

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The ministry of divine healing was one of the major activities of the incarnate Jesus Christ. An intensive search of Christian bookshops shows that the issue of divine healing is among the top list of much discussed topics. It is one of the spiritual gifts that are now making waves in the Christian and secular communities¹. The issues of divine healing now receive attention not only at Bantama in Kumasi but also throughout Ghana and Africa as a whole. However, there are so many challenges or abuses of its administration. The researcher for this reason undertakes an analytic study of divine healing, its abuses and control in selected churches in Assemblies of God in Bantama district. This introductory chapter discusses the background of the study, the statement of problem, research question, the aim and the objectives of the study, methodology of the research, delimitations of the study, the literature review, and significance of the study and the organization of chapters.

1.2 Background to the Study

The phenomenon of healing and deliverance has become very common central to the religions of many churches in Ghana. According to Asamoah-Gyadu, Charismatics view divine healing as the employment of divine power and the authority in either the name or blood of Jesus Christ in pneumathological terms.² This is when the Holy Spirit intervenes thus providing release for the demon-possessed, demon oppressed,

¹ Daniel J. Lewis, *The Charismata: Spiritual Gifts* (Michigan: Diakonia Inc., 1994), 4.

² Johnson Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Development within Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Koninklike Brill NV, 2005), 2.

broken, disturbed and troubled persons so that the affected persons become restored and begin to function normally. From Charismatic Pentecostal point of view healing and deliverance is perceived as an avenue whereby certain Christian religious activities are employed with the purpose of meeting the needs of humans. According to Asamoah-Gyadu Pentecostal healing and deliverance has become popular in Africa because it takes African worldviews of mystical causality seriously. This means that Christianity promises Christians alternative search for security that drives people to courts of other religious functionaries.

However, the African nature of charismatic and Pentecostal churches as compared with the western mission churches is that the Pentecostal churches are motivated by the desire to meet physical, emotion and spiritual needs of Africans by offering solutions to life's problems and finding ways to cope with the threatening and anxieties of a hostile world.³ One of the fastest growing churches in the past three decades is the Ghanaian charismatic Pentecostal churches.⁴

Anderson attributes the rapid proliferation of churches to the church's focus on contemporary existential problems that confront Christians through their contextualization approach.⁵

Some scholars believe that the rapid growth of Charismatic and Pentecostal churches is due to the fact that these churches fashion out programmes that responds to the contextual needs of both church members and non –church members. One of the common practices that are growing fast in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches

³ Allan Anderson, *Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 199.

⁴ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 159.

⁵ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 160.

across the African continent and Ghana in particular is divine healing and deliverance. The charismatic and Pentecostal churches' practice of divine healing and deliverances extensively is one of the major contributing factors to church growth among these churches. The Charismatic and Pentecostal churches have been employing healing and deliverance as evangelistic tool for the establishment and growth of their church denominations.

The Assemblies of God denomination has its roots in the religious revival that started during the late 1800's and continued through the early 1900's. A widespread experience of spiritual manifestations such as speaking in tongues, supernatural or divine healing, which gave birth to the Pentecostal movement characterized the revival.⁶ The prominent figure in this history is Charles Parham. Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The practice of divine healing and deliverance is evident in the religious activities of Assemblies of God Churches worldwide. These religious activities include revival meetings, all – night prayer meetings, corporate prayer, Bible study, evangelism and missions, healing the sick and casting out demons. Most congregations of Assemblies of God churches set some days aside to practice healing and deliverance services.⁷

A visit to most congregations and programmes of Assemblies of God Churches reveals the extent to which the practice has become part and parcel of church's life. Indeed national, regional and district conventions hardly end without “deliverance and healing service.” Healing and deliverance characterized Evangelistic crusades, week long –revivals, fasting, prayer, and end of year prayer festivals. At the local levels,

⁶ *History of Assemblies of God_church-pdf*. Accessed October 12, 2017.[www.agghana.org]

⁷ *History of Assemblies of God_church-pdf*. Accessed October 12, 2017

congregations that combine divine healing and deliverance with other spiritual gifts seem to be growing very fast at least numerically.

It has therefore become imperative to explore the extent to which divine healing contribute to church growth in Assemblies of God Ghana with particular reference to Bantama District, in Ashanti Region.

1.3 Statement of the Problem.

The practice of divine healing and deliverance has become a very common phenomenon in Ghanaian Charismatic and Neo-Pentecostal churches in recent times with large number of people attending church services. Churches practicing deliverance and healing services seem to be growing faster than those that do not. This therefore suggests a link between the practice of divine healing and church growth. Congregations within Assemblies of God are not exception. This researcher observed that Assemblies of God churches that practice divine healing and deliverance and ministry gifts such as prophecy seem to be growing very fast numerically. However, there is no adequate research work in Ghana that establishes a link between divine healing and church growth. Throughout the history of the church there seems to be one form of healing or the other. It is undeniable fact that the process and approach of divine healing may take different forms, but one cannot deny its practice in the church today. According to Tagoe, the practice of divine healing and deliverance was a key component of the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ and it has continued to make a significant impact in contemporary Christian practices.⁸ The Lord Jesus Christ, the messiah preached repentance and practiced divine healing throughout his ministry on earth. Recently, in Ghana the practice of divine healing

⁸ Michael Tagoe, *A Hand Book for Writing Proposals* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press), 53.

and deliverance is not only attributed to Pentecostal and charismatic churches but is also fast spreading in mainline or orthodox churches such as Roman Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church, Anglican Church, Methodist Church, Evangelical Presbyterian Church and many more. A classic example is the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, a vibrant Christian movement in the Catholic Church in Ghana today.

It is against this background that this study seeks to explore the relationship between the practice of divine healing and church growth of Assemblies of God Churches, using selected congregations as case studies.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the discussion above, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is or are the effects of divine healing on church growth?
2. To what extent does the absence of divine healing affect church growth?
3. What measures can be put in place to curb the abuse of divine healing?

1.5 Research Objectives

This study is designed to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To explore the effects of divine healing on church growth.
2. To examine the extent to which the absence of divine healing affects church growth.
3. To identify measures to curb the abuse of divine healing.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The main objective of the study was to estimate the relationship between the practice of divine healing and church growth in Assemblies of God, Ghana. This is due to the perceived ever growing and wide spread phenomenon and the obvious corresponding growth in the churches that practice it. The outcome of the study will serve as reference material to other students and guide to ministers of the gospel

1.7 The Scope of the Study

There is no established records of the extent to which divine healing is being practiced by churches in Ghana. However, the practice of divine healing is common among Pentecostal and Charismatic churches in Ghana. The research has been conducted in the Assemblies of God due to the churches continuous practice of divine healing and deliverance as parts of its activities. Assemblies of God has been chosen because the researcher is a Pastor of the Church, familiar with the church's beliefs and has a wonderful interpersonal relationship with the members who are key respondents from which data has been elicited. The study has been limited to Assemblies of God Bantama district in Ashanti Region. Bantama district of Assemblies of God is one of largest districts of the church.

1.8 Research Methodology

This describes the research methods and techniques that were employed for the study. This chapter specifically consist of the population from which the sample was

selected and the sampling technique. It describes the research instrument used, data collection procedure and the method of data analysis.

1.8.1 Research Design

Research design is a blue print that specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed. According to Gay, a research design indicates that basic structure of a study, the nature of the hypothesis and variables involved in the study.⁹ A survey design was employed for this study. This involves collecting data on the effects of divine healing on churches.

Amedahe maintains that in descriptive research, accurate description of activities, objects, processes and persons is the objective.¹⁰ Thus descriptive research is concerned with the conditions or relationships that exist, such as determining the nature of the prevailing conditions, practices and attitude, opinions that are held, and trends that are developed.

1.8.2 Population of the Study

Population refers to all the members of the target of the study as defined by the aims and objectives of the study.¹¹ The population of this study was churches in Kumasi metropolis with the target population being Assemblies of God Churches at Bantama

⁹ L.R. Gay, P..L. Diehl, *Research Methods for Business and Management* (New York, MacMillan Publisher,1992), 45.

¹⁰ F.K. Amedahe, ‘ *Fundamentals of Educational Research Methods*’ (Cape Coast : University of Cape Coast, 2000), 42.

¹¹ O.C Nwana, ‘ *Introduction to Educational Research: (Ibadan, Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books, 1992), 69.*

District. In all, there are twenty-two (22) Assemblies of God churches in Bantama district, and these constitute the target population of the study.

1.8.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

According to Adams sample is “an aggregate of elements or units that is studied in order to make reference to the whole by examining only a part.”¹² The sample of this study was made up of one hundred (100) Assemblies of God members from Bantama District. The convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample. It involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population, which is close to hand. Thus is readily available and convenient. It is also known as accidental or opportunity sampling. It involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing the process until the required sample size has been obtained. The respondents were chosen from the members who have been in the church for about two to three years. These include both adults and youth.

1.8.4 Research Instrument

Research instruments are “a range of approaches used in research to gather data which are to be used as basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction.”¹³ Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources.

¹² Adams, *Fundamentals Research Statistics for the Behavioural Science, 2nd Edition*, 84.

¹³ Cohen, *Statistics Power and Analysis for the Behaviour Sciences, 2nd Edition*, 51.

1.8.4.1 Primary source

The researcher used questionnaires for the study. Questionnaires are define as a set of questions usually in the form of a printed leaflet, for distribution to a number of people, as a means of collecting information or surveying opinions to which the respondent is required to answer by ticking or writing in his or her responses.¹⁴ Questionnaires are quite an effective instrument for collecting data from literate and it can be used to collect data from different people at the same time. In all one hundred (100) questionnaires were prepared and administered to respondents. The questionnaires covered the background characteristics of the respondents such as age, level of education and marital status. The other variables were the impact of divine healing on churches, effects of its abuse and measures to curb it.

1.8.4.2 Secondary Sources

The researcher consented a secondary source of information from thesis, books, reports, journals and internet. These sources were reviewed and duly cites in the references and footnotes.

1.8.5 Analysis of Data

Data obtained from the questionnaires would be coded for the purpose of data analysis. It would The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) would be used to analyze the and the results presented in tables.

¹⁴ Martin Manser and Megan Thomson, *Chambers Combined Dictionary Thesaurus* (England: Chambers Harraps Publishers Ltd, 1997), 1013.

1.9 Delimitations and Limitation of the study

The researcher was restricted by time from extending the research to a large number of churches in other districts in Ashanti Region. Hence, he focused on Assemblies of God churches in Bantama District for the study.

Moreover, some pastors refused to answer the questionnaires and even instructed their church members not to do it. It was quite unfortunate that some pastors took this stand. These hindered smooth administration of the questionnaires. Furthermore, some pastors and churches failed to return the questionnaires while others failed to respond to some of the questionnaires.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The study comprises five chapters: Chapter one consist of the introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and the scope of the study, followed by the significance of the study, delimitation of the study, organization of the study, literature review and conclusion. Chapter two, on the other hand presents a review of relevant and related literature on the effects of divine healing on church growth. Chapter three, presents the research methodology. This chapter also indicates the sources of data and the empirical design such as the model specification. Chapter four presents the results of the study, analysis and discussion of findings. The concluding chapter of the study is chapter five. It contains the main findings of the study and recommendations

1.11 Literature Review

Since knowledge accumulates and people learn and build on what others have done, the researcher has done some literature review on this subject. First, the researcher tried to establish a familiarity with a body of knowledge and establish its credibility. Secondly, to show the path of prior researches, and how the current research links to it. Thirdly, to integrate and summarize what is already known in the area, and to learn from others and stimulate new ideas.

McGavran affirms that reviewing church growth around the world he had seen that it frequently correlates with great healing campaigns.¹⁵ Continually, God is using this means of divine healing to create avenues and appealing to many hearts for the expansion of the church. Therefore, considering its effectiveness in promoting growth in the church, the church's refusal to operate in this direction limits the ultimate goal of God for the church. For the scripture says in Mark 3:7, that, almost everywhere Jesus went he healed the sick and as a result, he had a following, small and big alike. Therefore, it becomes strange when a churches that want to grow are refusing to exercise the gift of divine healing which is one of the important means to promote growth in the churches.

Dun Dunkerley and other authors believe that "healing is in the atonement."¹⁶ If Jesus Christ has provided for the believers healing, then it is a redemptive right, which believers may humbly and boldly claim by walking obediently with the Lord.¹⁷

¹⁵ Donald, McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand rapids, MI: William Eerdman Publishing Company, 1990), 144.

¹⁶ Dun Dunkerley, *Healing Evangelism: strengthening your witnessing with effective prayer for the sick* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1997), 58-59.

¹⁷ Baxter J. Sidlow, *Divine Healing of the Body* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing house, 1979), 127.

Moreover, it is God's will that all will be healed, yet the healing of a person whether instantly or later, or not at all, lies in the will of God. For God does his things in his time and to the glory of his name. This does not mean that believers should not pray to God for divine healing, neither to do persistent prayer for healing. According to Gary Wiens, "there has never been a claim made by any other individual, group, or religion in history that they healed all sickness, disease, or infirmity."¹⁸ In the Gospels there are many scriptures that state that Jesus healed all [see Multitude Healing List in the appendix]. However, in the Gospels we find approximately 30-40 individual healing events, depending on how one classify the event. Wien further states that, each healing event is significant because it was signaled out by the Holy Spirit to be recorded. Out of all the healings that Jesus did in the four Gospels, these individual cases were chosen to represent the basic healing concepts of the New Testament. Each particular healing event demonstrates at least one important concept about healing.¹⁹ Sometimes Jesus drew attention to the important concept such as in [Mark 2:9-10, Mark 5:30, Luke 13:15-16, Matthew 15:26, Mark 5:36, Mark 10:52]. Other times the concept is demonstrated by Jesus, then explained [Matthew 17:19]. Many believers think of healing as a "fringe benefit". They do not realize that healing is part of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Having healing in atonement believers must understand the part God's will plays in the believer's healing.

J.W. Jepson states that divine healing is a term that defines itself. A supernatural act of the loving personal, self-revealing God that restores a person to health and

¹⁸ Gary Wiens, *The Healing Ministry Of Jesus*, International House of Prayer Northwest. Accessed October 12, 2017, www.ihopnw.org.

¹⁹ Gary Wiens, *The Healing Ministry Of Jesus*, Accessed October 12, 2017, www.ihopnw.org.

wholeness. In some cases it is instantaneous, in others it is an accelerated process.²⁰

The author agrees with the writer for his definition of divine healing. First and foremost, it is a supernatural act. Secondly, it is God revealing His personal love to mankind. Thirdly, it portrays God's plan and purpose for mankind, which is to live in good health and wholeness of mind, soul and body. However, whether the healing process is slow or fast it still takes its source from God.

According to Ralph D. Winter, church growth is defined as follows:

Organic growth means the various structural and qualitative changes reflected in the internal growth of a congregation apart from the actual addition of new members. Expansion growth means the adding of new members to a congregation. Extension growth means the planting of new congregations. Bridge growth means a special case of extension growth, which was the classical Pauline task whereby a church was for the first time born within a cultural tradition that had no indigenous church at all. The opening of the door for the gospel into a new culture where there is not yet any indigenous church.²¹

For one to say that a church has grown or is growing, the various structural and qualitative changes should reflect in the internal growth of the congregation apart from the actual addition of the new members who are genuine converts of Christ. More so, there should be planting of new churches both in reached and unreached areas. This understanding of church growth must be generally accepted, and practiced by the Pentecostal believers.

According to McCrossan, under divine healing and medical science, the sick needs a physician (Luke 5:31) and the physician needs God. Rare is the doctor who practiced medicine for a length of time who does not have in his or her records cases of healing and recovery that could not be explained medically. A serious study of these cases should demonstrate a significant coefficient to correlation between prayer and

²⁰ J.W. Jepson, *What you should Know about Divine healing* (Dallas, OR: Thomas BI Nelson Inc., 1990), 7.

²¹Ralph D. Winter, *Mission Frontier- A Fresh Perspective on Mobilizing the Church*. Accessed on March 15, 2016, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/1990/0610/jo902.htm>.

dramatic and or unexplainable recovery.²² Considering the assertion made by the author it has already been deduced that both the doctor as well as divine healing have their sources from God. He therefore through His sovereignty can choose to make someone who is on admission at a hospital under the supervision of a medical doctor receive his healing without orthodox medication. Nevertheless, an atheist doctor who does not believe in the existence of God can deny this assertion. Therefore, this dissertation will investigate further into divine healing and medical science.

David E. Carr asserts that today, many people are asking the question: “What do we need to do in order to see the Holy Spirit visit our local church in power?” Scarcely a believer anywhere who does not want to see a greater manifestation of God’s power, to see people healed, delivered from the oppression and suppression of the devil, miraculously swept into the kingdom and to see the church functioning as it should. Christians are now and then interested and talking about past revivals. The researcher assents to the author about people having constant interest, talking about the experiences of the Holy Spirit in their revival services. They even go further to say that, the revivals have become too mechanical. The researcher will investigate what the spark was that generated the revivals, and what characterized them? Finally, the researcher will come out with suggestions that will help bring back revival.

