 3rd April, 2018.

⁴³ The Daily Graphic, Tuesday, March 13, 2018, 5.

4.4 The Effect of Noise Making on the Neighbourhood

The bye-laws as seen in 5.3 permits noise levels at certain times of the day in order not to disturb the neighbours who may need quiet time for themselves. But this is not the case in many areas in Ghana. In an interview with neighbours at Akweley in the locality of the Church of Pentecost many became used to the noise during worship. They said that all the churches they attend make similar noise and therefore they do not bother much about it. One family however complained of how they are unable to sleep whenever the church is holding all night service. Mr. Desmond Annor who shares a wall with the church stated that any time the church is having an all-night prayers; he and his wife will have to do an involuntary wake –keeping due to the noise from the church members. He concluded that “during such programmes the noise level becomes simply unbearable.” Asked whether he has made a formal complaint to the church, Annor answered that since the all night service comes only once in a while he did not think it is necessary to confront the church on it.

The problem of church noise making is not limited to Akweley only. In Kumasi, in the Ashanti Region, there was a case of noise making involving the House of Bethel Prayer Ministry and the Ashanti Regional minister Hon. Simon Osei Mensah. The church held a very loud all night prayer service on 24th November, 2017, which disturbed the sleep of the minister. Apparently the church is very close to the minister’s residence at Anwomaso a suburb of Kumasi. The minister complained to the head pastor about the noise level of the service and urged them to reduce it. According to Peace F.M and Joy F.M (all Accra based radio stations) news report the church regarded the minister as anti-Christ and a wizard for that matter hence he could not stand the power of their prayers for which reason he could not sleep.⁴⁴ The

⁴⁴ Peace FM 12:00pm News Broadcast on 27 November, 2017,

church then continued with even more powerful and loud prayers amid singing, drumming and dancing. At this point Hon. Mensah had no option than to resort to the law. He reported the issue to the police who acted promptly by interrupting the church service and arrested the head pastor Rev. Kwame Takyi in a dramatic fashion to the shock of the worshippers.

According to news report, the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly “commended the minister for the swift action, saying excessive noise contravenes the Criminal offenses Acts 1960. The Ashanti Regional Office of the Environment Protection Agency (E.P.A) has tasked the police to deal with individuals and churches that flout regulations on noise-making.”⁴⁵ This incident is just a tip of the iceberg of what many people are enduring in the hands of churches especially the Pentecostals and Charismatics who are in the proximity to residential areas.

4.5 Health Implications of Noisemaking

Apart from the law which seeks to regulate the noise pollution and the need for noisemakers to respect the peace or privacy of their neighbourhood, there are health implications associated with excessive noise.

A health expert, Dr. Joseph Somoah who is also the presiding elder of the Church of Pentecost at Akweley in an interview with this researcher revealed the dangers of noisemaking to human health.

He pointed out that the first thing too much noise can do to the human health is to damaging the eardrums slowly until such a time that they are permanently damaged resulting in total deafness. He advised that churches should design their buildings in

⁴⁵ Joy FM 6:00pm News Broadcast on 27th November, 2017.

such a way that the voice or noise amplifiers be placed on the inner walls of the building far above where the congregation sits. This way, the ear will avoid direct contact with the noise emanating from these devices during service. He encouraged the use of acoustics in churches.

Dr. Somoah gave an example of retired soldiers most of whom usually suffered hearing impairment at old age as a result of the sound of blazing guns and the sound of weapons like bombs. He said, one thing about the eardrum is that when noise is damaging it the victim may not notice it until the damage reaches irreversible level. Hence the need to take precaution.

Eld. Dr. Somoah also stated that loud noise worsens the plight of hypertensive patients who need much rest and sleep to control their blood pressure (B.P).

It is his candid wish that people will respect the laws on noisemaking in order to preserve a peaceful atmosphere.⁴⁶

4.6 The Impact of Noisemaking on Worship

Some people considered the church to be too noisy in modern times to the annoyance of many. The concern is that if the church is a place for people to commune with God why should it be over characterized with celebrations similar to a football game? This situation has reached an alarming level to the extent that the media with support of a section of society are now waging a campaign against it.

