BIBLICAL PROPHECY AND CONTEMPORARY PROPHETIC MINISTRY IN GHANAIAN NEO-PROPHETIC MINISTRIES: AN ASSESSMENT FROM A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

PROJECT WORK
(LONG ESSAY)

By
ADJEI MARTIN KWABENA

JULY, 2015.
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BY

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

JULY, 2015.
DECLARATION

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

Signed: ..................................................  Date: ...........................................
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  (Head of Department of Theology)
DEDICATION

Dedicated to God Almighty, who lifted me up when I thought I had come to my ‘educational end’ and told me there was more He had put on me and that I can do all things through the strength His Son Jesus provides. Thank you my father and Lord.

To my wonderful wife Mrs. Rosina Amoakoa Adjei and children for their love, patience and kindness to me for coping with my absence during the four years of study.

God bless you abundantly.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Almighty God for granting me good health and protection and all the needed help through this course.

I am also highly thankful to my supervisor and Head of Department, Rev. Ebenezer Adu Ampong for his love, patience and kindness for finding time out of his tight schedule to attend to this work. I am grateful for his constructive criticism and encouragement. I’m very much appreciative for the tireless efforts of our lecturers especially those of the Department of theology for equipping us throughout the four years stay in the University College.

Special thanks goes to my General Overseer Apostle Robertson Aboagye-Darko Revival Outreach Church International for his support and encouragement that has brought me this far, Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Sekyere-Marfo (Pharmacist at Bank of Ghana Clinic), who single-headedly paid for all my tuition fees. Special thanks also to my brothers and sisters (siblings) for the numerous financial support and encouragement throughout these four years of study.

The following also need commendation for their part in the work. They include Miss Victoria Tweneboah (alias Mother) who did the type setting and put together the work. I am grateful to Rev. S. Bayeti Zuul, and the entire BAT level 400 class of 2015. Last but not the least, all the church members at Revival Outreach Church-Kumasi, I say God bless you all.
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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The emergence of neo-prophetic ministries in Ghana have immensely contributed to the growth of the church but attendant to these phenomenal growth is the widespread abuse of prophecy especially in the area of providing directions popularly called “akwankyere” (local Akan dialect) in overcoming the many and numerous problems – both spiritual and physical associated with the Ghanaian populace.

This study seeks to assess biblical prophecy and the widespread ministration of prophecy by contemporary prophetic ministry in Ghanaian neo-prophetic ministries. Quite recently (in 2014), a so called Prophet delivered a message supposedly from God to a church member that there was going to be death with two of her family members and that this member was to bring two thousand and fourteen Ghana cedis(ghc2014) for some spiritual revocations to be done. This member was in a dilemma and moreover did not have that amount of money. This and many are the stories prevailing at most of our Prayer and Prophetic Centres and more dangerously on our airwaves (both FM’s and TV stations). These are the issues, this study seeks to address with respect to what happened in both the Old and New Testaments’ Prophets/Prophecies and make the necessary recommendations for the way forward. Furthermore, how to curb or minimize this ever growing menace would be looked at by this thesis.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The widespread dependence of prophecy in its use to overcome and live a victorious Christian life has grown to alarming proportions. It is now affecting the very
foundations of new souls won into the church, church planting and even existing Christian’s commitment to the Word of the Living God.

According to one prominent Evangelist Yaw Asante in Kumasi, “Systematically and gradually African Traditional Religion is replacing true biblical prophetic directives from God and His Word”.¹

The worse part of these prophetic controversial directives is that it is also militating against the very foundations of the Christian faith and practice. True and Biblical prophecy in contemporary prophetic ministry today must indeed reflect and bear resemblance to biblical prophecy as seen in the Holy Bible.

The researcher hopes that at the end of his write-up a good assessment would be made, so that all forms or kinds of deviations could be minimized and corrected. The researcher further seeks to provide biblical guidelines in the operations of these prophetic directives in Ghanaian neo-prophetic ministries.

1.3 Research Questions

This special study provides answers to the following ten important questions.

1. Have you ever visited or attended a Prophetic Centre or Service or Counseling Session?
2. When was the visit or attendant date/time /place/name of Centre or service/Prophet?
3. Why or what were the reasons for this visit or attendance?
4. Were you personally given a prophetic message/word or directive (in Akan ‘akwankyere’)?

¹ Evangelist Yaw Asante, *Church Leaders Seminar by Kumasi Ministers Fellowship* (KMF), 2012 Feb 6th to 10th at Pope John Paul Reformation Centre – Ofoase Kokoben.
5. From your perspective, was this message/word/directive (or Akwankyere) Biblical or non Biblical?

6. Why do you say so in the above (e) answer?

7. Have you read or heard of any precedence in the Bible (Old and New Testament) with respect to the prophetic message /word / directive (akwankyere) which was personally given to you by the Prophet?

8. Did you carry out, obey or fulfill the Prophetic directive given to you?

9. Did you get the expected results or answer to your request, need or petition?

10. What would you advise anyone who intends to visit or attend such centers, sessions, or services and those who patronize such events via FM’s and TV Stations?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

Neo-prophetic ministries have come to stay and their contribution in providing solutions to challenges faced by Christians is now widely patronized. Our quick-fix society and syndrome, is however making these prophetic phenomenon and excesses gain ascendancy.

The aims and objectives of this research are to:

- To let Christians rely on the Word of God and its power to find solutions to their problems
- To acknowledge the true operations of the prophets and prophecy.
- To establish the fact that prophetic guidelines/directives could be from other sources aside God.
- To provide accurate methodology and proper biblical procedures in receiving and following prophetic directives.
• To assess the nature of Biblical Prophecy as practiced today by neo-prophetic ministries, coming out with areas of shortcomings, deviations and abuse.

• To provide clear biblical guidelines in the use of prophetic directives also called “akwankyere” in the (Local dialect).

• To present some recommendations for action for the neo-prophetic ministries in the operation of prophecy.

1.5 Scope and Focus of the Study

This research work covers a comprehensive assessment of Biblical Prophecy and contemporary prophetic ministry in the neo-prophetic ministries in Kumasi.

The researcher would focus on prophetic directives popularly known as ‘akwankyere’ (in Akan language) and how it is practiced by both Old and New Testament prophets.

1.6 Research Methodology and Methods of Data collection

This research work cannot achieve its aims and objectives without the use of methods to collect data. Therefore the following methods will be used – Historical Method and the Mixed Method Approach.

1.6.1 Historical Method

This kind of research is by definition, the systematic and objective observation, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions about past events.

It is of particular relevance to this theological study, which itself is based on traditions which have changed and evolved through history. Moreover, Christian theology has some bearings on the significance of a particular historical event.
Historical research aims to search for solutions to contemporary problems or challenges in the light of previous historical event. This approach was employed in this research due to its relevance to this study.

1.6.2 Methods of Data Collection

In order to achieve the aim of this research work, this approach was also adopted. The mixed method approach includes both the qualitative and quantitative approach. Qualitative approach is whereby interviews are used to collect data and the quantitative is whereby questionnaires are used to collect data. The researcher used these methods as a guide to collect the necessary information needed for the work.