Craig Ott and Gene Wilson in their book *Global Church Planting*, affirms that there are varieties of spiritual gifts excluding divine healing that are essential in church planting.²³ However, the researcher disagrees with the authors as they mentioned some of these spiritual gifts that are essential in church planting but did not mention

²² T.J. McCrossan, *Bodily Healing and the Atonement* (Tulsa, OK: Rhema Bible Church, 1938), 30.

²³ Craig Ott and Gene Wilson, *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and best practices for multiplication* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2011), 310.

divine healing. However, their focus was not on church growth rather on church planting. Nevertheless, one of the spiritual gifts that pulls crowds to crusade grounds, to have them listen to the word of God is divine healing. If by God's grace someone they know in the community to be sick receives instant healing on the first day, on the second day of the crusade the grounds attracts many people to hear the gospel. For Jesus has promised believers that, there will be the manifestation of healings when they go and preach the gospel, (Mark 16:16-20). Therefore, the researcher will enquire into how effective divine healing can positively affect church planting.

According to Longman III, a German theologian Adolfo Harnack once stated "from the beginning Christianity was and is 'a religion for the sick'."²⁴ In as much as the researcher subscribes to this statement from Adolf, by declaring his thought as he explains his assertion, he did not explain what he meant by 'the sick' and which types of the sicknesses. The researcher will investigate into 'the sick' and type of sickness the author asserted.

Peter Wagner underscores that, the dynamic of spiritual gifts is one of the most powerful resources provided by God for the growth and health of His church. Among these gifts of the spirit is the gift of healing.²⁵ The research will delve into why the abuses of this gift by some of the churches and find measures that will help curtail these abuses.

Norman L. Geisler stresses that some of the gift of the spirit still exist, while others have passed away. Those that have passed away are often called "sign" gifts, since

²⁴ Tremper Longman III & Co., *The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books 2013), 758.

²⁵ C. Peter Wagner, *Effective Body Building: Biblical Steps to Spiritual Growth* (San Bernardino: Here is Life Publishers, Inc., 1967), 107.

they were supernatural; such were the “signs of an apostle” (2 Cor. 12:12, NKJV). The sign gifts are such as, miracles, healing and prophecy. He continues to say that gifts of healing that given to the early New Testament church have subsequently ceased to exist. They gave the reason that such gifts were needed only to establish the church, not to continue it, hence once they have served their purpose as functional gifts there is no reason for them to operate in these last times.²⁶ The researcher sides with Geisler on the basis that the gifts of healings are supernatural and given during the time of the apostles. Nevertheless, he differs on the opinion that it was a gift meant for the apostles in the establishment of the early church. Even many other writers including Donald McGavran say great healings are currently taking place resulting in church growth.²⁷ Moreover, according to James 5:14, 15, which states, “Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.”(NIV). In addition, this text tells the leadership of the church to considered healing and intercession as part of their ministry

1.12 Conclusion

Several critics have treated this topic under discussion under different views due to its implications on the individual the church and society as a whole. It is then imperative to investigate their input in order to ascertain the extent to which they have educated

²⁶ Normah L. Geisher, *Systematic Theology in One Volume* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House, 2011), 1181.

²⁷ McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 144.

us on the topic under discussion, which has attracted the consideration of the cross-section of the Ghanaian public. Amid other things that were discussed in this introductory chapter included the background of the study, the statement of the problem, research question, objective of the study, significance of the study, methodology of the research, delimitations of the study, as well as literature review. The next chapter discusses the various definitions, literature of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

DIVINE HEALING AND CHURCH GROWTH

2.1 Introduction

According to Donald A. McGravan, he said, “As I reviewed church growth around the world I have seen that it frequently correlates with great healing campaigns.”²⁸ This chapter dwells on divine healing and church growth. It has been divided into two main parts, the first section discusses the definition of concepts and the second part presents contemporary and biblical effects of divine healing on church growth.

2.2 Definition of Concepts

To ensure better understanding and clarity of this study of work the following concepts and terms were given the following working explanations and definitions.

Church Growth.

According to Gbordzo, church growth refers to the “bringing of people into a personal relationship and fellowship with Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit and into responsible church membership. Such a membership of a local congregation will increase in faith, holiness and other spiritual and material qualities while at the same time increasing in number and also opening and multiplying other branches.”²⁹

²⁸ Donald McGravan, *Understanding Church Growth*, 144.

²⁹ E.K. Gbordzo, *Prayer and Church Growth: A Practical Model*, (Accra: GEC Press, 2010), 63.

2.2.1 Four Views of Divine Healing

Popular thinking about divine healing falls into four general categories. At one end are those who reject divine healing altogether, either because they do not believe that God even exists as a personal being or because they believe that God acts exclusively through natural laws and processes. The second position is held by those who believe that God can heal and sometimes, does, but it is unusual for Him to do so. They believe that supernatural divine healing is the exception, not the rule. These believers pray that God will heal the sick “if it is His will”, but who in reality expect God to give the sick persons the grace to go through their suffering in such a way that will strengthen their Christian character and glorify God. Theirs is a genuine though passive faith. A third position is held by those who believe that it is God’s will to heal, and they pray and believe for the healing of the sick on that promise. They believe that divine healing is the rule, not the exception. They pray and believe for healing until God either heals or in His loving and wise sovereignty does otherwise. This is active faith. A fourth position is also held by those who believe that it is always God’s will to heal. No exceptions. They take an absolute position when they pray for the healing of the sick. When the sick are not healed, either their faith is devastated or they blame themselves and others, or others for what they perceive to be personal spiritual failure.³⁰

The third position is the one taken here as the most Biblical, reasonable, and realistic. This one will be under discussion.

As defined by Asamoah–Gyadu, healing and deliverance as the deployment of divine resources, that is power and authority in the name or blood of Jesus, perceived in

³⁰ Jenson, *What you Should Know About Divine Healing*, 13.

pneumatological terms as the intervention of the Holy Spirit, to provide release for demon–possessed, demon–oppressed, broken hearted, disturbed and troubled persons, in order that victims may be restored to proper functioning order, that is to health and wholeness; and being thus freed from demonic influence and curses, so they may enjoy God’s fullness of life understood to be available in Christ.³¹ In practical sense, the Charismatic and neo-Pentecostal Churches consider the two concepts as inseparable.

Charismatic and Neo-Pentecostal Churches

It is undeniable fact that many scholars have assigned several definitions to Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Thus while some scholars define “Charismatic” and “Pentecostal” variously, others define the two terms collectively. However, these definitions are mainly based on certain features distinguishing them as distinctive churches among the cluster of Christian religious organizations.³² Johnson and Mandryk assert “ ‘Charismatics are those who testify to a renewing experience of the Holy Spirit and present exercise of the gifts of the holy spirit’ whereas they defined Pentecostals as ‘those affiliated to Pentecostal denominations committed to a Pentecostal Theology usually including post-conversion experience of a baptism of the spirit.’”³³

³¹ Asamoah –Gyadu *African Charismatics*, 186.

³² Asamoah –Gyadu, *African Charismatic*, 189.

³³ Johnson Mandryk P., *Operation World: 1st Century Edition*, Amazon.com product. (accessed 12/3/2017), 154.

Healing and Deliverance

Asamoah-Gyadu defined charismatic Pentecostals as, “Christian groups which emphasize salvation in Christ as transformative experience wrought by the Holy Spirit and which pneumatic phenomenon including ‘speaking in tongues,’ prophecies, visions, healing and miracles in general perceived to be standing in continuity with the experience of the early church and found especially in the Acts of the apostles are sought, accepted, valued and consciously encouraged among members as signifying the presence of God and experience of his spirit.”³⁴

According to Anderson, the term “Pentecostal” is appropriate for describing globally all churches and movements that emphasize the working of the gifts of the spirit –both on the phenomenological and theological grounds although not without qualification.³⁵ He further asserts that regardless of their inclusive approach, both Pentecostal and charismatic churches believe that they are Christian denominations that affirm the phenomenon of the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and its subsequent transformative effects on the believers.³⁶ Again, the Charismatic churches are also known or referred to as neo-Pentecostals (new Pentecostals) in the sense that they emphasize the working of the gifts of the Holy Spirit both on the Phenomenological and theological grounds, although not without qualification as the Pentecostal.³⁷

It is worthy to note that, in Ghana the term ‘Charismatic movement’ or Charismatic Renewal is used to define the charismatic renewal movement that emerged in the

³⁴ Asamoah –Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 187.

³⁵ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 194.

³⁶ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 198.

³⁷ Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism*, 205.

several mainline churches³⁸ He contends that these were initially non-denominational fellowships which later grew to become distinct independent denominations with their leaders assuming titles. The Charismatic churches are noted for expressing of the Pentecostal types of Christianity, which sprung up in the Ghanaian Christian religious stage during the 1970s.

Indeed these churches were seen to be on the periphery of Christianity in the 1980s but currently they are gradually moving to the centre.³⁹ The link between ‘Pentecostal’ and ‘Charismatic’ is the common belief in the working of the Holy Spirit. As a result, churches or all Christian religious denominations that express the belief in the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit in either thought or practice are known as ‘Charismatic Pentecostal’ Churches, or movements.⁴⁰

2.2.2 Divine Healing and Medical Science

It is important to understand that no conflict exists between divine healing and medical science. The two are not opposing. They just operate with different dynamics. Some see a conflict between divine healing and medical science in the Bible where it records that late in his reign King Asa “sought not the lord, but to the physicians” (2 Chron. 16:12, NIV). Asa’s error was not that he sought the help of the physicians, but the fact that he did not seek the Lord. King Asa rejected God’s intervention because his heart had turned away from God who is the ultimate healer of

³⁸ Cephas N. Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum Publishing House, 2006), 109.

³⁹ Paul Gifford, *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing Africa Economy* (London: Hurst and Company Ltd, 2004), 23.

⁴⁰ Asamoah –Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 2.

diseases (2 Kings 20:5; Ps. 103:3).⁴¹ Therefore, this example would not apply to people who seek proper medical care, unless the same refuse to believe God and seek His intervention. Some see in Asa's actions an embracing of some of the superstitious and perhaps even occult practices of the "physicians" of his day. Whatever the case, it has not applicability to modern medical science.

In the ultimate sense, whether natural or supernatural, all healing is from God. The Creator built in to the biological organism the ability to heal itself. It has been said that doctors perform procedures, but God provides the healing both naturally and supernaturally.

Researchers develop pharmaceuticals yet, physicians prescribe them. The industry develops diagnostic and surgical equipment; technicians and surgeons learn how to use them. The ability of modern medical science and technology to make such amazing progress is a clear demonstration of the creative intelligence that God Almighty conferred on human beings, when He created us in His image and after His likeness (Gen. 1:26).

The human beings thus created and endowed certainly ought to acknowledge their Creator and honour Him as the source of their own intelligence. To fail to do so is a most unreasonable and inexcusable violation of that God-given intelligence. In the most productive arrangements, God and human beings work together. In healing, this synergism of supernatural and natural, prayer and practice, faith and medicine, spirit and body, best serves the whole person.

⁴¹ *The NIV study Bible: New International Version* (General Editor, Kenneth Baker, Grand Rapids; MI: Zondervan, 1994), 650.

The sick needs a physician (Luke 5:31), and the physician needs God. Rare is the doctor who has practiced medicine for a length of time who does not have in his or her record cases of healing and recovery that could not be explained medically. In addition, it is not coincidental that the recurring constant in these cases is that the patients were the subjects of earnest, believing prayer. A serious study of these cases should demonstrate a significant coefficient of correlation between prayer and dramatic or unexplainable recovery. “Spontaneous remission” or “cause of recovery unknown” in the medical records is oblique statements that mean nothing and do not address the issue properly.⁴²

2.3 The Concept of Ill –Health

It is an undeniable fact that health is an important aspect of the human race. Indeed individuals, corporations and nations spend billions of dollars maintaining a healthy style. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.⁴³ The biomedical healing, which is usually termed as curing or treatment, depends heavily on scientific method of investigation as opposed to the traditional method of healing. A short discussion on biomedical method of treatment of ill health is as follows.

⁴²McCrossan, *Bodily Healing and the Atonement*, 30.

⁴³*World Health Organization, definition of Health*. Accessed on January 2, 2017, [http://apps.who.in/about_who/en/definition.htm/]

2.3.1 The Scientific Viewpoint on ill –Health.

There are several philosophical viewpoints of scientifically explaining health and healing. One of the philosophical viewpoints of explaining health and healing is reductionism. This philosophical position holds that sophisticated phenomena are derived from a single fundamental principle. This is based on the biological processes and the explanation by the fundamental laws of chemistry and physics.⁴⁴ Thus, the scientific method of reductionism in medicine has been broken-down to be known as ‘bio reductionism’.⁴⁵ Fundamentally, the bio reductionism points out that unless there have been injuries caused by an external conditions, the cause of a diseased can be reduced to a ‘specific micro-organism.’⁴⁶ The reductionist explains the concept of health and diseases in the scientific context. Thus from biomedical perspective, health is a theoretical concept that is understood to be the absence of diseases.

According to Boorse, the chief components of health are biological and statistical normality, thus the ability to perform physiological functions, which are typical of humans.⁴⁷ He further argued that health is understood to be ‘functional normality. Hence, health is the normal functioning. An organism is healthy at any moment as it is not disease.’⁴⁸ Diseases are perceived as deviations from the norm of health – they are internal states, which depress functional ability. Therefore healing is limited to the kinds of diseases that are identified through scientific investigations. The

⁴⁴ G. Engel, ‘The Need for a New Medical Model: A Challenge for Biomedicine’ in A. Caplan et al (eds), *Concepts of Health and Diseases* (Town Unknown: Addison Wesley Co., 1981), 589.

⁴⁵ Roland S. Laura and S.Heaney, *Philosophical Foundations of Health Education* (London: Routledge, 1990), 6

⁴⁶ Laura and Heaney, *Philosophical Foundations*, 6.

⁴⁷ Christopher Boorse, *Health as a Theological Concept*, *Philosophy of Science*, Wildemuth, Baraba M. ‘Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research, *Journal of Marriage and the Family* vol. 63, (1995), 44.

⁴⁸ Boorse, ‘*Health as a Theological Concept*,’ 554.

dependence on scientific causes of ill health therefore narrows scientific system of healing to a measure that aims at restoring only scientifically proven causes of diseases or ill –health. The scientific method of restoring ill-health involves scientific diagnoses of diseases, causes of sickness, dispensation of biomedicine proven to be efficacious in curing the sickness and other forms of treatment such as taking rest, doing exercise and regulation of diet.⁴⁹

2.3.2 Ill – Health, African Indigenous Perspective

According to Dovlo, despite the fact that there are modern medical facilities in the form of hospitals and clinics all over the world, there is recourse to religion for the purpose of the sustenance and restoration of health.⁵⁰ He maintained that the African concept of health and well –being is a holistic one and for the African, health is wealth. Awoladu et al, contend that societies whose ideal and functions are not known should be encouraged and every religious society should exist only for the well-being of the community and its members and not for the disruption of people’s well –being. Thus, religious bodies should promote and maintain a healthy life style.

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According to Amoah, the African concept of health comprises everything that makes life worth living. These consist of the physical and metaphysical or spiritual and material well – being of the people. He further asserts that the well-being of people is

⁴⁹ Boorse, ‘ *Health as a Theological Concept*, 452.

⁵⁰ Elom Dovlo, *Healing and Religious Pluralism in Ghana*,’ (Draft Paper Presented at Graduate Seminar, University of Stockholm, September, 2006), 1.

⁵¹ Omosade J. Awoladu & Adelumo P. Dopamu, *West African Traditional Religion* (Ibadan: Onibonoje Press 7 Books Limited, 1979), 239.

made up of the being at peace and harmony within self, with the spirits world and the community at large.⁵² In the African context, health is referred to as the total well – being of the individual, which involves material resources that have both external and internal dimensions. The external dimension is made up of material blessings while the internal has to do with the psychological and spiritual aspects of life⁵³.

Appiah –Kubi revealed that ill health is a state of disharmony in the whole body and even in the whole society. This definition echoes the definition of a Nigerian scholar, Idemudia when he opines that the common element in African belief system is simply physical and mental illness.

This results from the distortions or disturbance in the harmony between an individual and cosmos, which may mean one’s family, society, peers, ancestors or a deity.⁵⁴ Thus, the concept of ill health consists of two key factors: the nature of humans and the factors that account for ill health.

Traditionally, Africans believe that the human being is made up of two elements, which the Akans present as body and soul but the soul is tripartite in nature and is presented as *Mogya* (blood), *Okra* (soul) and *Sunsum* (spirit).⁵⁵

According to Larbi, the human being in traditional Akan concept is made up of body and soul and that, the soul is tripartite in nature consisting of the *Mogya* (blood of the

⁵²Elizabeth Amoah, *African Traditional Religion and the Concept of Poverty in Peter J. Paris,(ed), Religion and Poverty: Pan –African Perspective* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 112 -113.