On 11th April 2018, another Accra based radio station Starr 103.5 F.M reported of how the minister of Environment and Technology Prof. Frimpong Boateng bemoaned the level of noise emanating from churches and mosques in recent times. According to

⁴⁶ Interview with Eld. Dr. Joseph Somoah the C.E.O. of St. Joe's Hospital at Akweley, on 18th March, 2018.

the news item Prof. Boateng specifically proposed the use of Whatsapp and Text message (social media) by Imams to call for prayers at the mosques. When called to share his view on this proposal the spokesman for the national chief Imam, Sheikh Aremeyaw Shaibu disagreed with this proposal of the use of social media to call for Islamic prayers which he says goes against the tradition of that religion. He however agrees there is the need to control the noise in the mosques and churches. An international evangelist, Rev. Dr. Lawrence Tetteh was also called into the programmes to share his views on the menace. He agreed that the noise level at church of late has become a source of worry to many including himself as a pastor. He called on the authorities to put measures in place to minimize the noise level not only in the churches and mosques but other social centers like funerals, political rallies, drinking bars among others.

During the said news programme on Starr F.M, the hosts invited listeners to vote via Whatsapp on whether it is time for the authorities to go tough on noise makers. At the end of the 20 minutes poll 90 people voted and out of that number 60 people voted yes, it is time the authorities use force to curb the canker while 30 voted otherwise.⁴⁷

Due to this trend of events it is time the leadership of the church sits up and educate Christians what it really means to worship God. For it will be wrong for the church to become a source of controversy over a trivial issue as noisemaking.

Writing on the definition of worship James F. White states that “The core of worship... is God acting to give his life to man and to bring man to partake of that life. Hence all we do as individuals or church is affected by worship. The Christian

⁴⁷ Starr 103.5 FM. News Broadcast on 11th April, 2018 at 5:00pm and Starfmonline.com.

life is a liturgical life.”⁴⁸ Defining worship as part of our lives, Kennon L. Callahan writes “Christians want to share together in worship. What we do not want is to have to put up with a gathering that is dull, trivial, irrelevant, or full of doom and gloom. Instead we are drawn to worship that is corporate and hopeful” which means that;

- I. The service is warm and winsome
- II. The music is dynamic and inspiring
- III. The service has power and movement
- IV. The service and sanctuary help the congregation reach persons in the community in mission
- V. The preaching expresses the character of the gospel and the quality of compassion.”⁴⁹

Per this definition of worship by these two seasoned authors; worship supposes to reconcile God and the worshippers as well as the neighbours or outsiders. But if worship is creating hatred for the church because of its noise level then the essence of worship is lost. For the Bible even says that our God is a God of order and not disorder, so when God’s people meet for worship there should be peace and order.⁵⁰

One wonders why a small church of about fifty or less members will want to use a voice amplified instruments for worship in a small room when the use of the natural voice can be heard by all present. It is erroneously believed that worship without heavy amplifiers and musical instruments are not a complete worship before God. We forget that the Bible says that when two or three people meet together for the purpose

⁴⁸ James F. White, *Introduction to Christian Worship*, 26.

⁴⁹ Kennon L. Callahan, *Dynamic Worship*, 4-5.

⁵⁰ 1 Cor.14:33.

of worship God is there with them.⁵¹ Again the Bible indicates that there is time to make noise and time to keep silence.⁵²

The earlier the church realizes this basic biblical truth the better for its image. The church should not be carried away by emotions and excitements on the part of the energetic youth.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter made analysis of the issues of noise making in the church. The chapter also weighed the implications of the menace on the environment.

Health implication and the position of the law on the issue were uncovered. The need not to lose sight of the purpose of true worship to emotions and the need for the church to be sensitive to the feelings of neighbours were discussed as well.