1.6.3 Sample/ Sampling Procedure or Technique

Target population technique was used in this study and a sample of individuals employed hoping that, the sample is representative of the population. Simple random sampling, Accidental/Convenience and Purposive/Judgment sampling tools were used in the sampling procedure.

1.7 Literature Review

This pericope entails the overview of some of the available literature. Here the researcher reviewed the views of some scholars. A lot of scholars have done much in the area of Biblical Prophecy and Contemporary Prophecy in Ghana but unfortunately they failed to deal with this widespread issue of ‘akwankyere’ in contemporary Neo-Prophetic Ministries in Ghana. The researcher intends to deal with this phenomenon.

In his book “Prophets and the Prophetic Movement”, Bill Hamon\(^2\) compares the ministry of the prophet and prophecy to weapons of mass destruction. He said when

this ministry gets into the hands of unprincipled, self-centered, immature, wrongly motivated saints – the damage would be unimaginable and unbelievable. Hamon said ‘every Christian needs to believe in and know about the dimensions of the prophetic ministry – all believers have a part to play. Everyone in the church is called to the opportunity to participate in one of these three groups;

1. Those called to be prophets

2. Those ministers not called to be prophets who nevertheless are called to become prophetic ministers

3. All believers who are called to move in the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit and to become God’s prophetic people.

Hamon however said, ‘the prophetic movement is also the greatest potential for good and evil. Just like every movement since the beginning of the great restoration period which began in AD1500, the power for its salvation and self destruction always exists’. I agree with these assertions but the onerous question is how we have a church fully engaged in this prophetic movement without knowing the rules of engagement.

James O. Murphy and Carolyn Sutton Murphy in their Church book “Prophets and Prophecy in Today’s Church”3 revealed that “there are many ways God speaks to man. He speaks to us through the bible, through teachings and preachings, through prayer, through circumstances, through others and through prophecy. Where do we place “akwankyere” which has now dominated the prophetic marketplace in neo prophetic ministries today. The prophetic messages/directives found in the scriptures and what we have today seem to be fighting against each other. The Murphys’ believe that God

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continues to give His people direction, encouragement, rebuke and so on, through prophecies and by using called prophets in His church. The problem is the kinds of directives today by some prophets unassumable with pretty large followings have a mixture of African traditional beliefs, mysticism and occultism. A look and an assessment into these prophetic practices would be beneficial to our innocent solution seeking populace.

Williams J. Michael calls it a “tall order” in his book “The Prophet and His Message – Reading Old Testament Prophecy Today”\(^4\). The argument was “to fully account for the complicated lives and mission of prophets would require multiple perspectives. To focus on one or another dimension of the prophetic office to the exclusion of the others results in a distorted and even dangerous understanding of the essential prophetic task. Contemporary application of such misunderstanding may cause severe damage in the church and harm the Christian witness in the world”. This thesis seeks to propose that, the fact that prophetic texts may be more difficult to comprehend than other biblical texts should not be the grounds for all kinds of mystery prophetic directives devoid of biblical consistencies.

J. Kwabena Asamoah - Gyadu in the Ogbomoso Journal of Theology Vol. XIII(1) 2008\(^5\) intimated that African Initiated Christianity has been widely acknowledged as largely responsible for the current phenomenal expansion of the faith on the continent and the issue of prophecy is seen as a leading trademark. The indigenous Christian churches that emerged in Africa through the evangelizing and prophetic activities of William Wade Harris of Liberia, Sokari Braide of Niger Delta etc at the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century took Christianity to a phenomenal level. The dynamics of what happened was

the combination of fundamental elements of Christianity and African Culture in a way that advertises their Christian intentions without undervaluing. What is happening today is far different from this earlier position stated above. Asamoah-Gyadu admitted that major changes have occurred in the field of African Christianity since the height of the revivals initiated by the AIC’s at the turn of the twentieth century.

In a paper (Ghana’s New Prophetism - Antecedents and some characteristic features) presented by Joseph Quayesi-Amakye (Lecturer with the School of Theology/Missions - Central University College, Dansoman - Accra)⁶ on webjournals.ac.edu.ac, he commented that “Prophetism poses a challenge and yet offers hope to Christianity due to its ability to respond to soteriological and pastoral needs amidst its ‘unexplained’ nature and ‘unconventional’ operations. Indeed, many are they who find problems with the ethos and theology of contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostal prophets. Pentecostal prophets are often accused of being pecuniary-motivated in their cause. Yet despite the criticisms, that include media reports, the phenomenon is becoming more and more appealing to many Ghanaians, Christians and non-Christians alike. One thing is clear. We do not have to pretend to be unconcerned with issues on prophetism”. Admittedly, there are issues and this thesis intends to assess biblical prophecy and contemporary prophetism, specifically looking at prophetic directives called “akwankyerê”.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The huge crowds at these neo-prophetic ministries depict the fact that most Christians and non-Christians are seeking for help and solutions through these neo-prophetic ministries and we have charlatans, immature self-made Prophets amongst these groups/ministries. This project work seeks to draw the attention of the populace to areas

⁶ Amakye - Quayesi Joseph, “Ghana’s New Prophetism - Antecedents and some Characteristic features” webjournal.ac.edu.au
of abuse, manipulation by these so-called prophets and also to continually look at scriptural precedents vis-à-vis the prophetic directives (akwankyere) they received from these prophets. It further seeks to make the ‘prophetic pathway’ less dangerous to “pedestrians” along that path.

1.9 Structure of the Study

The project is organized into five (5) chapters. Chapter one gives the general introduction and deals with the issue at stake, background to the research, statement of problem, research questions, aim and objectives of the study, research methodology, literature review that is the books, journals, magazines and other scholarly works that are relevant to this research both published and unpublished.

Chapter two covers prophecy from biblical perspective from both the Old and the New Testament. Also, the operational guidelines associated with biblical prophets and prophecy. A look at the role and work of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of the gift of prophecy.

Chapter three takes a view at the contemporary prophetic ministry in Ghana. The emergence of prophetism in Ghanaian and neo-prophetic movements are all discussed.

Chapter four makes a theological assessment of biblical prophecy of what happened in the Old and New Testaments as seen and practiced by neo-prophetic ministries today in Ghana.

Chapter five consists of the summary of the study, the general conclusions and recommendations.
1.10 Definition of Terms

**PROPHET** - is one who sees and knows things supernaturally because he has revelation gifts plus prophecy operating in his life and ministry. One called by God and empowered by the Spirit who serves as God’s spokesperson who has received authority and a revelation from God, who is a good shepherd over God’s flock and who demonstrates God’s Word and Mission by signs. A Person who speaks for God, or a god, or as though under divine guidance.