⁵³Amoah, *African Traditional Religion and the Concept of Poverty in Peter J. Paris,(ed), Religion and Poverty: Pan –African Perspectiv*,116.

⁵⁴ Amoah, *African Traditional Religion and concept of Poverty*, 121.

⁵⁵ Kofi Appiah –Kubi, *Man Curses, God Heals: Religion and Medical Practice among the Akans of Ghana* (New York: Friendship Press, 1981), 72.

mother), kra (life–soul), and Sunsum (personality soul).⁵⁶ He further argued that any disharmony between the two leads to sickness or ill–health. This reveals that ill–health from the Akan traditional perspective has a spiritual dimension of causation and falls in line with what Appiah observed that there are two major sources of ill–health which are described as the natural and preternatural.⁵⁷ His views confirm the assertions by Opoku, who argues, “It is generally held in west Africa that a man is a compound and material substances. In other words, a man has a body, which is tangible and spirit, which is intangible. The body is the part, which perishes when a man dies, but the spirit survives, and links him with the creator.”⁵⁸

These two parts may be further divided into a complexity of material and immaterial substances by different West African societies; but, in spite of this, there is a fundamental assumption among all of them concerning the unity of man’s personality. The idea that there must be complete harmony between the body and the spirit is basic to West African thought; for it is believed that either part, when damaged, will have effect on the other. In case of illness, for example, attention is not paid exclusively to the physiological aspect but to the spiritual causes as well, for good health and well–being can only be attained when both body and spirit are taken care of.⁵⁹ In addition, Appiah–Kubi asserts that, there is multi-dimensional understanding of the causes of

⁵⁶ Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism; the Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal and Charismatic Studies, 2001), 5.

⁵⁷ Appiah –Kubi, *Man Cures, God Heals*, 2.

⁵⁸ K. Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion* (Accra: FEP International Private Limited, 1978), 91.

⁵⁹ Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, 91.

diseases, which explains why the Akan traditional society of Ghana adopts multi-dimensional approaches to healing.⁶⁰

According to Amegashie, in whatever form that an ill-health assumes, the cause can be classified into three main categories among the Ewe society in Ghana. He further argued that the Anlo Ewe of Ghana identifies evil spirits, expressions of the anger of the gods and degenerated social relations as some of the causes of ill health in the African traditional societies.⁶¹ Africans generally believe that good morals enhance fellowship with the Supreme Being, the gods, ancestors and foster good health. Bad morals on the other hand are regarded as sins and separate the community from the Supreme Being resulting in disruption in well-being of both the individual and the community in which he or she lives. Indeed all these perspectives boil down to one strongly held view in Africa that science alone cannot explain the causes of diseases. This implies that any attempt to find treatment or remedy to ill health in the form of healing take a multi-dimensional and holistic approach to healing a process that scholars in recent times advocate⁶².

Africans seek understanding into both the known and the unknown from the Supernatural due to inextricable nature of the relationship between religion and other aspects of life in Africa. Due to the spirit – centeredness of Africans, the traditional Africans use divination to know the causes of ill health, the degree of damage, process of healing and duration of healing from the supernatural. One of the most commonly used methods of healing in the traditional African societies is prayer. The traditional

⁶⁰ Appiah –Kubi, *Man Cures, God Heals*, 2.

⁶¹ Justice Amegashie, *The Concept of Renewal* (University of Ghana; Legon, 1976), 9 -10.

⁶² Amegashie, *The Concept of Renewal* *B.A Long Essay*, 11-12.

African prays by pouring libation believed to be a means by which the Supreme Being, the gods, ancestors and other familiar spirit beings are invoked to intervene in solving a particular health problem at hand. Additionally, the use of herbal medicine has been known to the traditional African since time immemorial. This involves the use of parts of plants, which may either be used in their raw states or processed into different kinds of forms before they are applied for curative purpose.⁶³

In traditional African societies, sacrifices are sometimes offered to the supernatural as part of the healing processes. This is usually done to appease the gods or the spirit beings with the aim of paving a way for a smooth healing process. Furthermore, in the African indigenous religious society, ritual bath is considered as a means by which health is restored to the sick. This method of healing involves the use of selected items such as plants of different kinds or leaves as indicated by traditional priest through divination. These items are mashed into water and used for bath for a specific number of days as instructed by the traditional priest. The patient visits the traditional priest after the expiration of the specified days for a “checkup” As soon as the healing process ends and good health is restored to the sick, a thanksgiving ceremony is held to thank and appreciate the spirit being. Thus, the thanksgiving ceremony is held when the healers declare the clients healed, and the healed is satisfied with the services provided by the priest. The key objective of this ceremony is to offer the healed and their relatives the opportunity to show appreciation to healers on the day they are officially discharged from healing centre.

⁶³ Yohaness Akwesi Ahiabu, *Healing and Deliverance in Church Growth* (Accra Legon: Thesis submitted to the University of Ghana, 2013), 31.

2.3.3 Biblical – Perspective of Ill Health.

Understanding and explaining the Christian perspective of ill –health one must do a thorough examination about the Christian concept of man. The reason being that ill-health affects certain aspect of the human being. However, there are opposing Christian views about the composition of the human person. Many Christians on one hand believe that humans are composed of three basic elements: soul, body and spirit. Other Christians also believe in the bipartite nature of humans, referring to the biblical account of the creation of humans, that humans were created from an existing physical matter.⁶⁴

However, it is the introduction to the spiritual component, which is the breath of God (Spirit dimension) by God that makes humans living beings. The spirit element of humans is identified with God and serves as the divine element and the source of life for human existence. Fraser argued that the physical element known as the body serves as the embodiment of the spiritual component.⁶⁵ This is based on the hypothesis that two components of the human person do not operate or function in isolation of each other. Thus, anything that affects one aspect including ill–health will consequently affect the other component. From the Christian worldview, sin is regarded as one of the causes of ill –health. Therefore, sin is explained as disobedience to the commandments of God. The biblical point of view is that, maintaining a right relationship with God and fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law has a causal link with health. For instance, it is believed that people were sick

⁶⁴ Sinclair B. Ferguson et al. (ed), *New Dictionary of Theology*, (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 28.

⁶⁵ Stephen Fraser, ‘*The Orthodox Christian Concept of Man*. Accessed on December 16, 2016, [http://www.orthodoxresearchinstitute /articles/dogmatics/fraser_concept_of _man.htm].

and some died prematurely because they did not participate in the Lord's Supper in a proper manner (1Cor 11: 29 -30). In a related case, Jesus Christ was reported of warning the man beside the pool of Bethesda to stop sinning or something worse may happen to him (John 5: 14). These specific cases are indications that some people become sick as result of the consequence of sin. However, this does not mean sin is the only cause of ill-health. This means that from the Christian point of view not every ill-health is linked to sin.

From the biblical point of view, health was understood in terms of longevity and strength in the Old Testament. So, the concept of health is closely related to ill health. The words "health" and "life" in biblical thought were used interchangeably and synonymously. This implies survival and well -being. Hence, the biblical view of health could be construed as physical in nature although this pursued in the broader context to mean human well -being. Indeed this understanding of health is similar to African traditional religions view that health is also associated with material concepts such as life, fertility, plenty, prosperity, rain and the possession of cattle. Thus, this biblical view on ill-health and health support the argument that the Bible has a holistic view of health. This revolves around the concept of shalom which appears to be the nearest word to health. That is, most scholars and Wilkinson use this in turn to confirm that the Old Testament concept of health is holistic and indeed not only related to the state of the body.

The New Testament contains no dynamic equivalent to the word health but contents themselves with terms for healing. Consequently, the New Testament texts limit instances of healing to three areas, which are tangible physical healing, the casting out

of demons and the raising of the dead. Therefore, it had been argued that the New Testament understanding of health comprises physical and mental well-being, the absence of illness, physical disability, and the expulsion of demons or evil spirits which could have effects upon the physical and mental health of persons (Luke 8:26ff; Mark 9:14ff)⁶⁶

2.3.4 Charismatic Christian Worldview of Ill –Health

Asamoah Gyadu quoted Gifford, as saying, the Charismatic Churches are said to have been an expression of the Pentecostal types of Christianity, which emerged on the Ghanaian religious scene during the early 1970s. In Non- Western world such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America Pentecostalism emerged as the most exciting and dominant stream of Christianity in the twenty –first century not only in west Africa.⁶⁷ In Theology and practice, the charismatic Churches have consistently carved their activities to meet the needs of their members.

Asamoah Gyadu argued that Charismatic and Pentecostal Churches share certain characteristics with Pentecostalism, the most globalized form as pneumatic – Christianity, which belongs to the larger protestant family.⁶⁸ The Pentecostal and charismatic churches also share the traditional evangelical theological emphasizes on the authority of the Bible, the centrality of the cross, regeneration as the way to Christian salvation and a call to holiness as the outflow of a new relationship with Christ. Therefore, it is worthy to note that the Charismatic movement has become a

⁶⁶ The Holy Bible, Revise Standard Version

⁶⁷ Asamoah -Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 162-163 .

⁶⁸ Asamoah - Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 165.

“third force” in Christendom at the beginning of the twentieth century because of the traditional emphasis it has placed on the experience and the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the major heartlands of the Christian faith have shifted from the northern to the southern continents with Africa being a major hub of world Christianity. He argued that there is a sense in talking about African Charismatic Christianity and its underlying worldview particularly in relation to health. Therefore, the essence of religious practice among Africans is to preserve life and ensure the well – being of human society. This means that there is one life, one world of sunshine and sweet pleasures and it is natural that man should cherish it and seek to preserve and prolong it. The reason being that no sacrifice made can be compared with the life of a human.⁶⁹ The concept of life from the African traditional point of view have influenced the perspective of Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana and Africa as a whole.⁷⁰

The Pentecostal churches in Ghana have taken into consideration the indigenous worldview of the people.⁷¹ The quest to respond to the basic needs of the indigenous people also informed the churches understanding of ill-health. Furthermore, the general view about the causes of ill health, Pentecostal and charismatic churches in Ghana take into consideration the African Indigenous worldview about the causes of ill-health. Some of these causes of ill –health comprises of breach of taboo, customs, disturbances in social relations, hostile ancestral spirits, spirit possession, demonic

⁶⁹ Asamoah – Gyadu, *African Charismatic*, 133.

⁷⁰ Amegashie, *The Concept of Renewal*, 9 -10.

⁷¹ Asamoah –Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 2.

possession, evil machination and intrusion of objects, 'evil eye', sorcery, natural causes and affliction from gods⁷².

Sacked explained that charismatic and Pentecostal churches in Ghana generally believe that the cause of ill-health may be natural or instigated by sin or evil forces represented ultimately by the devil.⁷³ He argued that some of the manifestations of ill-health believed to be originated involved reproductive disorders, fibroids, diabetes, hypertension, barrenness, recurrent sexual dreams, epilepsy, and sudden death. However, the causes of ill-health are not always attributed to spiritual causalities. The reason being that many Pentecostal churches also believe that certain ill-health or sicknesses are caused by natural or organic factors such as fatigue, malnutrition, taking food that one's system is allergic to and other physical damages that occur to the body through accidents.⁷⁴ Sackey insisted that 'healing the amelioration or relief of problems in all aspect of everyday life as well as great afflictions, so that a cure from toothache, stomach pain, mental illness, infertility, signifies healing, as to making profits in commercial activities, defeating an opponents in any event such as litigations, repossession of a fortune, or a job, passing an examination or an interview for a job, obtaining visa to travel, winning political election or improving human relationship.'⁷⁵

⁷²Erhabor Sunday Idemudia, "Mental Health and Psychotherapy".(2002) www.inst.at/trans/15Nr/02_7/idemudia15.htm (accessed 16/12/2016).

⁷³ B.M. Sackey, *New Direction in Gender and Religion, Changing Status of Women in African Independent Churches* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2006), 166.

⁷⁴ E.M. Kekesi, 'Traditional and Christian Healing in Ghana', A case study in the Asuogyamang District', (MPhil Thesis. University of Ghana-Legon, 1996), 34.

⁷⁵ Sackey *New Direction in Gender and Religion*, 140.

2.3.5 Divine Healing from Biblical Perspective

This section of the thesis discusses divine healing and deliverance from both the Old Testament and New Testament perspectives and highlight on the practice fared and after the death of the last apostle who had been with Jesus Christ. Biblical records show several incidences of divine healing and deliverance in both the old and the New Testament. It therefore imperative to view divine healing and deliverance from biblical point of view because the bible is believed to be the Christian guide to faith and practice. The oldest trace of divine healing in the Bible recount the story of Abraham who was reported to have prayed and Abimelech and his household were healed (Genesis 20;18a)

Additionally, the account of divine healing as reported in the old testament also include natural phenomenon from which humans derive their existence and livelihood. For example 2 Kings 2:21 states that “then he went out to the spring and threw the salt into it, saying ‘this is what the Lord says; I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive.’ And the water remained wholesome to this day, according to the word of Elisha had spoken.’ In some cases, the mention of divine healing in the Old Testament implies the totality of people in the nation. Specifically, the Bible gives an account of how the nation of Babylon needed to be healed as recorded in Jeremiah 51: 9. This verse states that ‘ we would have healed Babylon, but she cannot be healed; let us leave her and each go to his own land, for her judgment reaches to the skies, it rises as high as cloud.” It obvious in the above discussion that healing is being employed to either deal with ill – health in the lives of individuals or restore the well –being of the people in the society in general. In the Old Testament, healing does not only mean physical sickness of

people but also has to do with the immediate environments in which the people live and derive their existence and livelihood. In the New Testament, Matthew Chapter 4: 23-25 (RSV) summarizes Jesus's ministry and practice in Galilee and its environs as "And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every diseases and every infirmity among the people." Therefore, his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and healed them. And a great crowd followed him from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond Jordan."

Matthew 9:35 and Mark 1:34, further provides biblical testimonies that suggest healing and deliverance was one of the key characteristics of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. The ministry of Jesus Christ went hand-in-hand with the healing of the sick and the casting out of evil spirits from people suspected to be under demonic control. It is also evident that the Gospel does not only show evidence of Jesus's practice of healing and deliverance, but they also recorded the fact that Jesus commanded his disciples to do it. In the New Testament, the Gospel according to Matthew illustrates Jesus not only as a teacher and preacher; but also a healer who was portrayed to have practically and clearly demonstrated divine power in his early ministry by casting out devils, healing the sick and raising the dead. After the death and ascension of Jesus Christ, the early disciples obeyed the command to heal the sick as part of their ministry which called on them to spread the gospel to all nations" (Matthew 28: 20, RSV). The New Testament recorded in the book of Acts 5: 12 through to 16 state that "And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. In addition, they were all one accord in Solomon's porch. The Verse 15 of

the same chapter revealed that the sick were brought out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter (disciple of Jesus Christ), passing by might fall on some of them. Furthermore, the verse 26 affirms, “Also multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits and they were all healed.”

2.3.6. The Impact of Divine Healing in the Old Testament Times

The Old Testament records only a few occasions of miraculous healings. The people had the promises of God for physical healing and God’s specific revelation of Himself as “the Lord who heals you” (Exodus 15:26). Two instances were so remarkable for the impacts were really felt because these prominent people were non Israelites. They are Naaman and King Nebuchadnezzar. Jesus did say in Luke 4:1 - 27, that there were many lepers in Israel in the days of Elisha the Prophet, but Naaman was only healed.

Naaman the Syrian was the only one healed of leprosy in Elisha’s time, and that was ultimately the result of the influence of a captive Israeli slave girl. The event is recorded in 2 Kings 5. There was nothing like church in the Old Testament, so anytime God healed a person we either see the person’s faith in God increasing or a whole nation or a town or a community beginning to fear Him and put their trust in Him. Let us look at the Old Testament record of miraculous healings.

Healing Through Humility and Intercession. The account in Numbers 12 shows the insubordination of Moses’ brother, Aaron, and sister, Miriam. Because of their attitude and actions, the glory cloud lifted off from the tabernacle, and Miriam was stricken with advanced “leprosy” as a divine chastisement. The Bible did not explain

why God punished Miriam and not Aaron. Whatever was the reason, Miriam had a very serious illness.

Aaron immediately humbled himself and begged Moses for mercy. Because of this offence against Moses and the divine authority that God had placed on him, God prescribed a seven-day exile for Miriam. God healed Miriam at the end of seven days, thus sparing her life and restoring her to full health.

In reflecting on this incident, it is realized that chastisement of Miriam was comparatively light. God healed Miriam at the end of seven days, thus sparing her life and restoring her to full health. Truly, God is merciful, and He does not afflict beyond what is necessary (Job 37:23).