⁵¹ Matt 18:20.

⁵² Eccl.3:1.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the implications of noise-making in contemporary Christian worship. A careful analysis was made on the implications of the phenomenon for the church. It touched on the legal, health and neighbourhood or environmental implications of the issue. This chapter is the conclusion of the whole work which captures the summary of the research, makes general conclusion and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of the Research

The study made a careful examination of Noisemaking in Contemporary Christian Worship at Akweley Church of Pentecost. The study is thus made up of six chapter work with subtopics under each chapter. An introduction on the background to the study which contained statement of problem, aim and objectives of the study, significance of the study as well as the research methodology was addressed. This also took care of the structure of the study and the research questions. Chapter two considered the views of other scholars on the topic or its related topics which helped to throw more light on the study.

Other background issues also tackled included the history of the Church of Pentecost in Ghana, the history of Akweley Church of Pentecost and the history of the Akweley township. Next, the study looked into worship in the Akweley Church of Pentecost and sought the views of leadership and members on the issue under consideration. The study then made an analysis of the implications of the problem on society as

whole. The work ended with a summary of the study, general conclusion and recommendations. It must be stated that the problem of noisemaking during worship is not peculiar to Church of Pentecost only.

5.3 General Conclusion

The study has undertaken to evaluate the issue of noisemaking in contemporary Christian worship in Akweley Church of Pentecost. This has revealed that while church members enjoy the action packed worship, there are negative implications affecting a section of society and the environment as a whole. While the church has every right to make a joyful noise to the Lord (especially judging from the fact that Jesus has achieved victory for every Christian on the cross) the church should not lose sight of the damning consequences of such celebration. The church has a duty to present herself as a heavenly minded body of believers and at the same time as an institution that is relevant to the peace and development of the earth. After all the Bible which commands the Christians to make a joyful noise to the Lord, is the same Bible that entreats the church to remain silence before the Lord and worship Him in spirit. Therefore, there is the need for the church to strike a balance between being heavenly good and earthly acceptable at least on the basis of noisemaking and be mindful of the popular saying that “too much of everything is bad.”

5.4 Recommendations

With modernization in full force in this 21st century coupled with the revolution in technology which has the potential to enhance noisemaking machines, the issue of noisemaking is bound to continue even at an alarming levels. It is in this light that the

researcher made the following recommendations which if implemented will help to minimize excessive noise in the church in particular and society as a whole.

5.4.1 The Role of the Metropolitan / Municipal / District Assemblies

It seems many people do not know of the various metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies bye-laws on noisemaking. It is therefore imperative for the assemblies to collaborate with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to sensitize the public on the bye-laws. They can achieve this through advertising in the various media and organizing seminars for churches on the issue. They should also make their bye-laws on noisemaking available to all churches, event organizers and social centres like drinking bars.

5.4.2 The Role of the Government

The central government should provide noise measuring devices to the assemblies to enable them detect what is permissible noise level and what is not. This will facilitate in providing evidence in prosecuting offenders in court.

5.4.3 The Role of Church Leaders

Pastors and church leaders have a duty to educate their members on the dangers of noise pollution. They can do this by organizing seminars for the youth who are the lovers of noisemaking. The Pastors should also use the pulpit during preaching to speak against the nuisance and educate the congregation that it is not how loud we can be heard that will make us better Christians, acceptable to God.

5.4.4 Punishment

When all the above is implemented, anybody who defies or flouts the law must be punished as spelt out in the bye-laws to serve as a deterrent to others.

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APPENDIX I

RELEVANT PICTURES



The Front View of the Church Building



Leaders Worshipping God during Sunday Service



The Congregation at Worship in the Church Auditorium



Musical Instruments and the Instrumentalists



**Researcher (Ninth from left) with the Leadership of Akweley Church of
Pentecost**



Parts of Akweley Township near Church of Pentecost



St. Joe's Hospital at Akweley



Researcher (right) with the Secretary of Akweley Church of Pentecost