**PROPHECY** - in the bible is used generally for all vocal utterances. It is used specifically under the gift of prophecy to refer to a gift and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. And this phrase, gift of prophecy includes both. It includes the function of the gift but more generally, it talks about the development of prophetic utterances. In the Old Testament, you read about the prophets prophesying and speaking divine utterances. We understand that prophesying can sometimes give forth the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom, which they do in the Old Testament. If they predict something in the future, it actually includes the word of wisdom. But the word prophecy is used generally in the bible sense to refer to any ecstatic utterances that comes forth through a control of the Holy Spirit. And the word prophecy includes also psalms, hymns, and divine utterances in songs that may have some content of revelation. It is not just a simple gift of prophecy in the bible where it only comforts exhorts and edifies. It should do all those three things. Prophecy in the purest sense is foretelling and forth telling. Foretelling - is to know the future. Forth telling - is to cause

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8 Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language, Second College Edition, David B Guralnik, Editor in Chief; William Collins + World Publishing Co., Inc. 2080 West 117th Street Cleveland Ohio44111.
the future\textsuperscript{10}. Webster’s dictionary defines prophecy as in the New Testament as ‘the gift of speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit; predictions of the future under the influence of divine guidance; the act or practice of a prophet.\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{NEO – PROPHETIC MINISTRIES} - These movements constitute a new manifestation of prophetism in contemporary African Christianity. They exemplify a high degree of hybridity, grounding their beliefs and practices in an African worldview while combining practices of the older African Independent Churches (AICs), the Classical Pentecostal Churches and the neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. Their predominant feature is the prophetic ministry. Furthermore, they are, more often than not, built around major prophetic figures/leaders, who are invariably the founders, and around whom their patrons/clients gravitate.\textsuperscript{12}

\textbf{AKWANKYERE} - An Akan dialect meaning directions or prophetic guidance which the prophet/leader is to give information that is supposed to explain a person’s situation and also prescribe solutions. Sometimes this is done openly in the setting of public worship, but mostly it is done on a one-on-one basis.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{AICs} - African Independent Churches.

\textsuperscript{10} Vallotton Kris, \textit{Basic Training for Prophetic Ministry} (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Linage, 1977), 21 - 23.

\textsuperscript{11} Webster’s New World Dictionary of the American Language, Second College Edition, David B Guralnik, Editor in Chief; William Collins + World Publishing Co., Inc. 2080 West 117th Street Cleveland Ohio 44111.


\textsuperscript{13} David B. Stiles Ocran, ‘Prophetism in Ghana: A Case Study of Charismatic Churches in Ghana’ (M.Phil Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 2004), 96.
CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPHETIC MOVEMENT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter, the researcher looks at the Background of the Prophetic Movement from a biblical perspective – tracing from the biblical times to our contemporary period. A comprehensive look at the Old and New Testament Prophets/Prophecy. The History of the Charismatic and Neo-Prophetic Movement in Ghana and the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

2.2 Prophecy from Biblical Perspective.

According to J. Barton Payne\(^{14}\), scripture recognizes prophecy as a “medium of divine communication”. In Biblical thought, prophetism defines God’s activeness in history through his concern, purpose and participation in human affairs. Prophetism therefore gives meaning to history. Israel’s prophets were seen as Yahweh’s messengers or spokesmen whose language was often characterized by “Thus says the Lord”. In the OT, prophets were servants of God who mostly operated alone and spoke the will of God to His people. They generally spoke words of warning, judgment and encouragement to Israel and Judah, and answered only to God Himself. In the New Testament, prophets are accountable to and are an integral part of the Body of Christ, and speak to bear witness of Christ in order to build up believers\(^{15}\).


2.2.1 Old Testament Prophecy

This section wishes to indicate that prophetism is what provides the Old Testament religion with its divine urgency and social interpretations. This means it is the writings and actions of the OT prophets which provide the basis for understanding God’s righteous standards for his covenant people Israel. Through the prophets Yahweh made his will and demands known to Israel as his covenant people. Israel became the people of Yahweh at Mt. Sinai when Yahweh ‘cut’ a covenant with them.

In that covenant, Israel as the subject was required to adhere to the terms that Yahweh, her suzerain dictated. When Israel failed to be loyal to the terms of the covenant Yahweh raised prophets to bring the people back into his kind of relationship, a relationship of socio-religious and political implications. Anderson 16 notes: “…the prophet speaking under the influence of Yahweh’s Spirit was able to interpret the meaning of events and to proclaim the will of God in concrete terms”. Thus, these prophets challenged the people to right living by demanding from them a religion that translated into the socio-political and economic dimensions of life. It was a normal practice of OT prophets to consult God often to hear from or speak for him in the trying situations of the people. Due to their unique position in God’s relationship with his people however, a culture of consultation with the prophet emerged for the purposes of knowing God’s mind and will. The importance of the prophet in Israel’s life is brought to the fore when we consider that God delivered his people from Egypt through a prophet, Moses (Hosea 12:13; Psalm 105: 26; Numbers 33:1, 2). Moses enjoyed a special place among God’s prophets because God spoke with him face to face (Ex. 33: 11). This Moses admonished Israel that God would raise for them a prophet like

himself, a prophecy which is acknowledged to be messianic in purpose (Deut. 18: 15; Acts 3:22-26).

Furthermore, a lack of prophetic ministry in Israel was understood as a time of spiritual famine since it was the prophet who held the key to divine knowledge, insight and will for the people (Amos 8: 11-13).

However, prophetism in the OT receives an extension in the NT through the ministries of such prophets as Ezekiel and Joel. The latter spoke specifically of the distant future when God’s Spirit would be poured upon all people. Consequently, there would be the bestowal of gifts of prophecy, dreams and visions to usher in the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:28ff.). It is with this understanding that Luke interprets the phenomenon in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when he quotes Peter’s message and links it to the eschatological outpouring of the Spirit. As Onyinah\textsuperscript{17} insists: “that Pentecost marks the beginning of the new covenant has not been a problem for biblical scholars, but what has been a problem is the quintessence of the outpouring and its significance for the New Testament saint”.

2.2.2 Prophecy in the New Testament

Dr Bill Hamon\textsuperscript{18} in his book “Fulfilling Your Personal Prophecy” said the coming of the Holy Spirit, the birth of the Church, and the writing of the Bible did not eliminate the need for the prophetic voice of the Lord; in fact it intensified that need. Peter insisted that the prophet Joel was speaking of the Church age when he proclaimed, "I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy".

\textsuperscript{17} O. Onyinah & James McKeown, \textit{Memorial Lectures: 50 Years of Sustainable Growth of the Church of Pentecost} (Accra: Pentecost Press, 2010), 1 – 187.
(Acts 2:17). Paul emphasized that truth when he told the church at Corinth to "covet to prophesy" (I Cor. 14:39; Eph. 4:11).

God still wants the revelation of His will to be vocalized, so He has established the prophetic ministry as a voice of revelation and illumination which will reveal the mind of Christ to the human race. He also uses this ministry to give specific instructions to individuals concerning His personal will for their lives. Of course, the ministry of the prophet is not to bring about additions or subtractions to the Bible but to bring illumination and further specifics about that which has already been written”.