Healing through Obedience. Naaman was no ordinary general, (2 Kings 5:1-4). On the contrary, he was a military genius whose successes God used providentially to maintain Syrian national security. A terminal illness had led more than one stubborn soul, a captive young girl from Israel, to listen to God! God allowed her to be snatched away from home and friends for a specific reason “Leprosy.” Full of faith and the love of God she became a shining witness in a foreign land to the healing power of God. Here is a miserable man totally ignorant of God and of how God works, trying vainly through money and diplomatic channels to secure life and wholeness.⁷⁶ The Prophet Elisha was not even interested in his rich gifts.

Certainly, God loves human beings, and He is concerned about their well-being. God loved Naaman and wanted very much to heal him. However, more importantly, God

⁷⁶ Charles F. Pfeiffer, (OT) and Everette F. Harrison (NT) *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), 139.

wanted to straighten out his heart and mind. He wanted ceremony befitting his position, the prophet prescribed humility to remedy his spiritual condition. He wanted the benefits; God insisted on the prerequisites. Naaman wanted to be a passive recipient; God required that he be an active respondent. Therefore, Naaman “turned and went away in a rage” (verse 12). God always provides mankind with an occasion to reveal what is in his or her spirit. God always do that when man disobeys Him. The general was dying, and a dying man is a desperate man (v 13 NIV). God’s formula is always: “Wash and be clean.” Therefore, he surrendered.

He received his healing through full obedience. Instead of pride, pomp and prejudice, he exhibited humility, obedience, and faith. His confession was “Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel” (2 Kings 5:15 NIV). The administration of divine healing to Naaman impacted him to accept God as the one and only true God.

Hezekiah’s Prayer for healing. Hezekiah was an outstanding king of Judah. “He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord” (2 Chronicles 29:2 NIV). One of the major events of his reign was the renewal of the celebration of the Passover (2 Chron. 30). During the celebration, Hezekiah prayed to God to pardon and accept everyone who had prepared his heart to seek God but who had not gone through the purification rituals “of the sanctuary” (vv 18:19). Verse 20 reports that “the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.”

A “wave” of God’s healing power swept through the people. It must have been a dramatic scene as people *en masse* experienced healing and wholeness. In 2 Kings 20:1-7 the Bible records that Hezekiah himself was healed of a terminal illness. God

sent the prophet Isaiah with the message that the king was going to die (verse 11). God heard his prayer, healed him, and added 15 years to his life. It is important to note here that reprieve and recovery for the sick are linked to the same good fortune for Judah, the fate of the king and the fate of the city are linked together.⁷⁷

The Healing of King Nebuchadnezzar. King Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful king at the then world. In the book of Daniel 4, this king had a terrifying vision that no one except Daniel was able to interpret it to him (Daniel. 4:32). The interpretation of the dream is that he shall be insane and shall be made to eat grass as oxen. The madness that fell upon him induced him to forsake society, and to run to the woods and deserts, where he lived like a wild beast. His hairs growing long and thick, so as to be a substitute for clothing, and his nails strong and hooked, that he might the better climb trees and grub up the ground, in order to get roots and earth-nuts. God who showed him mercy by clothing and accoutered him. His case seems much like that of the maniac in the Gospel, whose dwelling was among the tombs and in the mountains, and who shunned the society of men.

Everything was fulfilled that was exhibited by the dream and its interpretation. It is very likely that this unfortunate king had so concealed himself that the place of his retreat was not found out; and the providence of God had so watched over everything. “Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.”(Daniel 4:37, NKJV) Nebuchadnezzar this time acknowledged the Sovereignty of God.

⁷⁷ Leander E Keck, *Studies In Luke – Acts: Essays Presented In Honour of Paul Schubert* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 271.

2.3.7 The Impact of Divine Healing in Jesus' Ministry in the Gospels

Jesus himself is the best guide to the ministry of healing. The true heart and nature of God is clearly seen in Jesus Christ. Nearly 20% of the entire gospels are devoted to Jesus' healing ministry and the discussions occasioned by it. Out of the 3779 verses in the four gospels, 727 relate specifically to the healing of physical, mental illness, and resurrection of the dead.⁷⁸ In addition, 165 verses deal in general with eternal life, and 31 general references to miracles that include healing. The importance of this ministry is seen in a simple collection of healing stories from the Gospels using the arrangement of Percy Dreamer's book, *Body and Soul*, (ref. to appendix II).⁷⁹ Now let us consider why Jesus Christ healed people.

To Fulfil His Prophetic Ministry. When the great crowd gathered after the healing of Peter's mother in-law; "he healed them all, that it might be fulfill which was spoken by Isaiah the Prophet, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities and carried our sickness" (Isaiah. 53:4-6); (Matthew 8:16, 17).

To Express His Compassion. Numerous scriptures mention the compassion of Christ motivating him to meet the needs of the people. Jesus was "...moved with compassion, and healed their sickness" (Matthew. 14:14; 20:34; Mark. 1:40, 41; 5:19; 9:22).

To Convey the Mercy of God. Speaking of Ephaphraditus, Paul says, "for...he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but on me

⁷⁸ Gary Wiens, *The Healing Ministry Of Jesus*, International House of Prayer Northwest. Accessed October 10, 2017, www.ihopnw.org.

⁷⁹ Morton T. Kesley, *Healing and Christianity* (New York: Harper and Row Publishing, 1973), 55-56.

also...” Paul must believe that this means the Lord healed Ephaphraditus (Philippians 2:27).

God had Truly Sent Him. The miracles and healings, which attended the ministry of Jesus, were sign or credential to prove that God was with him, Peter calls him a man approve of God among you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you” (Acts 2:22 NIV).

To Destroy the Works of the Devil. “For this purpose was the son of God manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil” (I John 3:8 NIV). “How God anointed Jesus Christ of Nazareth with the holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38 NIV). “That he might destroy him that has the power of death. That is the devil” (Hebrews. 2:14 NIV). Sickness is the work of the devil, and Jesus manifest to destroy it.

To Manifest the Works of God. Jesus and his disciples one day saw a man who had been blind. Was it the result of his sin or that of the parent? Was the question asked by the disciples. Jesus however was interested in something else. He said, “that the work of God should be manifested in him, I must work the work of him who sent me while is day” (John. 9:3, 4 NIV). He then proceeded to heal the man, showing clearly that one of the reasons He healed the sick was to make manifest the works of God.

To Manifest the Glory of God. Jesus performed the mighty works of God, that his father might be glorified. Standing before the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said to Martha: “said I not unto thee that if believest thou, thou will see the glory of God? (John

11:40 KJV). In Luke 13:10-17, we read of the story of the woman bound by a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years, and how Jesus loosed her from her infirmity.

The Healing of Two Blind Men (Bartimaeus and his friend). Both Mark (Mark 10:46-52) and Luke (Luke 18:35-43) focus on just one of them. First, we observe the persistence of his faith. As soon as he heard that Jesus was passing by, he began to yell out, “Jesus! Son of David! Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of David, and therefore the Son of God. Suddenly Jesus came to a halt and commanded the people to bring him, the blind man. By commanding, “Bring him to me,” Jesus addressed the attitude of the crowd. Let us now examine Christ’s response to Bartimaeus.

Even though Jesus probably observed that Bartimaeus was blind, Bartimaeus himself needed to make a definite expression of his need. Next, Jesus had compassion on him, (Matt. 20:34). Jesus “touched their eyes” (Matthew 20:34 NIV). It touches people – who believe—right at the point of their need.

Luke records our Lord’s next words: “Receive your sight!” (Luke 18:42 NIV). Christ speaks the creative word. “Your faith has saved you” (Luke 18:42 NIV); that is, “made you whole” (Mark 10:52). Jesus turned the parable into a praise celebration, and Bartimaeus was leading the worship! Jesus still knows how to turn problem situations into praise celebration for people to put their faith in Him and His word. Jesus gave Bartimaeus the freedom to go his way. His way was to follow Jesus.

Jesus Heals a Serious “Ear problem” (The restoration of Malchus’ ear). All four gospels record the event, but Luke alone record the healing of the ear. After reprimanding Peter, Jesus touched Malchus’ ear and healed him. Whether Jesus

reached down, picked up the severed ear, and reattached it to Malchus's head, or touched the wound and created a new ear, it is not stated.

Our Lord's attitude and actions are the main points of interest in this even. Here again we see the selfless compassion of Jesus. He had just come through the agony of Gethsemane; He was facing imminent crucifixion; the mob had arrived to arrest Him; yet He takes time to heal the severed ear of one of His adversaries. Furthermore, He does it calmly and with perfect composure. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8 NIV).

2.3.8 The Impact of Divine Healing on Church Growth in the Apostolic Era

Jesus commanded His disciples go and make disciples of all nation (Matthew 28:18), and again, He said, "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NIV). He also said that, "I tell the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, I am going to the Father" (John 14:12 NIV). When Jesus made these statements, His intention was not that the disciples were to go and just perform miracles, rather He was making them aware that to have greater impact in their witnessing there should be a confirmation of the word through miraculous signs and wonders. These are clear indications that Jesus was looking forward to having a great multitude of disciples through the preaching of the word by the apostles and other believers and bringing deliverance to the people through miracles, signs and wonders.

Therefore, it is no wonder that after the Day of Pentecost the apostles and other believers continued to do so. They had both the promises and the power. “Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed His word by the signs that accompanied it” (Mk. 16:20 NIV).

Again, before His ascension, Jesus promised that certain signs would follow believers, including, “...they will place their hands on the sick and they will get well” (Mark 16:18 NIV). Without going into the textual matters regarding Mark 16, let it be affirmed here that the weight of evidence supports the view that these are the genuine words of Jesus.⁸⁰

Even during His earthly ministry, Jesus commissioned His disciples, both “the twelve” and “the seventy,” to go out and heal the sick (Matthew 10:1; Luke 10:1, 17). Before entering into the main issue under this sub-topic, it should once again be reminded that miracles are not ends in themselves but rather means to an end. That is to say, they make the people open up for the word of God to be preached to them.

Moreover, not all the healing miracles brought increase to the growth of the church. Some faced stiff oppositions, and others also brought confusions leading to the beatings and even imprisonment of some disciples like, Paul, Barnabas Silas, and others (Acts 16:22-24). Despite the fact that not all the divine healings that took place resulted in the growth of the church, it is estimated that about ninety-five percent led to that effect.

⁸⁰ Jepson, *What You Should Know About Divine Healing*, 42.

Early Apostolic Miracles. After Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, God empowered the leaders of the early church to heal. The Book of Acts declares that the Apostle Peter healed a crippled beggar at the temple gate called Beautiful. When the beggar asked Peter for money, he said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." The man was instantly cured of his crippled condition and jumped to his feet (Acts 3:1-10 NIV). Many people came to believe because of this divine healing, as a result the church grew from about three thousand to give thousand men (Acts 4:4).

Following this event, in Acts 5:12-16, it is said that the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. The power of the Holy Spirit was so much at work that the people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mat so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by (v. 15). Of course, Peter's shadow had no miraculous healing power in itself. Coming under his shadow was an act of faith on the part of the people, and God honoured that faith. However, most of the healing came by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. As a result of these many people came to believe in the Lord and the church grew in number and in power. Then the early church grew spiritually and numerically which resulted in many people bringing their sick friends and relatives to the apostles for healing. The verse 16 tells us that "all of them were healed."⁸¹ All these took place in Jerusalem.

In addition, as faith encourages faith, and faith receives what it believes, still others heard what God was doing, and they believed and were saved. Since the power of the

⁸¹ Ted Schwartz, *Faith or Fraud? Healing in the name of God* (Grand rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 29.

Holy Spirit to heal was essential for all who believe and, not only were the apostles the instruments of miraculous healing but also the other believers as well. Deacons like Philip and Stephen also perform many miracles that brought many to Christ, resulting in the formation and growth of the church in Samaria.

As persecution broke up in Jerusalem against the believers, Philip went to Samaria, and all the people paid attention to what he preached upon hearing and seeing the miracles, which did. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed (Acts 8:5-7 NIV). As a result of this many believed in the Lord and were saved.⁸²

In Acts 9:1-20, Saul [Paul] who was on a mission to persecute some of the believers had an encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus, which resulted in his blindness. There was a Jewish believer by name Ananias who went to Saul by divine direction, put his hands on him and declared him healed of his blindness. After this, Paul joined the believers in Damascus and spent several days with them. Paul later recounted this part of his experience (Acts 22:12, 13). The appearance of Christ to Saul on the Damascus road involves both his conversion to Christianity and his commission to be the apostle to the Gentiles.⁸³

In Acts 9:32-35, Peter by the same spiritual authority and resources that he had healed the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple, and healed a man who had been bedridden for eight years due to paralysis. “Aeneas, Peter said, Jesus Christ heals you get up and tidy up your mate. Immediately Aeneas got up.” The result was that, “all

⁸² Ralph W. Harris, *Acts Today: Sign and Wonders of the Holy Spirit* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1995), 14.

⁸³ French L. Arrington and Roger Stranstrad, *Full Life Bible Commentary to The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 578.

those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord” (v. 35 NIV). What can change the mind of a whole two townships to give their lives to Christ? This great in gathering was preceded by a remarkable case of divine healing.⁸⁴

Immediately after this event, in Acts 9:36-41, the disciples at Joppa sent for Peter because Tabitha (Dorcas) had just died. She had devoted herself to helping other people, and her good works and godly influence would be greatly missed. When Peter arrived, he dismissed the weeping widows, knelt down and prayed; then he told Tabitha to arise. She opened her eyes and sat up. Peter gave her his hand, lifted her up, and presented her alive to the waiting believers. Again, at Joppa, many people turned to the Lord (v. 42). Let us now turn the attention to the ministry and miracles of Paul.

Paul and Barnabas in the Region of Lyconia. During his first missionary journey, Paul along with Barnabas came to Iconium (Acts 13; 51). Paul and Barnabas remained there for an extended period; “speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of His grace by enabling him to do miraculous signs and wonders” (Acts 14:3 NIV). Some of the Jews and the Gentiles believed in the Lord. After this incident the Jews in that city were divided, some siding with Paul and Barnabas, and others with the town folks who put a plan afoot to beat them. Paul and Barnabas upon hearing this left the place.

In Acts 14:8-10, we read that at Lystra a man who from birth was unable to walk or even stand listened to Paul. Paul looked at him intently and recognized that he had faith to be healed. Considering this healing, there is an observation of the spoken

⁸⁴ Donald McGravan, *Understanding Church Growth*, 145.

word of the apostle and the active faith of the recipient. Paul knew that the man believed and that God was ready to honour his faith. Therefore, Paul (like Peter in the previous events) simply commanded the man to act. Again, like the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple, the man responded beyond the command. "...stand up on your feet' at that he jumped and began to walk" (v. 10).

Handkerchiefs and Aprons: Special Miracles at Ephesus. In Acts 19, Paul went to Ephesus. Not to burden anyone for support he went into tent making. In addition to his anointed preaching he also performed miracles (vv. 11-12), described as "extraordinary" because they are special charismatic manifestations of the spirit.⁸⁵ He had to send his apron and handkerchief to those who were sick and were healed. Even demon possessed people were exorcised. There were some Jews who tried to emulate him by using the name of Jesus to exorcise demons, and the demon possessed people beat them up. Fear then gripped the people. As result, many people gave their lives to the Lord (vv. 17-20).

From Shipwreck to Revival: The Healing of Publius's Father. The father of Publius, the Roman official, contracted a severe intestinal disorder. The record does not say whether Paul was asked to come in and heal Publius's father or whether he did so in his own initiative. Way, Paul went in, laid his hands on the man, and healed him. News of this healing quickly spread throughout the island, and other sick people living there came and were healed. Though it was not categorically stated that the islanders believed in the Lord but the way and manner the people furnished them with supplies for their journey concludes to that effect.

⁸⁵ Arrington, *Full Life Bible Commentary to The New Testament*, 638.

Paul also wrote to the church at Corinth. “My message and preaching were not with persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom but on God’s power” (I Corinthians 2:4 NIV). In this epistle to the Romans he testified that God “...through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done, by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit of God” (Romans 15:18,19, NIV). That was God’s *modus operandi*, His mode of operation.⁸⁶

This section cannot end without touching what James wrote in James 5:14, 15. “Is anyone of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up” (Jas. 5:14, 15 NIV):

In the case of serious sickness, James counsels, the elders (a reference to definite officers) of the church should be called. Their prayers were to be accompanied by anointing with oil in the name of the Lord. In some cases, oil may have therapeutic value, but in most cases, its use is best understood as an aid to faith. It is clear from verse 15 that, it is not the oil that heals the sick man rather the Lord shall raise him up in answer to the prayer of faith. This is not to suggest that God always answers believing prayer. All prayer including the prayer for healing is subject to the will of God.⁸⁷

Finally in Acts 10:38 the apostle Peter said Jesus who was full of the Holy Spirit went about healing “How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with Him” (Acts 10:38 RSV). Therefore, if Jesus was involved in the healing ministry and the apostles and the early believers were involved then it is expedient on believers in these contemporary times to heal the sick. Moreover, the believers who specifically have been given the gift of healing by the

⁸⁶Jepson, *What You Should Know About Divine Healing*, 50.