**2.3 History of the Charismatic – Neo Prophetic Movement in Ghana**

Two scholars Asamoah-Gyadu and Larbi identify some prophetic figures as the forerunners of Ghanaian Pentecostalism. The two scholars agree that these prophets were characterized by the charisma they received from God in their encounter with the Holy Spirit. Similarly, Torvestad asserts that the charismatic powers of such leaders were transmitted to sub-leaders who had healing and prophesying abilities themselves. These leaders proclaimed an all-powerful Christ to the people. Thus through their activities, the then Gold Coast witnessed a strong and powerful prophetic and spiritual revival. These prophetic ministries had no foreign contact but were purely indigenous. Two things come out clearly in Ghanaian independent church history. Either the Founders of the movement were rejected and/or branded as impostors by their mainline church fellowships or felt compelled to leave them to initiate a new work. Thus Baeta shows that Joseph Egyanka Appiah was forced to abandon the Methodist Church as a

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teacher-catechist to initiate his own church, the Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC), and build his ‘holy city’, Musano as a city for the faithful. Three out of the numerous prophets and prophetesses who pioneered and/or maintained Africa Independent Churches (AICs) in Ghana were Prophets William Wadé Harris, John Swatson and Sampson Oppong. These have enjoyed some amount of scholarly research into their ministries in recent times. Larbi’s²³ study *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, has dealt extensively with them. Apart from these, Baëta’s work *Prophetism in Ghana* also covered the ministries of such prophets as Jehu Appiah and Kwame Nkansah among others.

Evidence on the ground suggests the Ghanaian religious quest for meaning in this life gave rise to the Spirit movement characteristic in the earlier AICs that emerged. These churches were founded by native Africans who had personal pneumatic experiences and who went about preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost. The prophetic ministries of some activated missionary activities in the country. However, not all of them enjoyed the goodwill of their own church fellowships. This reaction from their church fellowships resulted in the prophets’ alienation, rejection or induced secession. With the rise of these prophetic ministries in the country, as it were, God was announcing to his church of the inauguration of a new era of spiritual renewal. Though the resultant churches from the activities of some of these prophets are now becoming peripheral in the country’s Christianity, yet today’s spiritual renewal owes much to these prophets’ obedience and surrender to the Holy Spirit. Again, the ministry of a prophet like Jehu Appiah offers a religio-political paradigm for charting a meaningful prophetic ministry in Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity today. Prophetism in Ghanaian Christianity is indeed traceable to the AICs, the forerunners of modern

Pentecostalism, the latter continuing and perhaps improving on the former’s weaknesses and lapses. According to Larbi, Quayesi - Amakye and Adubofuor²⁴ there are five phases of Ghanaian Pentecostal prophetism. A phase is used here to denote the various stages of prophetic manifestations in Ghanaian Christianity. The assertion here is that the current prophetic manifestations in the country may well be described as the fifth phase of that phenomenon.

The first phase of Christian prophetism in Ghana occurred in the era of the AICs. The AICs were characterized with a strong prophetic ministry. Founders/leaders in these churches prophesied, saw visions and offered spiritual directions to their clients who came to them in search of spiritual relief from diseases, sicknesses, etc. This first phase of prophetism was followed by the emergence of Classical Pentecostalism of which Apostle Peter Anim is credited with its origination.

Pentecostalism was characterized with its own brand of prophetism especially in the 1950s. Notable among the prophets were Brother Lawson and Prophet John Mensah. Both men used to be in McKeown’s organization until they seceded to form their respective churches. Brother Lawson’s prophet/healing group came to be known as the Divine Healer’s Church while John Mensah formed the Church of Christ (Spiritual Movement). This prophetism is identifiably the second phase of Christian prophetism in Ghana.

In his PhD thesis *Evangelical Para-Church Movement in Ghanaian Christianity: (1950 to Early 1990s)*, Adubofuor discusses the Inter-Hall Christian Fellowship of the University of Science and Technology (UST), now Kwame Nkrumah University of Technology.

Science and technology (KNUST) - Kumasi. In this work, he shows how Pentecostal prophetism gained prominence in the Inter-Hall Christian Fellowship in the 1970s. One of the forerunners, Kwabena Adu Baah is reported to have stated that “prophecy was the excitement of the day”. Because of the extremities of campus prophetism of the UST, Adubofour alleges the Inter-Hall Christian Fellowship “attracted reactions which range from derogatory remarks to outright condemnation”. This phase of prophetism though experienced basically at the tertiary level may be deemed to be the third phase of Christian prophetism in the land. The fourth phase of prophetism is traceable to the denominational prayer centers/camps in the Church of Pentecost, among others, which became quite more phenomenal in the early 1980s. Gifford maintains they filled the gaps in the faith gospel of the Charismatic Ministries (CMs) and asserts they have since 1985 subsided significantly, with the soteriological shift being now tilted towards the prophetic ministries of the Charismatic Ministries. A problem with Gifford’s claim is that he failed to see these centers, as Onyinah has shown, as places that basically catered for Church of Pentecost rather than Charismatic members’ existential needs.

They were actually spiritual insulators against the members’ ‘straying’ into the AICs’ healing gardens. Among the CMs it may be said that the emergent deliverance ministries provided the supernatural explanations for failings of the faith gospel claims. Moreover leaders of these centres actually qualify as prophets though their approach may differ from the prophets of the prophetic ministries in neo-Pentecostalism. These Prayer Camps/Centres offer alternative soteriological recourse for great majority of troubled and perplexed Ghanaians who resort to them for a special time of prayers in the expectation of receiving answers from God to their numerous existential needs and

problems. Both Larbi and Onyinah see the prayer camps/centres as places where people resort to with various needs for supernatural succour via prayer and fasting. Also, both agree that the activities at these centers gravitate around a key personality who is a prophet/prophetess or evangelist. Though their initial existence dates back to the 1940s, it was not until the 1980s that the prayer centers became prominent in the religious life of many Ghanaians. Onyinah therefore sees them as “revived prayer camp(s)” in the Church of Pentecost. Again he associates their activities with those of the Deliverance Teams, Prayer Warriors and Prayer Towers set up by Para-church groups and other churches to cater for the ‘urgent’ needs of their followers.

The fifth phase of prophetism we identify began with the emergence of independent prophetic figures in the early 1990s. This was when a new crop of young Pentecostals arrived on the ecclesiastical scene. Among these were Prophets Elisha Salifu Amoako and Owusu-Bempah. Significantly, it was just when the prayer centres in COP numbered eight (by October 1993), and had begun assuming a nationwide popularity that the prophetic ministries in neo-Pentecostalism were also beginning to emerge on a large scale. The prophets/prophetesses of these prayer centres share a lot in common with the prophets within neo-Pentecostal Christianity.

Today, it is not uncommon to hear of ‘prophet such and such’ organizing a ‘prophetic’ service or to hear a ‘prophet’ speak on the airwaves. A significant feature of these prophetic services is the prophets’ belief in the omniscience of God and their own role in the supernatural delivery.

2.4 The Holy Spirit and the Church

The Holy Spirit is the divine person who eternally co-exists with the Father and the Son. The Spirit was present and active in creation, is seen throughout the Old
Testament, and is revealed more explicitly in the New Testament. Life in the Spirit was reflected most clearly in the earthly life of Jesus. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came from God to continue the work of the ascended Christ, as Jesus had promised His followers. The Holy Spirit cannot be overlooked in this research work since His duties, among others includes the administering of the Ministry and Supernatural gifts of which we have Prophecy, Word of Knowledge, Wisdom and the ministry of the Prophet ((1 Corinthians 12 : 4 -11 and Ephesians 4 : 4 – 16). All manifestations and exercise of True Prophecy and Prophetic Ministry should of course be normal out-workings of the Holy Spirit in His Servants or Church.