⁸⁷ Pfeiffer, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, 1439.

Holy Spirit must use it. "...to another the gift of healing by the same Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12: 9,NIV).

2.3.9 Post-Apostolic View of Divine Healing and Deliverance

According to Warner, the post – apostolic church continued the tradition of first – century believers by teaching and practicing a healing to the sick. He further argued that Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian viewed passages such as Mark 16: 15 -18 and James 5: 14 -16 as the church is mandated to pray for the sick for divine healing. Warner further noted that in the third century, Gregory Thaumaturgus or “wonder worker” (c 213 –c, 270) was credited with many miracles, among which was healing. He argued that, there are evidences to show that by the ninth century in Italy the Waldensians were practicing faith, while the sixteenth –century Protestant Reformation brought with it a revival of prayers for the sick. Martin Luther believed in praying for the sick and later protestant groups continued this apostolic practice.⁸⁸

The Catholic Church is noted to have been using the sacrament of Anointing of the sick since the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with healings reportedly taking place. However, the sacrament was regarded as a preparation for death (extreme unction) rather than a sacramental means of healing grace. The other means of miraculous healing recognized the Catholic Church takes the form of prayers, blessings, by healing power associated with places such as Lourdes, France or as result of prayer to the saint. Certain individuals have been credited with the spiritual gifts of healing in

⁸⁸ W.E. Warner, ‘*Faith Healing*’, in *Daniel G. Reid, et al. (eds), Dictionary of Christianity in America*, (Town: Downers Grove, Illinois, USA Inter Varsity Press, 1990, Discovering Collection Database, PC Study Bible Version 5.

the catholic tradition such as Francis of Assisi, Bernard of Clairvourx and Patrick of Ireland.⁸⁹

Warner noted that the practice of faith healing and deliverance particularly associated with the Pentecostal movement is based on the belief that Jesus' promise recorded in Mark 16:18 is for every generation of believers. He further ascertained that, in the late nineteenth century, prominent devout figures such as Charles Collis, Carrie Judd Montgomery, A. B Simpson, A.J. Gordon and others were tutoring and practicing faith healing in America.⁹⁰

However, these practitioners had differences in interpretation and practice of healing. One School of thought believed that healing is part of the atonement and as readily available to believers as salvation, while the other school of thought believe that healing is mercy available as result of Christ's atonement, but guarantee of physical well-being. Hence, the second school of thought looked to the resurrection for fullness of divine healing. However, the conservative theologians, especially those of a dispensationalist persuasion, maintained that the gift of healing and deliverance seemed to be absent in the activities of some protestant churches. This tradition was left with the they have founded generally in Africa and Ghana in particular such as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (E.P. Church).

Notwithstanding the conflicting views on faith healing and deliverance, some religious individuals like J.A Dowie, an emigrant from Australia, held the most radical view of faith healing. He further contends against the teaching that medicine

⁸⁹ Warner, *Faith Healing*, PC Study Bible Version 5.

⁹⁰ Warner, *Faith Healing*, PC Study Bible Version 5.

and faith were incompatible. Thus his theocratic community of Zion, Illinois, banned the medical profession including veterinarians from practicing within the city.⁹¹ In the African context, the period of silence on faith healing continued with the type of Christian tradition presented to the Africans until the practice of evangelization and spiritual healing and deliverance reemerged through the initiatives of some African prophets.⁹² Asamoah –Gyadu observed that despite the fact that healing and deliverance is no longer new to indigenous Pentecostalism, the ministry has enjoyed an enormous resurgence within Ghanaian Christianity last decades⁹³.

2.3.10 African Pentecostal Churches View of Healing and Deliverance

In Africa today, there are many major Western mission-related Pentecostal denominations such as the Assemblies of God originating from the United States, but also African-initiated ones like William F. Kumuyi’s Deeper Christian Life Ministry, which started in **Nigeria** in 1973. In addition, there are the multitudinous “mega” independent NPCs like Mensa Otabil’s International Central Gospel Church in **Ghana**, David O. Oyedepo’s Word of Faith Mission International or Winner’s Chapel of **Nigeria** and Andrew Wutawanashe’s Family of God in **Zimbabwe**, which were also born out of local initiatives. Additionally, African Pentecostal churches have become a dominant force in Western Europe and North America. The fact that African religions have emerged in Europe not as primal forms but in terms of Christianity is itself evidence of the growing strength of the Christian faith in modern Africa. To this end, the largest single Christian congregation in Western Europe since

⁹¹ Yohanness, *Healing and Deliverance in Church Growth*, 41.

⁹² Yohanness, *Healing and Deliverance in Church Growth*, 41.

⁹³ Asamoah – Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 166.

Christianity began is Nigerian Pastor Matthew Ashimolowo's Kingsway International Christian Center (KICC) in London.

The African Pentecostal Churches hold the view that the causes of ill –health may be natural or instigated by sin or evil forces.⁹⁴ Therefore, for the African Pentecostal Christian, healing and deliverance finds expression in the salvation of God. Salvation must be experienced and the goal thereof being the realization of 'transformation and empowerment' healing and deliverance' prosperity and success in the lives of believers. According to Asamoah –Gyadu, he explained that the experiential, the emphasis on personality transformation' underlying the spirituality of the Pentecostal churches is obvious in these soteriological goals.⁹⁵ The realization of these soteriological goals must commence the calling of the world to repentance from sin and conversion to God. The African Pentecostal Christian believe that salvation comprises of freedom from sin, spiritual enemies such as the devil, evil spirit, and other harmful demonic forces whose main aim is to steal, kill and destroy the children of God (John10:10).

The African Pentecostal Christians believed in the casual relationship between sin, the work of demons and ill-health. That is the reason why healing is tied to deliverance among Pentecostal churches. This explains why Pentecostal churches believe in and practice healing and deliverance as a pastoral care for the flock of God. The healing and deliverance practice also involves consultation with gifted experts in the field to determine the cause of ill –health. This usually takes the form of counselling and domesticating spirits through ritual process of binding and casting out the spirits with

⁹⁴ Asamoah –Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 176.

⁹⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 2.

loud words of command.⁹⁶ The more anointed and gifted the practitioner, the more effective the practice of healing and deliverance serves as a pastoral care and the more it attracts people to the practitioner's church.

2.4 The Concept of Church Growth

Generally speaking, an increase in size, number and significance is referred to as growth. With reference to the Church, scholars have identified several dimensions with which the idea of church can be envisaged. As stated by Leonard, the Christian church is a community founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ and strove to bear witness to Christ's gospel in its worship and faith, work and memory.⁹⁷ Theologians argued that the church is a spiritual communion of the whole people of God. Therefore, the church is rooted in the ancient covenant with Israel and divine promised to deliver God's people. Alluding to the imagery of Apostle Paul the Church is the body of Christ and Christ is the head of his body. Christ is the foundation of the Church. Indeed, without Christ there is no Church. Leonard further revealed that the church is defined as an incarnate community of those who receive the word of God, believe in Jesus Christ and seek to express that word in their own lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸ In the New Testament, the Christian understanding of the church, speaks of it as a living organism of persons closely related to Christ and to one another. As a living organism, the church must the church must grow as is the case with every normal living organism.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Yohannes, *Healing and Deliverance in Church Growth*, 45.

⁹⁷ J.B., Leonard, *Church in Dictionary Christianity in America*, (Intervarsity Press, 1990), 46.

⁹⁸ Leonard, 'Church in Dictionary Christianity in America', 34.

⁹⁹ Gbordzo, 'Prayer and Church Growth', 61.

Apostle Paul's address to the Church in Corinthian indicate that church growth is possible through the combination of human and divine efforts when he wrote "I planted, Apollos watered but God gave the Growth" (1Cor 3: 6, RSV). According to Gbordzo, the church can be define as bringing of people into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit and into a responsible church membership, such that the membership of local congregation will increase in faith, holiness and other spiritual and material qualities while at the same time increasing in number, and also opening and multiplying.¹⁰⁰ This relate to effective operation of Jesus Christ's Great Commission to go then to all people everywhere and make them my disciple (Matt 28: 19 -20 RSV).

2.4.1 Dimensions of Church Growth

The addition of new converts is the fundamental dimension of growth. However, there are many other areas of church growth that relates to the nature, function, structure, health and multiplication of Christian Churches. According to Pointer, church growth embraces more than an interest in numbers and includes a concern for quality. He further suggests 'holistic expansion' as a suitable term to describe the multinational growth of the body of Christ and defines four dimensions of church growth.¹⁰¹ Thus for church growth to be regarded as 'holistic expansion' it must consist of four major areas namely; Numerical, organic, conceptual and incarnational

The increase in the numbers of the membership of the church is referred to as the numerical growth of the church. According to Pointer this occurs through biological,

¹⁰⁰ Gbordzo, ' *Prayer and Church Growth*, 54.

¹⁰¹ Roy Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?*(Great Britain: Marshal Morgan& Scot, 1984), 25.

transfer, restoration, and conversion. The biological dimension of church growth occurs when the children of Christian parents come to a personal faith in Jesus Christ as savior and Lord and join the church, usually by a rite that recognizes their status as responsible.¹⁰² This involves confirmation of believers, baptism, putting on any other means by which converts are identified with community of believers.

The second numerical dimension church growth is referred to as the transfer. It involves the recruitment of members who are already committed Christians by transfer from other congregations. This might result from the movement of Christians from one area to another but occasionally be associated with social or doctrinal reasons.¹⁰³ The third numerical dimension of church growth is restoration. This occurs when some Christians who have withdrawn their active participation in religious activities are successfully brought to fellowship with Jesus Christ and into active church members.

According to Pointer, the successful bringing and restoration of these inactive Christians to active membership is considered as a form of growth. The fourth dimension of numerical church growth is conversion. He described this dimension as growing more in number. This is when those outside the church are brought to repentance and faith in Christ, and join a local church as responsible members. This dimension of Church growth comes from obedience and commitment to the Great Commission, it only manifest after the evangelized have become responsible and

¹⁰² Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?*, 34.

¹⁰³ Richard Foli, *Toward Church Growth in Ghana* (Accra: Trust Publishes, 1996), 52.

committed members of the Christian community.¹⁰⁴ Thus this dimension is linked to the task of evangelization.

Pointer, identified another dimension of church growth referred to as growing up in maturity.¹⁰⁵ This involves the personal and corporate development of the Christians' understanding of his faith. Thus, he defines growth as the degree of consciousness that a community of faith has regard to its nature and mission to the world. He further stress that the local church is a community formed and nurtured by the preaching of the word of God. The progress of preaching the gospel and the growth of the church are even described as increase of the word. Thus, the key ingredient the fuels church growth is the word of God.

The Organic growth of the church is described as growing together in community. According to Pointer, being and becoming a Christian are entirely dependent upon an intimate and personal relationship to Christ, the Christian faith can only be lived in relationship with and in service to others.¹⁰⁶ He argued that commitment to Jesus Christ includes commitment to community and organic growth. He therefore defines organic growth as the "Internal development of a local community of faith (that is the system of relationships among its members), its form of government, financial structures/ leadership and types of activities in which its time and resources are invested. Organic growth is concerned with such issues as depth of fellowship; quality of worship; training of new members, discovery of gifts and the exercise of ministry.

¹⁰⁴ Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?* 26.

¹⁰⁵ Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?* 27.

¹⁰⁶ Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?* 27.

The incarnational dimension of church growth identified.¹⁰⁷ This is described as the degree of involvement of a community of faith in the life and problems of her social environment. This encompasses the church's participation in the afflictions of the world in which finds itself; it is prophetic, intercessory and liberating action on behalf of the weak and destitute; the intensity of its preaching to the poor; the broken – hearted, the captives, the blind and the oppressed.

This is the development of the ministry of a local church as an extension and continuation of Christ's ministry. In view of this, he argued that the church should actively engage in a healing ministry even if many of the church members reject the miracle that underlines the messages and the wonders that signify the Lord is with the people. Even though the church believes in the tremendous progress made in modern medicine, it also believes in the extraordinary God's intervention in the healing process. The church must endeavor to draw its unlimited spiritual resources available for the progress of God's mission through prayer.

2.4.2 Factors for Church Growth

Several factors account for church growth. Thus, several scholars discuss various which contribute to Church growth. According to Donald for instance in discussing the church of growth identify ten dynamic but which the authors point at as far from exhaustive growth principles.¹⁰⁸ Other scholars believed that new church principles

¹⁰⁷ Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?* 27.

¹⁰⁸ Donald Anderson McGavran and Winfield C. Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 15.

were yet to be discovered. Further search for such is yet to be discovered through growth principles.¹⁰⁹

In their study McGavran et al, consider these factors and discuss them under the following heading, 'Ten Steps for church growth.'¹¹⁰ These steps comprises of discovering church growth principles, respecting biblical principles, yielding to God's unswerving purpose, giving priority to effective evangelism, rightly discerning the community, finding new groups and ways to disciple, churches reproducing themselves through planned parenthood, structuring for growth and risking growth.¹¹¹

Pointer discusses similar factors such as Signs of Growth.¹¹² He identified factors such constant prayer, respect for biblical authority, effective leadership, mobilized membership, continuous evangelism, community life, compassionate service, openness to change and released resources as signs because they are observable resources for church growth. He argued that these factors are obvious signs that accompany church growth. He insisted that churches growth when there is constant prayer, respect for authority of the Bible, appoint effective leaders, mobilized their membership, worship God in eventful services; engage in continuous evangelism and compassionate service, develop genuine community life, allow spirit-directed change and release the resources of God for God's mission¹¹³

McGavran et al, explains that a church growth principle is the universal truth, which, when properly interpreted and employed can contribute considerably to the growth churches and denominations. A church growth principle shows where the church is

¹⁰⁹ McGavran and Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth*, 18.

¹¹⁰ McGavran and Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth*, 21.

¹¹¹ Pointer, *How do Churches Growth*, 87.

¹¹² Pointer, *How do Churches Growth*, 88.

¹¹³ Pointer, *How do Churches Growth*, 55 -56.

growing, where God is blessing the efforts of his servants with factual 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.¹¹⁴ Norman et al argued that when God is blessing the church with growth, it is important that one investigates why and how the growth is occurring.¹¹⁵ This is observation and study of the various factors such as efforts, prayers, passion, teaching, education, biblical base and outreach from which growth emerges. The careful analysis of the result of the studies or findings, could lead to the discovery of one or more church growth principles¹¹⁶

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this chapter was to know how much people have written about it. Since knowledge accumulates and people learn and build on what others have done, writings from a lot of writers were considered. Moreover, the study tried and establish familiarity with a body of knowledge of divine healing and church growth and establish their credibility. Again, the study showed the path of prior research and how current research was linked to it. Finally, the study integrated and summarized what is already known to the area and learnt from others and stimulated new ideas about divine healing and impact growth of the church.

¹¹⁴ McGavran et al, *Ten steps for church growth*, 58.

¹¹⁵ Norman A. Horner & James M. Philips (eds), *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement* (Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1994), 516.

¹¹⁶ McGavran and Arn, *Ten steps for church growth*, 88.

CHAPTER THREE

BRIEF HISTORY OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCH.

3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, some concepts considered to be very central to this research were studied. These are ill health, healing, deliverance and church growth. In addition, it looks at some factors of church growth and the various dimensions from which it can be appreciated. This chapter presents a brief historical survey of the Assemblies of God Church and discusses some of its fundamental and theological teachings. This is aimed at helping understand how these fundamental teachings and theological perspectives shape the practice of 'healing and deliverance' within the Assemblies of God Church. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an insight into the practice of 'healing and deliverance' and the role it plays in church growth.

3.2 Brief History Assemblies of God Church, Early Beginnings in America.

The Assemblies of God denomination traces its roots back to a religious revival that started during the late 1800's and continued through the early 1900's. The revival was characterized by a widespread experience of spiritual manifestations such as speaking in tongues and supernatural healing, giving birth to the Pentecostal movement. Charles Parham is a prominent figure in the history of the Assemblies of God and the Pentecostal movement.¹¹⁷ His teachings greatly influenced the doctrines of the Assemblies of God. He is the founder of the first Pentecost Church - the Apostolic Faith Church. He started a Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, where students came to

¹¹⁷ *History of Assemblies of God, Ghana*. Accessed on October 10, 2017, [www.agghana.org].

learn about the word of God. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit was emphasized here as a key factor in one's walk of faith.