According to John Ntsiful’s lecture notes on New Testament Theology, ‘Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, the redeemed community. His Word and will are authoritative in the Church. The church consists of all those who trust Jesus as Savior and follow Him as Lord. One becomes part of God’s family, loving the Lord Jesus and learning to love and care for one another. It is a covenant community vowing before God and fellow members to live a holy life, to remain loyal to the church, and to foster oneness within the body of Christ. The understanding of this covenant is expressed in a commitment to the local congregation, where the integrity of our discipleship is lived; to the denomination, where relationships with a wider fellowship of God’s people are realized; and to the body of Christ throughout the world, by which we fulfill the prayer of Jesus that we all may be one. The essential functions of the church are worship, fellowship, discipleship, and mission. In worship, we bring our whole-hearted devotion to the Lord God. In fellowship, we live out our deep commitment to love one another. In discipleship, we follow the call of the Lord Jesus to obey and to teach all things.

commanded by Him. In mission, we proclaim the gospel to all people and minister to human need as Jesus did'. As a covenant community we practice mutual accountability among our members.\(^{29}\)

It is important to note that, for the authentic manifestation of the gifts (prophecy etc) and ministry of the prophet, one must be fully engrafted in the church, fully be under the control of the Holy Spirit and be ready to submit to spiritual authority; since the Holy Spirit works within the church amidst Order and grace.

### 2.5 Conclusion

The researcher has tried to show that prophetism has been part of Ghanaian Christianity appearing in various phases of the Ghanaian Pentecostal experience. This cannot be captured well than Ntumy’s\(^ {30} \) submission during the “1st National Prophetic Leadership Conference”, that the prophetic gift is a gift from God to the church. Yet like any other gift it can be used or abused. Stanley M. Horton\(^ {31} \) in looking at “The Spirit in the Ministry of the Church” from 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, Apostle Paul insisted correction and instruction were needed and we must be careful to give correction in a way that the operation and manifestation of the gift of prophecy and the prophetic ministry would be appreciated.

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\(^{30}\)1st National Prophetic Leadership Conference, held at the Prayer Cathedral of the Christian Action Faith Ministries, in Accra from Sunday to Thursday (June 4-8, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEMPORARY PROPHETIC MINISTRIES IN GHANA

3. 1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the Background of the Prophetic Movement from a biblical perspective, a look at the Old and New Testament Prophets/Prophecy, the History of the Charismatic and Neo-Prophetic Movement in Ghana and the Work of The Holy Spirit in the Church. This chapter seeks to examine the features that currently characterize Ghanaian prophetism. These include; Christianity and Prophetism, the nature of the Ghanaian Prophetic Ministry and the impact of Prophetism in Ghana.

3. 2 Christianity And Prophetism

In Ghana, ripples of prophetism have characterised Christianity since the turn of the twentieth century. In fact, it has been part of African Christianity ever since the faith was reintroduced into the continent by Western missionaries 32. Today prophetic ministries have become more or less a ‘normal’ religious phenomenon. We find ‘prophets’ in both Classical Pentecostal churches, such as the Church of Pentecost (COP), and neo-Pentecostal/prophetic churches. Yet prophetism still remains an ‘unfamiliar’ field that calls for serious scholarly investigation.

Prophetism seems to pose a challenge and yet offers hope to Christianity due to its seeming ability to respond to soteriological and pastoral needs amidst its ‘unexplained’ nature and ‘unconventional’ operations. Indeed, many are they who find problems with the ethos and theology of contemporary Ghanaian prophets. Prophets are often accused of being monetary-motivated in their cause. Yet despite the criticisms, that include media reports, the phenomenon is becoming more and more appealing to many

Ghanaians, Christians and non-Christians alike. One thing is clear; we do not have to pretend to be unconcerned with issues on prophetism. Neither should we think we can eradicate it simply because we have problems with it. As Opoku Onyinah indicated, “the early Christian missionaries failed when they attempted to erase prophetism in both its traditional and ‘Christian’ versions from their converts”.

There is enough evidence to show that the biblical and Ghanaian prophets sought or seek to provide solutions to the problems of their people in various situations and periods of history. To better appreciate what really goes on in Ghanaian prophetic circles, one needs to analyze the group and individual psychology of both clients and prophets. Therefore, a study on Ghanaian Contemporary prophetism demands an examination of its discernible trends which would lead to the analysis and evaluation of the Ghanaian conception and practice of prophetism.

Moreover, Ghanaian neo-prophetic Christians understand the fulfilled or successful life as a comprehensive package: salvation should bring transformation and empowerment, prosperity, healing and deliverance. So regularly at neo-prophetic prayer sessions, members are encouraged to prophesy into their lives by confessing among other things good health, business success and fruitful marriages. The prophet may prophesy ‘good’ into the lives of his members, usually supporting the prophecy from scripture and often including the statement, ‘God says I should tell you it shall be well with you . . .’ This is appropriated with loud shouts of ‘Amen’ or ‘Halleluiah’, ‘Yes’ or ‘I receive it’. Deuteronomy 28, John 10: 10 and 3 John 2 are among the passages of choice for the Ghanaian neo prophetic Christian. Jabez’s prayer in 1 Chronicles 4: 9 - 10 becomes a

model for them. Their hermeneutics seem to show that Jesus brings success and prosperity to the Christian and that seems to form the basis of their preaching and prophecies.

3. 3 The Nature Of Ghanaian Prophetic Ministry

3.3.1 Africa Independent Church (AIC) Tradition – Church Of Hosanna

Prophet Stephen Obeng Mensah is the Founder and leader of Church of Hosanna, an African Independent Church (AIC) situated at Kromoase-New Site, Kumasi. He started it as a prayer, healing and deliverance centre where all kinds of people afflicted with various sicknesses and diseases used to go until the Lord gave him the prophetic mantle or gift. With the prophetic and prophecies, Prophet Stephen Obeng Mensah carefully elaborated its operations and manifestations in his ministry as follows: Although the prophecies come from human beings, he believes it is through the Spirit’s guidance, even though his congregation sometimes “forces” him to prophecy. Some members sometimes shout during the service, *odiyifo hye nkô* (Prophet, do prophesy.). In such situations, he only confesses what the scriptures have said about the children of God.

Spiritual consultation is another aspect of his prophetic encounters with people – this happens every Wednesday (7am to 7pm). During such consultations, he employs laying on of hands, anointing oil, “nhyiransuo” (blessed or consecrated water), and candles in ministering healing, deliverance and prophetic directives or “akwankyere” to members/clients34.

According to Prophet Stephen Obeng Mensah, his sermons are concerned with responding to contemporary challenges, the work of evil spirits especially witches and wizards in such situations and the interpretation of dreams and visions.

34 Interview with Prophet Stephen Obeng Mensah, Founder and Leader of Church of Hosanna, Kromoase New Site on May 30, 2015 at his Residence.
There is a huge emphasis on the Spirit as power made manifest in healing and deliverance.

In participating in one of their services, it was observed that, the members cherish their leader more than even the scriptures. The leader is the church and the church is the leader. They believe in the prosperity messages preached to them, that every Christian must prosper at all cost. A member had this to say, “Every child of God must prosper, because prosperity comes from God”. You realize that members strive for prosperity; to them, poverty is alien to any child of God. They search for a kind of well-being which involves both the spiritual and the physical. They have the belief that, only those who are not children of God suffer in life.

They believe in the existence of earthly suffering but not for the children of God. For that reason, the prophets are there to counter any suffering that the devil plans to bring on the child of God. To them, eternal suffering is for those who do not accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior while on earth. The liturgy of the AIC’s is similar to that of many other Christian denominations with the exception of a slight difference in their combination of African styles in their worship: an example is the usage of crucifixes, holy water (blessed and consecrated), local songs, tambourines players and many others..

3.3.2 Charismatic Tradition – Revival Outreach Church International. (ROC – Intl.)

The Revival Outreach Church International is an International Charismatic Church headquartered in Odorkor – Accra. The vision of the church includes Character Building, Evangelism and Church Planting and its Mission Statement involves “Taking the Gospel of Christ everywhere in the World, establishing local / International
churches and building Christlike character in people – Matthew 24:14”\(^{35}\). The church began as a fellowship in 1989 and through the direction of the Holy Spirit became a Church in 1992. Apostle Robertson Aboagye – Darko is the Spiritual Leader and Chairman of the Executive Council (Highest Ruling Body) of the Church. From their constitution, their belief is centered on the Apostles Creed…,

The believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary, Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy Catholic Church; The Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, and the Life everlasting.\(^{36}\)

There is an official recognition of the five – fold ministry centered on the Pastor, Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist and Teacher used by the Ministers of this Church. The work of the Prophet and Prophecy is highly acknowledged as seen in their various programmes like Conventions, Church services, Retreats and their special quarterly Holy Ghost Revival Campaigns. Both personal and corporate prophecies are used in the liturgy. As observed by the researcher in one of their Regional Easter Convention at Techiman in 2014 April 17 -20, one prophet named Frank Asare Nyamekye ministered to both individuals and gave prophetic directions to the entire church as an organization. One noticeable attitude in this Church is the subjugation of prophecy (ies) to Pastoral counsel and Biblical Checks, members have been educated in such a way

\(^{35}\) Revival Outreach Church Int., Constitution, 1992, 3.
\(^{36}\) Revival Outreach Church Int., Constitution, 1992, 3.
that any complex or strange prophecies are brought to the Pastoral leadership over them and the Word of God, discernment and wisdom is used to bring balance, re-interpretation or rejection of the prophecy. There is great awareness in the church on how prophecies can go wrong or be abused hence utmost precautions from both the Prophets and members being ministered to, go hand in hand37.

Despite these checks and balances in the church, the Spiritual Leader and Chairman of the Executive Council, Apostle Robertson Aboagye Darko observed that there have been reported cases of unbiblical prophecies and ‘akwankyere’ dished out to church members. One typical example was when one member was asked to go to the cemetery at midnight to wash his son who had attacks of epilepsy with various concoctions (olive oil, some herbs, stream water, some coins and the back of a tortoise). Another woman was made to sell her piece of land because it was a centre for the meeting of wizards and witches from the member’s hometown. This woman was told that her burial was imminent anytime or day she decides to do something on the land.

On the other hand, Apostle Darko also indicated that true deliverance, healing and guidance had come to several members from such prophetic phenomenon, encounters and experiences38.

### 3.3.3 Pentecostal Tradition – Church Of Pentecost (COP)

The Church of Pentecost is a worldwide, non-profit-making Pentecostal church with its headquarters in Accra, Ghana. It exists to bring all people everywhere to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the gospel, the planting of churches and the equipping of believers for every God-glorifying service. It

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37 Interview with Prophet Robert Oppong Yeboah, Assistant to the General Overseer / Chairman of the Executive Council – ROC INTL. on 6th February 2015 during their National Ministers Retreat in Kumasi – Adom Fie Retreat Centre (Apire).

38 Interview with Apostle Robertson Aboagy – Darko(Spiritual Leader, General Overseer and Chairman of the Executive Council – ROC – INT) on 6th February 2015 during their National Ministers Retreat in Kumasi-Adom Fie Retreat Centre (Apire)
demonstrates the love of God through the provision of social services in partnership with governments, communities and other like-minded organizations.\textsuperscript{39} According to Griffiths\textsuperscript{40}, while New Testament teaching tends to indicate that all Christians may engage in prophesying, there are people who seem to be recognized to occupy the definitive office of prophet. This submission of Griffiths then provokes an examination of the whole idea of a prophet in a church like the COP. It is not easy to define who the prophet is in COP. However one may identify three types of prophets in it.

### 3.3.3.1 The Prophesier

The prophesier is the most common type of prophets in COP. Prophesiers are commonly known as \textit{nkómhyéfoò} (those who prophesy). A prophesier is a person who exhibits the gift of prophecy to edify, encourage and exhort the church.

In COP prophesiers may be members of the laity or ordained ministers. Indeed, this is true of other Pentecostal churches in Ghana.

Apostle Ntumy similarly narrates\textsuperscript{41} how a prophecy was given at his send-off service to Liberia as a missionary about the dangers that awaited him in that country. But the prophecy also talked about the subsequent honor God promised to give him eventually. This prophecy was fulfilled partially when he and his family got caught up in the Liberian civil war. Eventually, he became the youngest chairman of COP. He sees all these as a demonstration of God’s unfailing love and covenant with his own.

Apostle Ntumy further narrates how his home church was assured through a prophecy that he and his family would be delivered from danger in the Liberian crisis. He points


\textsuperscript{40} Griffiths, M. Serving Grace: Gifts Without . MARC Europe; OMF Books.1986.

\textsuperscript{41} K. A. Wiafe, (Producer), A Servant of God [Motion Picture]. Pentmedia/TV3 (Accra: Sunday April 23 2006), 5:30 – 6:00am.
out that it was this time that the song “Nyame ne yèn wò hò nnè nso…” (Translated, God is with us today…..) was received prophetically by the church. According to him the song’s primary aim was to assure the church that God would see him and his family through that difficult time.

Prophesiers in COP, therefore, are people who bring forth an ‘inspired message’ during times of corporate worship or prayer service. The content of the message may sometimes be personal, yet their message is acknowledged to possess the basic elements of edification, exhortation and comfort. Normally, they prefix their messages thus: “My children, My children, I, the Lord, Am in your midst...” and end it thus: “It is I the Lord that speak to you”.42

It is normal to hear someone leading a prayer meeting or corporate worship request the congregation at the end of the session to wait quietly to hear from the Lord. And the congregation understands this to mean waiting to receive a prophecy or a revelation through anybody present, but more especially through those noted to prophesy often. The COP believes that 1 Corinthians 14: 29 limits such spontaneities to not more than three prophecies.