During the Christmas holiday of 1900, Parham asked his students to study the Bible to discover the biblical evidence for the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. At a prayer meeting on January 1, 1901, they concluded that the Holy Spirit Baptism is expressed and evidenced by speaking in tongues.¹¹⁸

From this experience, the Assemblies of God denomination can trace its belief that Speaking in tongues are the biblical evidence for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The revival quickly spread to Missouri and Texas, and eventually to California and beyond. Pentecostal believers from around the world gathered at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles for a 3-year (1906–1909) revival meeting. Another important meeting in the denomination's history was a gathering in Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1914, called by a preacher named Eudorus N. Bell. As a result of the spreading revival and the formation of many Pentecostal congregations, Bell recognized the need for an organized assembly. Three hundred Pentecostal ministers and laymen gathered to discuss the growing need for doctrinal unity and other common goals. As a result the General Council of Assemblies of God was formed, uniting the assemblies in ministry and legal identity, yet preserving each congregation as a self-governing and self-supporting entity. This structural model remains intact today.

In 1916, a Statement of Fundamental Truths was approved and adopted by the General Council. This position on the essential doctrines of the Assemblies of God denomination remains virtually unchanged to this day. The Assemblies of God

¹¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/assemblies_of_God. Accessed on March 3, 2017.

ministries have focused on evangelism, missions and church planting. From its founding attendance of 300, the denomination has grown to more than 2.6 million members in the United States and over 48 million overseas. The national headquarters for the Assemblies of God is located in Springfield, Missouri.¹¹⁹

3.3 History of Assemblies of God, Ghana

The Assemblies of God, Ghana is a member of the worldwide fellowship of Assemblies of God spread in Two Hundred Twelve (212) countries of the world.¹²⁰ Missionaries from Assemblies of God, U.S.A. in the person of Rev. Lloyd and Margaret Shirer, who were then in Moshi land, Ouagadougou now Burkina Faso crossed over to the Northern Region of the then Gold Cost on the horse backs in the early 1931. With the First recruits, Miss Beulah Buchhwalter and Guy Hickok, they started the first Assemblies of God congregation in Yendi. Some other members who joined later were Florence Blossom, Henry Garlock, Eric Johnson and Thelma Godwin.

The zeal of these early missionaries was so strong that they consistently worked and witnessed for the Lord under very harsh conditions and in hostile environments. Indeed, the likes of Bushwalker and Guy Hickok died in 1942 on the mission field. Branches of the church were established at Tamale and Walewale in 1935 and Bawku in 1937. Bro. Mba. Mahama was the Mamprusi Christian to be converted in 1939. On December 13, 1948, the Assemblies of God aeroplane, “Ambassador”

¹¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/assemblies_of_God. Accessed on March 3, 2017.

¹²⁰ *History of Assemblies of God, Ghana*. Accessed on October 10, 2017, www.agghana.org.

landed in Accra bringing the wheeler Andersons, Roddy Johnson and Ozella Reid to join the missionary family in the Gold Coast.¹²¹

Beginnings in the North

When the missionaries arrived in Ghana, their preoccupation was to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They soon realized that they were faced with the daunting and enormous task of fighting hunger, disease, poverty and illiteracy. To give practical meaning to the Biblical teaching of caring for the needy and alleviating the suffering of the people, the female missionaries organized literacy classes for the indigenous women while the men organized work crews teaching their male counterparts to make swish blocks, door and window frames, and roof trusses.¹²²

The economic lives of the people have improved greatly as a result. Rev. Lloyd Shirer served as community Development Officer in Tamale during the early days of the establishment of the Church. During the inception of the Church, the Shirers and Garlocks were aware of the needs of the Kokomba tribe, about 40 miles northeast of Yendi. The missionaries believed a medical work among the Kokombas would be a real asset to the whole mission as well as the needs of the people, many of whom had never heard the name of Jesus nor did they have any medical help closer than Yendi. The first Assemblies of God Clinic was therefore built in 1948 in Saboba in the Northern Region by the Missionaries. The second was built in 1950 in Nakpanduri also in the Northern Region. Later a third Clinic (Maternity Clinic) functioned in

¹²¹ *History of Assemblies of God, Ghana*, Accessed on October 10, 2017.

¹²² *History of Assemblies of God, Ghana*. Accessed on October 10, 2017, www.agghana.org.

Walewale under Vivian Smith. The first Bible School of Assemblies of God Ghana was opened in 1950 at Kumbungu in the Northern Region, under the leadership of Rev. Fur Thomas. The first graduates of the School, Rev. Bewini, Agbango, Elisha Akurugu, Alo Joshua Kabba and Alhassan completed Pastoral training in 1951. One of the early students of the Scholl who had worked for the Missionaries was a young man by name Winifred Mullings, who eventually became the Dean of the Northern Ghana Bible Institute. A year later, a second School, Southern Ghana Bible Institute was opened in Kumasi and later moved to Saltpond.¹²³

In 1988, the Mid Ghana Bible Institute was established in Kumasi as the third Bible School. Rev. David Vespa, who was Missionary in Ghana from 1966 to 2006, served as the first principal School at Saltpond. The Andersons found some printing equipment in Tamale and endeavoured to put it to use. This resulted in the establishment of the Assemblies of God Literature Centre (AGLC) located in Accra. It was dedicated by Rev. E. L. Phillips in 1970 to the glory of God. The Literature Centre also catered for the literature needs in the sub-region. It published the first tentative Dagomba version of the New Testament in 1973. The translation was done by Rev. and Mrs. H. S. Lehman and an indigenous Pastor Daniel Wumbee. In 1980, a book outlet known as Ghana Literature Outlet (GLO) was established now renamed Assemblies Bookshop Limited (AGBL) based in Accra. Currently, it has branches in Koforidua, Kumasi and Tamale.¹²⁴

The Church published the first edition of its magazine called “Ghana Evangel” in 1959.

¹²³ *History of Assemblies of God, Ghana*. Accessed on October 10, 2017, www.agghana.org.

¹²⁴ *History of Assemblies of God, Ghana* Accessed on October 10, 2017.

To bring theological and effective Bible Studies to the doorstep of its members and Christians, the Church adopted a distance-learning program in 1970 called International Correspondence Institute (ICI), now Global University. The Church began a radio ministry dubbed, 'BIBLE TIME' aired on (G.B.C) by Rev. James Kessler in 1968. Currently, a good number of our local Churches and Pastors are involved in radio ministry across the country.

Again, to strengthen its members in the faith, Assemblies of God, Ghana, organized Vacation Bible Schools for its students and all interested members around 1959. This continued for many years.¹²⁵

Growth in the South

All along, the activities of the missionaries had been confined to the north. Southerners domiciled in the north on their return to the south shared the gospel with their kinsmen. This led to the establishment of Assemblies of God Churches.

As a result, the Accra and Kumasi stations were opened in 1944, followed by the Takoradi station in 1945. Subsequently, the Southern Ghana District Council was inaugurated in 1950, a year after the official inauguration of the then Northern Ghana District Council.

The first indigenous person to receive the Holy Spirit baptism in the South was the late Rev. Edward Adutwum in 1942 who worked as a pharmacist in the North. He later became a pastor and the Church's General Secretary. Rev. Peter Osei, one of the ministers of the church was ordained at the age of seventy (70) years. The first official General Council meeting was held in 1964. Prior to that, the Northern and

¹²⁵ *History of Assemblies of God, Ghana*. Accessed on October 10, 2017, www.agghana.org.

Southern District Councils held their meetings separately. From Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi the Church spread to the Eastern, Central, Volta and Brong Ahafo regions.¹²⁶

3.4 The Official Position Of Assemblies Of God Worldwide on Divine healing

This is the Official Assemblies of God Worldwide Position Paper on Divine Healing adopted by the General Presbytery in session August 9-11, 2010. From its inception, the General Council of the Assemblies of God has recognized divine healing for the whole person as an important part of the gospel, the good news, which Jesus commissioned His disciples to proclaim. The Assemblies of God Constitution and its Statement of Fundamental Truths, section 12, states, “Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the Atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matthew 8:16,17; James 5:14–16).”¹²⁷ Though it is impossible in a brief paper to cover all the implications of this statement or answer all the questions that are raised concerning it, they endeavoured to show that the statement is scripturally sound. (Appendix iii)¹²⁸

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the historical accounts of the formation Of Assemblies of God denomination and its relation with the healing and deliverance practice. The discussion has shown that though the healing and deliverance practice existed in the

¹²⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assemblies_of_God. Accessed on March 3, 2017.

¹²⁷ “Divine Healing,” Official A/G Position Paper (Adopted by the General Presbytery in session August 9-11, 2010). Accessed on October 12, 2017, <https://ag.org/Beliefs/Topics-Index/Divine-Healing>.

¹²⁸ All biblical quotations unless otherwise indicated are in the New International Version.

A/G Church and precedes the formation of the A/G Ghana. Divine healing is one of its statements of the fundamental truth, which is also one of the gifts of the spirit to the church. Therefore, Assemblies of God founded on the influence of the Holy Spirit should see the church growing through the exercising of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Considering the indepth scriptural understanding of divine healing by the A/G church it should be one of the practices in their services.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents detailed results and analysis of data obtained in the survey. The results of the study were presented in a tabular form using frequencies.

4.2 Presentation of Results

TABLE4.1 GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
MALE	64	65.3	65.3	65.3
FEMALE	36	34.7	34.7	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1, above, represents results on the gender distribution of the respondents. The result of the study indicates that sixty-four (64) of the respondents were males while thirty-six (36) were female. Thus 65.3% of the respondents were males whereas 34.7% are females.

TABLE4.2 EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
MSLE	4	4.1	4.1	4.1
SSCE	28	26.5	26.5	30.6
TERTIARY	68	69.4	69.4	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From table 4.2 above, it is obvious that sixty-eight (68) respondents representing 69.4% either were in tertiary institutions or have completed tertiary education. Additionally, 26.5% of the respondents had completed senior Secondary school while only 4.1% were Middle School graduates.

TABLE 4.3 MEANS THROUGH WHICH PEOPLE BECAME MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
BORN INTO THE CHURCH	26	26.5	26.5	26.5
INVITED	22	22.4	22.4	49.0
CRUSADE	6	4.1	4.1	53.1
PERSONAL DECISION	46	46.9	46.9	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3 presents detail result on the channels through which people joined the church and eventually became church members. From the table above, 46.9% of the respondents made a personal decision to join the church while 26.5% of the respondents were born into the church. Additionally, 22.4% of the respondents presenting eleven (22) respondents were invited by church members to visit the church and they (respondents) eventually decided to join the church as members. The Study revealed that only three (6) respondents representing 4.1% joined the church through crusades. The study shows that Assemblies of God churches have not done enough in evangelism or crusades in spreading the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to get more people to join the church. Furthermore, majority of the respondents, thus 46.9% voluntarily joined the church. This implies that the Assemblies of God

Church still appeals to most Ghanaians but the church must not be complement. The must begin to invest heavily in missions and take personal evangelism seriously.

TABLE 4. 4 RESPONDENTS KNOWLEDGE ON DIVINE HEALING

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid YES	96	98.0	98.0	98.0
Valid NO	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 4.5 IMPACT OF DIVINE HEALING ON CHURCH GROWTH

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid DRIVE CHURCH GROWTH	96	98.0	98.0	98.0
Valid BRINGS DIVISION	4	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

It is evident from table4.4 above, those ninety- six (96) respondents representing 98% Acknowledged that God is the source of divine healing. Respondent however, acknowledged that God could use anointing oil handkerchiefs, water etc. as a means to effect divine healing.

Table 4.5 presents detail results on the impact or effects of divine healing on church. It is evident from the table above that, divine healing drive church growth. Thus ninety-six (96) respondents representing 98% believe that divine healing promote church growth while only two percentage (2%) indicate that divine healing brings division to the church. Interestingly, none of the respondents observed that divine healing decreases church membership. This findings confirms the work of Yohanes (2013) and Pointer (1984)

TABLE 4.6 EFFECTS OF THE ABUSE OF DIVINE HEALTH

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
DRAIN FINANCES OF CHURCH MEMBERS	40	40.8	40.8	40.8
EVERY AILMENT IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE DEVIL	28	28.6	28.6	69.4
PHYSICAL ABUSE	2	2.0	2.0	71.4
FAILURE TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE	28	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

From table 4.6 above, 40.8% of the respondents revealed that the main effect of divine healing on the church is that, it drains the finances of church members. Specifically where church members are asked or coerced to purchase anointing oil, handkerchiefs, water and many other items as means of attaining divine healing. Furthermore, 28.6% of the respondents indicate that attribution of every ailment to the devil and failure to seek medical care are some of the adverse effects of divine healing

on the church. Physical abuse of church members was also noted as one of the effects of divine healing on the church.

TABLE 4.7 ABSENCE OF DIVINE HEALING ON THE CHURCH

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
MEMBERS SEEK DIVINE HEALING OUTSIDE	74	75.5	75.5	75.5
LOSS OF CHURCH MEMBERS	18	18.4	18.4	93.9
HAS NO EFFECTS	6	6.1	6.1	100.0
Total	98	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 4.8 ADMINISTRATORS OF DIVINE HEALING

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
RESIDENT PASTOR	26	24.5	24.5	24.5
GUEST PASTOR	36	36.7	36.7	61.2
BOTH PASTORS	38	38.8	38.8	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

From table 4.7 above, it is obvious that seven-four (74) respondents presenting 75.5% indicate that church members seek divine healing outside their traditional churches. Additionally, 18.4% of the respondents revealed that the church could lose it members to other churches that practice divine healing. These revelations from the study

indicate that absence of the practice of divine healing could have serious adverse effects of church growth.

Table 4.8 revealed that only 24.5% of the Assemblies of God Pastors practice divine healing. The study further revealed that 36.7% of divine healing was administered by guest pastors. However, thirty-eight (38) respondents representing 38.8% revealed that divine healing was administered by both resident and the guest pastors. The study shows that most Assemblies of God pastors do not practice divine healing in their churches.

TABLE 4.9 MEASURES TO CURB THE ABUSE OF DIVINE HEALTH

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
SANCTION OFFENDERS	8	6.1	6.1	6.1
Valid EDUCATE CHURCH MEMBERS	92	93.9	93.9	100.0
Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.9 presents detail results on the measures to curb the abuse of divine healing. Interestingly 93.9% of the respondents noted that educating Church members is one of the most important ways to curbing the abuse of divine healing by some men and women of God. Only 6.1% of the respondents alluded to the fact that The Ghana Pentecostal Council should take comprehensive measures to reduce the excess or abuse of divine healing. It is worthy to note that none of the respondents wants government intervention to regulate the activities of the Church.

4.3 Discussion of Results

The study revealed that only 4.1% of the respondents joined the through crusades or personal evangelism. This reflects the declining enthusiasm by the church in propagating the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to win more souls for Christ. The results of the study show that 26.5% of the respondents were born into the Church while 46.9% made personal decision to join the Church. This result confirms Pointer's Biological dimension of Church growth. The result revealed that majority of respondents made a personal decision to join the church. This might imply that the church appeals to majority of Ghanaians but gradually losing sight on evangelism and missions¹²⁹,

It was also established through the study that the practice of divine healing by pastors drive church growth. Thus 98% of the respondents noted that the practice of divine healing positively drive and significantly contribute to church growth. This result is in line with the study of Yohanes who came to a similar conclusion that divine healing positively drives church growth since it attracts a lot of people to the church.¹³⁰

The results of the study indicate that the abuse of divine healing could drain the finances of church members, especially where church members are either coerced or persuaded to purchase anointing oils, handkerchiefs, water in order to access divine healing. Specifically 40.8% of the respondents revealed that financial drain of church members is one of the effects of the abuse of divine healing. Additionally, 28.6% of the respondents acknowledged that the attributions of every ailment to the devil or

¹²⁹ Pointer, *How do Churches Grow?*, 58.

¹³⁰ Yohannes, *Healing and Deliverance in Church Growth*, 67.

failure to seek medical care are some of the excesses or abuses of divine healing by pastors. The results above contradict the work of Asamoah-Gyadu who found out that the sale of anointing oils, handkerchiefs, water, etc. imposes additional financial burden on the church members.¹³¹

The results of the study revealed that church members would seek divine healing outside their churches if their pastors failed to administer or practice it. Specifically, 75.5% of the respondents indicated that they would seek divine healing outside their main church if their pastors failed to practice it. However, 18.4% of the respondents revealed that the continuous absence of divine healing could lead to loss of church members who crave for divine healing to other churches. Yohanes and Anderson, also concluded that many church members seek divine healing in other churches when their pastors failed to administer it.¹³²

The study revealed that educating church members is the most important measure of curbing the excesses of abuse of divine healing. Thus 93.9% of the respondents agreed that education of church members is the most appropriate measure to reduce or curb the abuse of divine healing in the church.

4.4 Conclusion

Even nearly, 20% of the entire gospels are devoted to Jesus' healing ministry and the discussions occasioned by it. Out of the 3,779 verses in the four gospels, 727 relate specifically to the healing of physical, mental illness, and resurrection of the dead. In addition, 165 verses deal in general with eternal life, and 31 general references to

¹³¹ Asamoah –Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 78.

¹³² Yohanes, *Healing and Deliverance in Church Growth*, 54.

miracles that include healing. Therefore, considering the high rate of sickness in our time there is a lot of work for the church to do.¹³³

In this context, the conclusion is that the Christians' concern about their responsibility in the society was facing a new challenge that called for new responses. The central question is rapidly becoming, how can the resources of our religious heritage be a source of new life and hope for those now caught up in this daily struggle for survival? For only when these women and men, whose lives are being threatened and often broken by the destructive powers around and within them, find a spiritual power capable of recognizing their lives and they will have the will and the energy to struggle dynamically to change their world. They have spent the little money they have and have nothing left. Their only hope is the church to minister healing into their lives to become whole. Therefore, the aim is to bring out how divine healing can help promote church growth in Bantama.

Healing Attracts People's Attention to Listen to the Word of God. There are many programmes done in various churches which most often than not they do not yield the needed results. It attracts people to the scene. At times, it may involve a lot of financial input and advertisement, members' participation yet it attracts less people than expected. Meanwhile even if one person is prayed for and receives healing in a small gathering like a prayer meeting, the news often travels everywhere to attract people to the scene or that particular church or prayer meeting and affects the growth in attendance. For in as much as people are suffering from many diseases there are

¹³³ Kesley, *Healing and Christianity*, 348.

others who want to identify with people groups who are genuine in their dealings and confirm what they preach.

Divine Healing Promotes Financial Growth of the Churches. If members are sick, there are the possibilities that they will do everything possible to receive their healing. This takes them to diverse sources of help. Finally, they will spend their money on hospital bills and other medications. People always budget for things like food to feed the family, children's school fees, electricity bills, and others. If a member gets sick since certain items are unavoidable, the money to be used for medication and checkup, will automatically affect the budget for offerings and tithes. Generally, the pastors seem to understand such members if they are not paying their tithes and fulfilling their pledges.

The assumption is that when they get well they will pay the arrears. This finally goes a long way to affect positively the finances of the church. Even to some, the church ought to go in and support footing their medical bills. However, when the members are experiencing divine healing in the church they are always very happy and feel a sense of belonging, of course, sickness is unavoidable. First, they support the church financially by paying good offerings and tithes. Secondly, they come in to give testimonies and thanksgiving offerings, which convince those in the congregation who have not yet, believe in Jesus to take a final decision for his salvation. This thanksgiving offering usually comes in a large sum. Testimonies about the healing too spread so quickly, which attracts people to the church. They will be able to come from far and near to attend services. When the income of the church rises, the church is able to evangelize and bring souls into the Kingdom of God.

Divine Healing Promotes a Healthy and a Lively Church. There are certain churches in the metropolis that are having membership of which about 80% of the population are above forty-five years. Such churches lack the healthiness and the lively atmosphere found in dynamic churches full of youth. The reason is that old age has its own problem of sicknesses in disguise. Such churches do not have lively services.

Likewise, when majority of the membership of the church are sick there is that possibility that the church will not be healthy and living. However, when divine healing is operating in the church and people are receiving healing, it brings a spirit-filled atmosphere in the church and every individual enjoys the services. This gives a general outlook of a healthy and a lively church and members as well. Such churches are able to embark on the following: Acts 4:32-37:

- a. They are able to do the work of ministry, teaching, ministering in songs and prayer.
- b. They grow in fellowship, each person becomes the brother keeper and are able to evangelize as a church and as individuals.
- c. The 'backdoors' of the church will be closed for there will always be people ready to do follow ups on the new members as well as old members who are absenting themselves from the church.
- d. The pastor prepares well to teach the members of the church to do the work of ministry (Eph. 4:11-13) and minister in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Irrespective of the pastor's vision for the church, he alone cannot promote its growth. People visit such churches and they stay forever. Since the growth of the church is effected by God and divine healing is one of the spiritual gifts, it should be the gift people should desire more.

Divine Healing Promotes Planting Churches. Generally, both believers and unbelievers fall sick. So, if there is going to be an evangelistic outreach to plant a church, and during the open-air-evangelistic outreach or a door to door witness within the community, and a sick person in that vicinity is prayed for and is healed, the

miracle automatically attracts people to believe in God. Then the new church receives a good sizeable membership right from the start. This also promotes church growth.

Divine Healing Promotes Lively Worship Service and Full Participation. David said, “I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of the Lord.” (Psalm 122:1 NKJV) He was in a healthy state that was why he felt glad. If he was sick he would probably had said” I felt sad when they said unto me let us go into the house of the Lord”. A healthy person in Christ always has a sound mind. A sick person cannot worship God to his outermost best. For example during the Sunday services if the worship leader is sick, and the instrumentalists are also not feeling well, only these few out of the lot can negatively affect the worship service that day. There are also times a breadwinner in the family is admitted at the hospital the night before church service, and it negatively affects the rest of the family members or dependents, which finally affects their participation in the worship service. In the nutshell, sickness of a beloved one takes their minds off the service and even affect their worship for the day. Some even stay at home till the person is completely healed. However, when the sick person is brought to the church and receives healing, it changes the tone of the service and everybody becomes happy. The service becomes lively right from the, beginning to the end. When testimonies come, unbelievers turn to believe and put their trust in God. People send the testimonies out and these attract many people to come in to believe in God. Many sick persons in the church are expecting healing in their churches.

Divine Healing Brings Joy to the Affected Family. When a person in the family is sick, it affects negatively the joy of the family. Some refuse to attend church service while the unbelievers among them tend to mock the church. For the church preaches that their God heals the sick. However, when God heals the person the smiles reappear on their faces and increase the faith of the believers and to the unbelievers to the saving knowledge of Christ. At times, a whole family or a town believe in the Lord (Acts 9:32-43).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

This is the final chapter of the thesis. It is made up of the discussion of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study revealed that only 4.1% of the respondents joined the church through crusades or personal evangelism. This reflects the declining enthusiasm by the church in propagating the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to win more souls for Christ. The results of the study show that 26.5% of the respondents were born into the Church while 46.9% made personal decision to join the Church. The study established that the practice of divine healing by pastors drive church growth. Thus 98% of the respondents noted that the practice of divine healing positively drives and significantly contributes to church growth.

The results of the study indicate that the abuse of divine healing could drain the finances of church members, especially where the local church pastor or an invited pastor to the church either coerces or persuades members to purchase anointing oils, handkerchiefs, water in order to access divine healing. Specifically 40.8% of the respondents revealed that financial drain of church members is one of the effects of the abuse of divine healing. Additionally, 28.6% of the respondents acknowledged

that the attribution of every ailment to the devil or failure to seek medical care is some of the excess or abuse of divine healing by pastors.

The results of the study revealed that church members would seek divine healing outside their churches if their pastors failed to administer or practice it. Specially, 75.5% of the respondents indicated that they would seek divine healing outside their main church if their pastors failed to practice it. However, 18.4% of the respondents revealed that the continuous absence of divine healing could cause loss of church members who crave for divine healing to other churches.

The study revealed that educating church members is the most important measure of curbing the excesses of abuse of divine healing. Thus 93.9% of the respondents agreed that education of church members is the key measure to reduce or curb the abuse of divine healing in the church.

5.3 Recommendations

Related to the findings made in the course of this study, it is obvious that the Assemblies of God Church appeals to majority of Ghanaians but the church must wake- up and pay a serious attention to the following areas.

The study revealed that only 4.1% of the respondents joined the Church through evangelism and crusades. This is an obvious indication of declining evangelistic effort by the church to win more souls for the body of Christ. There must be a concerted effort to spread the gospel and invest heavily in the missions department in order to drive this agenda.

The study also revealed that 75.5% of the respondents seek divine healing in other churches when the resident minister does not practice it. Historically, divine healing has been one of the main Christian practices associated with Assemblies of God Church. It was the Church's unique identity and so must it be today. The church must entreat all its ministers or pastors to go back to the root and start practicing divine healing and deliverance since it is even one of the Fundamental Truths of the Church. This will help to avert church members from seeking divine healing and deliverance in other churches and prayer centers.

Lastly, the study reveals that some ministers of God abused the administration of divine healing and deliverance resulting in physical, emotional and psychological effect on the victims. To curb the recent upsurge in this abuse, pastors must take the responsibility to educate their members very well. A Well-structured and intensive bible studies and teaching will contribute significantly to curb this menace.

Use Sunday evenings for healing services

Some members who are sick or a family member is sick, and having realized that the church takes keen interest in their plight and has set a particular time to minister their needs will be happy to come to that service.

Therefore, it is recommended that the churches use the Sunday evenings for divine healing services and in few weeks' time, they will see the rise in membership that will finally result in the growth of the churches. These services will begin to attract unbelievers to the church because the sick among them also need healing and deliverance. The motive behind this is that the sick among the congregation will now come to the realization that the church care about their primary needs. When such

persons receive their healings, the testimonies they give outside the church then draw many people to the church resulting in the growth of the church. Moreover, those who will not receive their healing will not be much bothered rather felt ministered to.

Use the Holy Communion services as healing services

The Holy Communion is one of the ordinances of the church. Jesus Christ commanded the church to observe it as a remembrance of Him, (Mt. 26:26-28). The significances include divine healing. An observation made about this ordinance is that some of the churches apportion less time for this ordinance in their worship service. Others who give it enough time in the worship service also do not make it very effective. A sacrilegious attitude towards the Holy Communion can eventuate in sickness.¹³⁴ However, when observed properly it does much good to the church. The broken body of Christ is for the believers, (I Cor. 11:24). The broken body was for the atonement of sin. Sin separates man from God. Atonement brings us back to God and makes us one with God. The prophet Isaiah said, "... by His stripes we are healed" (Is. 53:4-5NIV). He was making an analogy that anyone who partakes of the body of Christ benefits from effect of the stripes, which is healing.

As a result, pastors should teach members to have in-depth knowledge about this ordinance so that they will appropriate it into their lives, which will finally result in their healing. This will promote the growth of the church.

Therefore, it is recommend to the pastors that full attention be given to the Holy Communion, and should be observed as a healing service because it is one of the effective tools to promote church growth.

¹³⁴ Jesse K. Moon, *Divine Healing and the Problem of Suffering* (Waxahachie, TX: Dr. Jesse K. Moon, 1967), 8.

The Pastors should encourage those with the gifts of healing to operate in the church.

The author believes that pastors are not the only people operating with the gifts of healing in the church to pray for the sick. Some members also have been endowed with this gift since it is a gift for all believers. Therefore, the pastors are to direct as well as encourage those operating the gifts for its proper use. For many people operating in the gift of healing easily fall prey to the devil. Pride easily takes over their lives, and in no time leave the faith. Therefore when the pastors see the need and take time off their busy schedule and guide them in the operation of the gift, it will be beneficial to the church. Divine healing attracts people to places where they preach and practice the gospel. This will result in the growth of the church. Therefore, the pastors must encourage and direct those operating in the gift of healing to use them wisely and not to abuse them.

Pastors should encourage the members to pray for the sick

Since witnessing is not only for those with the gift of healing but all the members, it is expedient on the pastors to teach the members and encourage them to pray for the sick when they go for witnessing. Many a time ordinary church members have prayed for the sick persons during witnessing and people were healed.

The whole church is to make a habit to pray for the sick when the need arises during witnessing. When this becomes a habit of the members many people will get their healing in this process and as a result come to the saving knowledge of God, (Mk. 16:18). For this reason I recommend that to the church to involve praying for the sick when they go for witnessing.

Support members to attend spiritual gifts workshops

The leadership of the church have two responsibilities, first, the church should organize workshop on spiritual gifts for the members in the church. Second, the church should sponsor some members to attend the workshop on spiritual gifts organized outside the church. This will educate the church on divine healing and create the atmosphere in the church. Many people in the church can assess divine healing when they are sick and also can pray for those in their families, friend and others when they are sick so that it will not seem like the pastor is the only person responsible for the gift of healing. When such people receive their healings they will come to believe in God and the church will grow.

5.4 Conclusion.

It has become obvious that the Assemblies of God, a church that is Pentecostal, and believes in the workings and gifting of the Holy Spirit are now losing the essence of the spiritual gifts in their services. Most importantly, one of the fundamental truths of the organization is divine healing. All the information gathered from the research shows that it is scarcely being practiced in their services. Therefore, if it continues in these directions, the church will lose its members to the churches who are practicing it. The topic must be treated intensively, practice regularly during services and when evangelizing. Evangelism that brings salvation to the people should be the prime goal of the church.

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APPENDIX I
QUESTIONNAIRE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR RESPONDENTS AGED 18YEARS AND ABOVE

TOPIC: EXAMING THE EFFECT OF DIVINE HEALING ON CHURCH GROWTH: A CASE STUDY OF ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHURCH-BANTAMA DISTRICT

Rev. Samuel Oduro Dwumo a postgraduate student of Christian Service University for research purpose is collecting the data of these questionnaires only. It is not part of any government or political party project. All information received will be kept confidential and for academic purpose only.

SOCIO – DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

1. Gender: 1. [] Male, 2. [] Female

2. Age of respondents (in years)

1. [] 10 -20, 2. [] 21- 30, 3. [] 31 – 40,
4. [] 40 and above

3. Marital Status.

1. [] Married, 2. [] single, 3. [] widow, 4. [] Divorced, 5. [] widower

4. Level of education

1. [] No formal education 2 [] Primary education,
3.[] Junior Secondary/Middle School, 4 [] Senior Secondary/ Technical education
5. [] Tertiary education

BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS IN THE CHURCH

Name of your Church

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

- 1 [] Below one year,
- 2. [] 1 – 3 years ,
- 3.[] 4 years and above

6. How did you become a member of this church?

- 1.[] Born into the church
- 2.[] Invited by a member
- 3.[] Through crusade
- 4.[] Seek divine healing
- 5.[] Personal decision

7. What is your position in the church?

- 1.[] Pastor,
- 2. [] Deacon,
- 3.[] Member
- 4[] others (specify)

8. Which of the following main groups do you belong to in the church?

- 1. [] Men's ministry, 2 [] Women's ministry,
- 3. [] Christ Ambassadors(CA)

DIVINE HEALING

9. Did you hear of divine healing or someone being healed divinely before?

- 1.[] Yes, 2.[] No,

10. Who or what do you think is the source of divine healing.

1. Jesus Christ (God) 2. Men of God 3. Anointing oil, “ holy”
handkerchiefs, hand bangles etc.

11. Is there any difference between divine healing and orthodox medication?

1. Yes 2. No

12. Have you ever witness divine healing in your church?

1. Yes, 2. No

13. If yes, through whom was it administered?

1. Resident Pastor, 2. Guest Speaker, 3. Both

14. Have you personally experience divine healing before?

1. Yes, 2. No

15. Have you ever pray for someone to receive divine healing ?

1. Yes 2. No.

16. Can one receive divine healing without buying anointing oil, holy handkerchiefs,
holy bangles etc.

1. Yes 2. No

17. What is your understanding of church growth?

1. Addition of new members
2. Growth seen in both internal and external structures
3. Increase in happenings of miracles like divine healings

DIVINE HEALING AND CHURCH GROWTH

17. Divine healing is an integral part of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

1. True 2. False

18. What is the impact of divine healing on the church today?

1. Drive church growth,
2. Decrease in church members,
3. Brings division in the church

19. What is the effects of the absence of divine healing in some Pentecostal churches today?

1. Members seek divine healing in other churches,
2. The church could lose its members
3. Has no effects on the church

21. Have you been attracted to visit a particular church due to the operations of divine healing before?

1. Yes,
2. No

22. Which of people do God use to administer divine healing.

1. Pastors,
2. members,
3. Both

23. A new convert can operate the gift of divine healing. True False

ABUSE DIVINE HEALING

24. Is divine healing being abused in the church by men and women of God in these contemporary times?

1. Yes,
2. No

25. What is the effects of the abuse or the excess of divine healing on church members?

Drains the finances of church members

Attribute every ailment to the devil

Physical abuse

Failure to seek medical care

26. What can be done to reduce the excess or abuse of divine healing?

1. Christian Council should sanction men or women of God who abuse it

2. Educate church members

3. Government should pass law regulate the abuse

APPENDIX II

This tabulation of the healing works described in the Gospels is as follows:

No.	Healing	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Method
1.	Man with unclean spirit		1:23	4:33		Exorcism, word
2.	Peter's mother in law	8:1	1:30	4:38		Touch, word; prayer of friends
3.	Multitudes	8:16.	1:32	4:40		Touch, word; faith of friends
3.	Many demons		1:39			Preaching exorcism
4.	A leper	8:2	1:40	5:12		Word, touch; leper's faith and Christ compassion
5.	Man sick of the palsy	9:2	2:3	5:17		Word; faith of friends
6.	Man's withered hand	12:9	3:1	6:6		Word; obedient faith
7.	Multitudes	12:15	3:10			Exorcism, response to faith
8.	Gerasene demoniac	8:28	5:1	8:26		Word, exorcism
9.	Jarius' Daughter	9:18	5:22	8:41		Word, touch; faith of the father