It ought to be noted also that it is possible for prophesiers to receive a message before going to church. This is actually sometimes the case of prophecy in both the Old and New Testaments.43 Unfortunately some Pentecostal prophesiers fail to present such a message in a normal conversational form but rather make it assume spontaneity. This may be due to the Ghanaian crave to sound ‘spiritual’ in both religious and irreligious domains.

42 Interview with Elder Gyabah Philip at Pentecost International Worship centre (PIWC) – Kurofrom on May, 24 2015.
3.3.3.2 The Singing Prophet

COP is a church which since its earliest beginnings has benefited a lot from ‘inspired songs’. These are songs which are received spontaneously during prayer or worship services and are believed to come from the Holy Spirit. Like the gift of prophecy they are meant for the church’s edification, exhortation and comfort. As such they qualify to be part of prophecy that operates in certain individuals who possess the spirit of prophecy.

COP takes credit for many of such ‘Pentecostal spirituals’ in Ghanaian religious life. Unfortunately, for a long time the church did not consider it expedient to document them electronically or in writing. Hence, most of these songs were hijacked by people who were not very conversant with their origins and contents, and who have done much mutilation to many of them. Those who receive these songs in COP are designated ‘singing prophets’ or ‘Pentecostal psalmists’.

These Pentecostal songs are normally received during corporate worship services or prayer meetings of the church, especially during conventions or when the individual prophet is alone serving the Lord through worship or prayers. They become more pronounced especially during times of fasting and prayers. At times too they are received during crises or joyful moments in the prophet’s life. They are not restricted to only one sex; both men and women may operate in it. Sometimes the prophet may also receive new songs through the study and meditation of scripture and all of a sudden a new song ‘jumps up’ in him/her. This may underscore why these songs have strong theological content. The reception of these songs can occur at any place but most especially when the Pentecostal psalmist listens to sermons preached s/he at times hears

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44 Interview with Elder Gyabah Philip at Pentecost International Worship centre (PIWC) – Kurofrom on Sunday May, 24 2015.
a new song ring in his/her spirit or feels a new song bubble up within. This signals a new song from the Lord to his church. S/he would then rise up to sing\textsuperscript{45}. Though the church believes in the divine origin of these songs, it nonetheless holds that as a gift of prophecy they are subject to the judgment of Church leadership. Consequently, some spiritual songs have had to undergo amendment of some sort.

### 3.3.3.3 Grassroots Prophets

These are those Onyinah designates as lay prophets/prophetesses and links their prominence in COP to the emergence of ‘witchdemonology’\textsuperscript{46}. He argues that this current phenomenon in the COP is a reinvigoration of what emerged in the 1950s but which eventually resulted in secessions of the prophets/healers from the church. These are perhaps the type of prophets whose identity is most controversial within that church. This is because there is much ambiguity on how to define them. How they are defined officially differs from ordinary church members’ definition.

The secessions of the prophets in the 1950s were underpinned by a number of factors. According to Onyinah, the prophets wanted the authorities to provide them with accommodation and food as the pastors enjoyed. They also felt cheated that the pastors left them to handle the healing and deliverance sessions during conventions. Furthermore, they claimed healing and deliverance sessions were not long enough and so many sick people went away unhealed. Finally, failure of the church to define their position in the church conditioned their secession from it. But the church authorities on their part felt these prophets/healers promoted a lot of ‘unscriptural practices’ such as blessing of water, blessing of handkerchiefs, using of Florida water.

\textsuperscript{45}Interview with Elder Gyabah Philip at Pentecost International Worship centre (PIWC) – Kurofrom on May, 24 2015.

\textsuperscript{46} O. Onyinah, “Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost” (An unpublished PhD thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham, UK, 2002), 25.
Perhaps, the prophets’ agitation for recognition should be appreciated that even today it is to the prophets, but not the pastors, that the suffering masses mostly turn in their search for spiritual solace. These prophets who operate prayer centres in the church have as their major focus deliverance from demonic oppressions and manipulations; hence their activities and operations give vent to witchdemonology which Classical Pentecostals do not encourage.

COP officially is careful not to designate the title ‘prophet’ to everyone who exhibits some revelatory gifts. Such gifts include, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits, prophecy, speaking in diverse tongues and interpretation of tongues. Generally, Pentecostals equate the combined effects of the last two to prophecy. In its Ministers’ Handbook COP states47, “No one is specially trained or referred to as a prophet/prophetess or allowed to begin a new centre”. This does not actually imply a prohibition on the establishment of new prayer centers. The clarification is brought to the fore in the following statement, “No new prayer centers are opened without the prior approval of the Executive Council”48

COP’s restriction on the use of the title of ‘prophet’ may stem from its experiences from the past. Onyinah intimates49 that due to the rise of ‘unscriptural practices’ of the prophets/prophetesses, McKeown personally outlawed the use of the title ‘prophet’ by lay healers/exorcists in the church. It was when Prophet M. K Yeboah became the head of the church that there was a reactivation of the activities of the prayer camps/centers. Prophet M. K Yeboah perceived them as ‘gifts’ to the church.

49 O. Onyinah, “Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost”, 26.
Clearly, those that ordinary church members may recognize as prophets are not officially recognized as such. These prophets of the ordinary people we term ‘grassroots prophets’ because they deal with the ordinary mundane affairs of the masses who come to them with all sorts of problems expecting that God through their ministries would hear their cry.

These prophets are able to reveal to clients seekers things that are hidden from the ordinary person through the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The attitude of the masses towards grassroots prophets is similar to that of the Samaritan woman in her encounter with Jesus at Jacob’s Well (John 4: 1-29). They become overwhelmed with the telepathic and therapeutic gifts in the prophets and so stick to them no matter the consequence. Majority of these seekers and clients are women and men in search of successful marriages, businesses, foreign travel, good health and fruitfulness in marriages. The desire to have good and successful marriages, succeed in business, undertake foreign journeys, enjoy good health and fruitfulness in marriage mostly came up during my interviews with both leaders and seekers. These grassroots prophets tend to offer hope to the suffering masses as they are seem to bring solution to the latter.

3.3.4 Neo Pentecostal / Neo Prophetic Ministry Tradition

In the Ashanti Region of Ghana, One prophet who has come to the scene in contemporary times is Prophet Ebenezer Opambour Adarkwa Yiadom popularly known as “Prophet One” or “Asante Moses”. He is the Leader and Founder of the Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre located at Ahenema Kokoben, a suburb of Kumasi. Ebenezer Opambour Adarkwa Yiadom was born in the early 1960s to a very poor family who.