10.	Woman with issue of	9:20	5:25 '	8:45	Touching his garment in blood faith
11.	A few sick folk	13:58	6:5		Touched (hindered By unbelief)
13.	Multitudes	14:34	6:55		Touch of garment friends faith
14.	Syrophoenician's	15:22	7:24		Response mother's prayer daughter
15.	Deaf and dumb man	7:32			Word, touch; friends' prayer
16.	Blind man (gradual healing)	8:22			Word, touch; friends' prayer
17.	Child with evil spirit	17:14	9:14	9:38	Word, touch; faith of father
18.	Bartimaeus	20:30	10:46	18:38	Word, touch; compassion; faith
19.	Centurion's servant	8:5	7:2		Resp. to master's prayer, faith
20.	Two blind men	9:27			Word, touch; men's faith
21.	Dumb demoniac	9:32			Exorcism
22.	Blind and dumb demoniac	12:22	11:14		Exorcism

23.	Multitudes	4:23	6:17		Teaching, preaching healing
24.	Multitudes	9:35			Teaching, preaching healing
25.	Multitudes	11:4	7:21		Proof to John Bapt. in prison
26.	Multitudes	14:14	9:11	6:2	Compassion, response to need
27.	Great multitudes	15:30			Faith of friends
28.	Great multitudes	19:2			
29.	Blind and lame in temple	21:4			
30.	Widow's son	7:11			Word, compassion
31.	Mary Magdalene and others			8:2	Exorcism
32.	Woman bound by Satan	13:10			Word, touch
33.	Man with dropsy	14:1			Touch
34.	Ten lepers	17:11			Word; faith of the men.
35.	Malchus' ear	22:49			Touch
36.	Multitudes	5:15			
37.	Various persons	13:32			Exorcism, and not Stated

- | | | |
|--------------------|------|-------------------------|
| 38. Nobleman's son | 4:46 | Word; father's
faith |
| 39. Impotent man | 5:2 | Word; man's faith |

APPENDIX III

The Assemblies of God Constitution and its Statement of Fundamental Truths

I. Divine Healing Is an Integral Part of the Gospel

The ministry of both Jesus and the apostles gives evidence that divine healing was integral to the proclamation of the gospel message. It was an important witness to Jesus as the revelation of the Father, the promised Messiah, and the Savior from sin (see John 10:37,38). The Bible shows a close connection between the healing ministry of Jesus and His saving, forgiving ministry. His power to heal was actually a witness to His authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:5–12). Frequently the gospel writers testify that His healing miracles parallel His preaching of the gospel, both being the purpose of His ministry (Matthew 4:23; 9:35,36).

People came from all directions both to hear Him and to be healed (Luke 5:15; 6:17,18). He never turned any away but healed all varieties of sicknesses, diseases, deformities, defects, and injuries (Matthew 15:30,31; 21:14). He also delivered people from demons and the problems they caused (Matthew 4:24).

Jesus recognized that sickness is ultimately the result of the fall of humans into sin, and in some instances may be linked to specific sin (John 5:14) or to the activity of Satan (Luke 13:16). He recognized also, however, that sickness is not always the direct result of specific sin (John 9:2,3). There were times when it was rather an opportunity for God to be glorified (Mark 2:12).

Miracles of healing were an important part of the works God sent Jesus to do (John 9:3,4). This is in line with the Old Testament revelation of God as the Great Physician, the Lord who heals (Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:3, where the Hebrew participles used in both cases indicate it is God's nature to heal). Jesus' ministry showed that divine healing is still a vital part of God's nature and plan.

Healings also helped to identify Jesus as the promised Messiah and Savior. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4: "Surely he took up [lifted and took away] our infirmities and carried [as a heavy load] our sorrows." ("Infirmities," *choli*, is the same word used of physical sickness and disease in Deuteronomy 28:59,61; 2 Chronicles 16:12; 21:15,18,19; Isaiah 38:9. "Sorrows," *makob*, is the same word used of physical pain in Job 33:19.) Matthew, in the account of Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law, sees this Isaiah passage fulfilled in the healing ministry of Jesus: "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 'He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases'" (Matthew 8:17).

Isaiah also ties the sufferings of the Servant to the provision of salvation, a ministry fulfilled by Jesus (Isaiah 53:5,6). His sufferings were for our sins and lead to our peace with God: "And by his wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). The Isaiah context and the reference to it in 1 Peter 2:24,25 emphasize especially the healing or restoration from sin. However, in view of the emphasis on physical sickness in Isaiah 53:4, it is clear that these passages teach that the gospel to be introduced by the Suffering Servant, Jesus, includes healing from both the spiritual and physical effects of the fall of the human race into sin recorded in Genesis 3.

When John the Baptist was imprisoned, he questioned whether Jesus was actually the promised Messiah or just another forerunner like himself. Jesus responded by calling attention to His messianic works that linked miracles and the preaching of the gospel to the poor (Matthew 11:4,5). Again, healing was an important witness, an integral part of the gospel (Isaiah 61:1,2; Luke 4:18; 7:19–23).

Divine healing continued to be an integral part of the gospel through the ministry of the apostles and the Early Church. Jesus sent out the Twelve and the Seventy-two to preach and to heal the sick (Luke 9:2; 10:9). After Pentecost “many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles” (Acts 2:43). Luke wrote the Book of Acts as an extension of the story of what Jesus did and taught, not only through the apostles but through a Church filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1,8; 2:4).

The working of miracles, including divine healing, was not limited to the apostles. The promise of Jesus was to all believers (John 14:12–14) who would ask in His name (that is, those who recognize His authority and conform themselves to His nature and purposes). God used deacons such as Philip to preach and heal (Acts 8:5–7) and an otherwise unknown disciple, Ananias, to bring healing to Saul (Paul) (Acts 9:12–18).

The gospel message includes the provision of spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit to the Church, among which are the gifts of healings (1 Corinthians 12:7). All of these gifts, including that of healing, continue to edify or build up the Church and offer hope to every believer. Moreover, James asserts that healing is a normal aspect of the regular meetings of the Church. Whenever the community of faith is gathered, anyone who is sick may request prayer for healing (5:14). We are assured that divine healing is an ongoing manifestation of the gospel in the current day, and will continue until the return of Jesus.

II. Divine Healing Is Provided in the Atonement

The ministry of the priests under the Law foreshadowed the ministry of the great High Priest, Jesus Christ, who is able “to sympathize with our weaknesses (astheneia, weakness, sickness, disease, timidity, infirmity)” (Hebrews 4:14,15). The Old Testament priests, through the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices, made atonement for the sins of the people.

An examination of the concept of atonement in the Bible shows that in most cases it refers to a ransom price paid ¹³⁵for redemption and restoration, which points to the redemption through Christ accomplished by the shedding of His blood in our behalf. The apostle Paul described it this way: “God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood” (Romans 3:25).

The phrase, “sacrifice of atonement,” translates the Greek hilasterion, which can be also translated expiation, propitiation, atonement, or mercy seat. Leviticus 16 records God’s expectations for Israel’s Day of Atonement and the ministry of the high priest sprinkling the blood of a sin offering on the atonement cover (the solid gold lid on top of the ark of the covenant). The ark contained the stone tablets of the Law, which the people had broken. The broken Law called for judgment and death. But when the blood of a spotless lamb was sprinkled, prophetically anticipating the sinless life of Christ, God saw that sinless life instead of the broken Law and could give mercy and blessing.

The primary purpose of the atonement was cleansing from sin (Leviticus 16:30). It is also clear, however, that atonement brought release from the penalty and consequences of sin in order to bring restoration to God’s blessing and favor. When the people of Israel complained after the judgment that followed the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, God sent a plague on the Israelites. Moses sent Aaron out into the midst of the congregation, where he made atonement for them, and the plague was stopped (Numbers 16:47,48). The Law of Moses required that when the men of Israel were numbered, they were each to give a half shekel atonement offering for their redemption and to prevent a plague from coming upon

¹³⁵ “Divine Healing: Official A/G Position Paper.” Accessed on October 12, 2017.

them (Exodus 30:11–16). Atonement thus provided cleansing from sin and its consequences, including sickness and disease.

The Bible makes it clear that people could not pay the price for their redemption, so God out of His love and for the glory of His own name provided the ultimate atonement (Romans 3:25; see also Psalms 65:3; 78:38; 79:9; Romans 3:21–28). All this was accomplished through Christ at Calvary (John 3:14–16). There He made a full atonement for the whole person. The New Testament speaks of this as redemption, which has essentially the same meaning as atonement. Through Christ we have received redemption and the forgiveness of sins (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:15).

Redemption, accomplished through the atonement of Christ, provides reconciliation for sin and its consequences. Even where sickness is not the direct result of specific sin, it is still in the world because of sin. Therefore it is among the works of the devil Jesus came to destroy (1 John 3:8) and is thus included in the Atonement.

From the parallel between redemption and atonement, we see that provision for the healing of our bodies is part of the redemption spoken of in Romans 8:23. We receive the forgiveness of sins now in connection with the redemption of our souls. We shall receive the redemption of our bodies when we are caught up to meet the Lord and are changed into His likeness (1 Corinthians 15:51–54; 2 Corinthians 5:1–4; 1 John 3:2). Divine healing now is a foretaste of this, and, like all the blessings of the gospel, flows from the Atonement.¹³⁶

III. Divine Healing Is a Gift of God's Grace for All

Just as salvation is by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8), so all God's blessings and gifts are ours by His grace, or unmerited favor. They cannot be earned or deserved. It should be noted that instead of demanding healing from Jesus, the New Testament records that people came asking for His compassionate ministry. They did not look on healing as their right, but as a gracious privilege extended to them.

That we cannot earn God's blessings, including divine healing, should make us realize the importance of cultivating our life in the Spirit, for the Spirit will "give life to your mortal bodies," and that is our real hope (Romans 8:11). In fact, even though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day (2 Corinthians 4:16).

It is this inner renewal that makes us best able to have the faith to receive the gift of divine healing. To the woman healed of her twelve-year-long bleeding, Jesus said, "Your faith has healed you" (Mark 5:34). Paul at Lystra, when he saw that listening to his preaching had brought faith to be healed into the heart of a cripple, commanded him to stand up (Acts 14:9,10). Faith is seen also in the Roman centurion who recognized the authority of Christ's word for the healing of his servant (Matthew 8:5–13) and the Canaanite woman who believed in Jesus for the healing of her daughter (Mark 7:24–30; Matthew 15:28).

That divine healing comes through faith is further confirmed by the fact that unbelief hindered its reception at Nazareth (Mark 6:5,6) and at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:14–20). James 5:15 promises that the prayer of faith offered for the sick by the elders of the church will make the sick well and the Lord will raise them up. Faith, then, receives healing through the simple Word of the Lord. But Jesus did not turn away from those who had little faith or who did not seem to express any faith at all. Those who are sick often find it is not easy to express faith, and Jesus did a variety of things to help them. Some He touched (Mark 1:41; 8:22), took their hands (Mark 1:31; Luke 14:4), or laid His hands upon

¹³⁶ "Divine Healing: Official A/G Position Paper." Accessed on October 12, 2017.

them (Mark 6:5; 8:25; Luke 4:40; 13:13). Others He helped by a variety of acts, some of which called for faith and obedience on their part (Mark 7:33; 8:23).

Faith, however, had to be in the Lord, not in the means used to help them express their faith. This seems to be the reason for the great variety of means used, lest people get their eyes on the means rather than on God. Faith is trusting the all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful God to respond to the cries of His creation in His own way.

The promise “anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing” is closely connected with prayer, asking in Christ’s name (John 14:12–14; 16:23,24). The usage of the name of Jesus is not a formula that can be used by humans to coerce the response of God. His name is the revelation of His character and nature, which we have in us only if we abide in Christ and His words abide in us (John 15:7). As a consequence of this, His will becomes dominant in our lives, conforming our will to His. Thus, our requests in His name are increasingly according to His will, opening the avenue for His responding to our prayers.

The revelation of God as “the Lord, who heals you” (Exodus 15:26) cannot be limited to Israel. The healing of the centurion’s servant and the daughter of the Canaanite woman show that healing is the privilege of Gentiles also. In fact, there is healing for all who desire it and will respond to Jesus. There is evidence that God’s gift of healing can even be experienced by one before their sins have been dealt with, as in the case of the invalid at the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:2–9,14).

Belief in divine healing neither opposes nor competes with medical doctors. The knowledge and skills of this profession bring help to many. It is true that the Bible condemns King Asa because “even in his illness he did not seek help from the Lord, but only from the physicians” (2 Chronicles 16:12). But Asa had already sought for help from Syria in an act of unbelief and disobedience, refusing to rely on the Lord (2 Chronicles 16:7). The issue for which Asa is judged is not that he sought help from physicians but that he refused to seek the Lord.

When the woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years was healed, Mark records that “she had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse” (Mark 5:26). If it was wrong for her to go to physicians, this would have been the perfect place for Jesus to have said so, but He did not. Instead, He accepted the faith she expressed and commended her for it.

Jesus also sent the ten lepers whom He healed to show themselves to the priests (Luke 17:14). Under the Law the priests were in charge of diagnosis, quarantine, and health (Leviticus 13:2ff.; 14:2ff.; Matthew 8:4). Thus Jesus recognized that human diagnosticians have their place.

Through the skill and training of physicians recoveries and restorations do occur, a truth that does neither refute nor diminishes the belief in divine healing. We rejoice should God, who is the source of all healing, work through the doctors, give thanks to them for their dedication, and offer continual praise to God. With all their learning, training, and skill, doctors are still not the last word to be uttered in diagnosing human maladies. We steadfastly look to God who is more than able to bring healing even in situations deemed to be hopeless.¹³⁷

IV. Divine Healing Will Be Fully Realized When Jesus Returns

We are living at present between the first and second appearances of Jesus Christ. At His first coming He provided, through His life, death, and resurrection, atonement for sin and its consequences. In this era divine healing, a gift of God’s grace, is seen as a prophetic expression of the complete redemption of the human body. At His second coming what was

¹³⁷ *Divine Healing: Official A/G Position Paper*. Accessed on October 12, 2017.

begun will be brought to completion—salvation from sin and all its effects will be realized. In this period of the “already and not yet” some are healed instantly, some gradually, and others are not healed.

The Bible indicates that until Jesus comes we groan because we have not yet received the full redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23). Only when the dead in Christ rise and we are changed do we receive the new bodies which are like His glorious body (1 Corinthians 15:42–44,51–54). Even followers of Christ groan and travail in pain like the rest of creation, waiting patiently for the fulfillment of our hope (Romans 8:21–25). In that the human body is described by Paul as a “temple of the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 6:19), we must care for it and avoid that which would abuse it. But, no matter what we do for this body, no matter how many times we are healed, unless the rapture of the Church intervenes we shall die.

The promise and reality of divine healing does not rule out suffering for the sake of Christ and that of the gospel. We are expected to be prepared to follow His example (Hebrews 5:8; 1 Peter 2:19,21; 4:12–14,19). Nor are we to look to divine healing as a substitute for obedience to the rules of physical and mental health. Jesus recognized the need of the disciples to get away from the crowds and rest awhile (Mark 6:31). Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, advised him to delegate some of his responsibilities so that he could stand the strain of leading Israel (Exodus 18:17,18).

Neither is divine healing a means of avoiding the effects of old age. Moses did retain a clear eye and his natural strength until the day of his death (Deuteronomy 34:7), but this privilege was not granted to King David (1 Kings 1:1–4). The gradual breakdown of old age, pictured so graphically in Ecclesiastes 12:1–7, is the common experience of believers as well as unbelievers. Healing is still available to the aged, but the part that is healed usually continues to age like the rest of the body. We do not yet have the redemption of the body.

It is possible that the refusal to alter one’s lifestyle to accord with biblical principles could hinder healing (John 5:14). While the amount of faith is not always, as noted above, determinative, if one does not believe that divine healing can occur, it might not. We must also be open to God’s will and activities, always designed by His love and for our good, understanding that they are beyond our immediate ability to understand. He is, by healing us now and by not healing us, moved by His great compassion, desiring that we be drawn increasingly closer to Him.

We recognize that there have been abuses regarding divine healing. Excessive claims and unfounded judgments are offered by some. But we must not let that cause us to retreat from a positive proclamation of the truth of the Scripture. Peter and John were able to say to the lame man who was to be healed, “What I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk” (Acts 3:6). May we, too, remain committed to the reality of the power of God to effect divine healing.

In humility we confess that we do not understand all that pertains to divine healing. We do not understand fully why some are healed and others are not, any more than we understand why God permitted James to be martyred and Peter delivered (Acts 12:1–19). Scripture makes it clear, however, that our part is to preach the Word, expecting signs, including divine healing, to follow. Finally, at the Lord’s return, “when the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:54), the full realization of divine healing will have come.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ *Divine Healing: Official A/G Position Paper*. Accessed on October 12, 2017.