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50Interview with Elder Gyabah Philip at Pentecost International Worship centre(PIWC) – Kurofrom on Sunday May, 24 2015
hailed from Juaso Pramso in the Ashanti Region. Kwame Adarkwa Yiadom as he was formerly called, lived with a guardian at Alabar, a zongo community in Kumasi. He had his basic education at St. Peters Educational Centre at Kwadaso and later continued at the Kumasi Technical Institute (KTI), where he pursued a course in plumbing. In his early days at school, Kwame was admired by most of his friends because of his melodious voice, even though he was always in tattered school uniform. His melodious voice eventually made him a composer and singer. He is currently married to Mama Mavis and they have five children.51

On a typical Sunday Service, the choir leads Prophet Opambour Adarkwa, the Associate Pastors and their wives with songs into the chapel as done in the mainline churches. This is followed by Opening prayer, praises and worship for about 45 minutes. Then there are song ministrations by the various singing groups in the church, led mostly by the wives of the pastors, for about 30 minutes. Offertory follows, Members are encouraged to give to God. Boxes are placed at vantage points in front and members are asked to move from their seats to put their offerings into the boxes. The congregation prays over the offertory. This takes about 15 minutes. Then, comes a time of singing and dancing, in preparation for the sermon. This is normally delivered by any of the Associate Pastors assigned by Prophet Opambour to do so. The preaching which is normally based on a short scripture lasts for about 20 minutes. An important aspect of the Sunday service is healing and deliverance. This follows the sermon and is done by the Prophet himself. He mounts the pulpit amidst rigorous shouts, claps and cheers from the congregation with a standing ovation; he is introduced with titles such as “Dr. Opambuor,” “the

history maker,” “the legend,” “Asante Moses,” “prophet one.” During this time, a kind of ineffable ecstasy fills the church auditorium. He starts the ministration session with songs, most of which are his own compositions. He moves to and fro the congregation, followed by two or three of the Associate Pastors. He calls people at random and begins to “prophesy” into their lives as and when supposedly moved by the Holy Spirit. As part of the prophecy, he reveals the past, tells the present and the future of people present. He reveals the plans of the devil on people. He attributes the forces hindering the progress of people as witchcraft, water spirits, demonic forces and ancestral spirits. He reveals the causes of sicknesses and prays for people. He delegates some of the prayer to his Associate Pastors. He claims to hear the voice of God telling him of the sins people commit secretly that lead to their sufferings. While ministering, some members of the congregation shout, Odifuo nono meaning “that is the prophet,” Onyame wo tumi oo with the response being Ena wo ka no seii literally meaning, “God has power” and the response is “It’s exactly what you have said.”

3.4 The Impact of Prophetism in Ghana

With the increasing spate of prophetism in Ghana, many concerns have been expressed over how the phenomenon is affecting individuals, families and the society in general.

Mrs. Augustina Opoku Danso53 – A fifty Three year old Principal Superintendent Teacher at Buorkrom M/A School admitted, she has had encounters with Prophets and she did express the end results had been both negative and positive. One Prophet after a series of revival meetings at her Church specifically spoke to her by way of prophecy that “for her to see an end of her financial woes, she needs to repent and pay tithes”.

52 Interview with Evangelist Rexford Boateng and Participant Observation at Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre on Sunday 17 May 2015.
53 Mrs. Augustina Opoku Danso, Principal Superintendent Teacher at Buorkrom M/A School (Block B) on June 4th 2015.
She claims to see some financial liberty when tithing become part of her service to God.

Another episode with another Prophet that occurred in August 2013 at her hometown, which she sees as negative and confusing was when she was told by this so –called Prophet that “the cause of two strange deaths in her family and marital unhappiness was – spiritual marriage to someone and that every night at 2 am, she must wake up and pray with some scripture verses and holy water” and that God will reveal things to her. Truly, she dreamt but a dead relative who revealed herself as the cause of those things made her wonder what was happening.

Mr. Isaac Owusu Ansah, a twenty three year old footballer and Mr. Michael Asante, a twenty one year old barbering shop operator of the All Grace Evangelistic Ministry related their counseling encounters with one Prophet Kwesi Kwarteng. Together with their 70 year old mother, they went to this Prophet for protection, prosperity, health and a better life. The directives or “akwankyere” basically was giving of an offering to the Prophet, the buying of anointing oil to smear oneself, to bath with water, and something about death in the family. These two brothers assert that these prophets are using their mind and they used this word “strategy” to do business instead of God’s Work. They questioned why oil should be bought and money given before one is ministered unto? What annoys them was that, there was no result and the purpose of going there never came to fruition.

Mad Philomena Achiaa, age 46, an unemployed housewife at kurofrom- Kumasi narrated her funny story when she visited a prophet at Kenyasi concerning her

54 Interview of Isaac Owusu Ansah (Footballer) and Michael Asante(Professional Barber) at the Barbering Shop at A- Line Buorkrom on June 4th 2015.
55 Interview with Philomena Achiaa, unemployed housewife at kurofrom- Kumasi, on June 4th 2015.
husband’s job and children’s education. After first taking a freewill offering, this prophet told her about some spiritual attacks in the “spirit world” upon the family and the necessity to perform certain purifications to deter that spirit (this Akan word was used “akyewadie”). The prophet finally ended with a list of household provisions to be bought for the “akyewadie purification”. According to this woman the list of household consumables was as if a new provisions shop was to be opened. Madam Achiaa never saw this prophet again.

Oheneba George56, a 24 year old second year student at KNUST was full of excitement and veneration for the prophetic ministry because all the Prophets he had personally encountered and those invited to their Campus Christian Fellowship (CCF) had manifested the true spirit of prophecy. Their prophetic insight and directives were accurate and precise. Through the prophetic anointing, clear cut instruction resulting in deliverance, triumphs even sicknesses and diseases were dealt with. A special mention was made of one Prophet Atsu Mannasseh whose program with them at school last year was well patronized by students and some lecturers of KNUST.

Mr. Dominic Boakye57 aged 37, the Director of an Aluminium Fabrication Shop near Sepe – Dote in Kumasi exonerated the activities of true prophets in an interview with him. A Prophet was invited to their church (Bethel Methodist Church at Buorkrom) during their Easter Harvest in April 2015. In one of the nights, the prophet called him forward and started prophesying to him about the “mantle of Oil” and the calling of God upon his life and asked him to pray with the Psalm of his age - Psalm 37. Brother Dominic confirmed the prophesy to be a true reflection of what was happening in his life; moreover he was in the process of being groomed as a Methodist Minister. He

56 Interview with Oheneba George, Student at KNUST, Kumasi on May 17th 2015
57 Interview with Dominic Boakye, Director of an Adom Aluminum Fabrication Shop near Sepe – Dote in Kumasi on June 4th 2015
again admonished Christians to be discerning and practicing prophets to also seek for relevant knowledge (Hosea 4:6) in order to communicate God’s directives to His people.

Rita Tornyie, a 28year old self – employed Hairdresser at Sofoline and Mr. Ernest Kussi aged 55years – a taxi driver at star junction (Odeneho Kwadaso) all of Church of Christ\(^{58}\) seem to share similar sentiments that “there are no prophets right now since prophetism ended with John the Baptist and Jesus Christ – anyone claiming to be a prophet is a huge liar interested in making and extorting money from innocent people”. They claim, all the prophecies we have now is the bible – speaking the truth of God’s Word to the people. Both added that the only “akwankyere” is the Bible and that Christians need to be like the Christians of Berea (Acts.17:10 -13). Rita testified that in the house where she lives, the directives of bringing salt, pure water, koko, shea butter – “nkuto” lemon, orange, apple, back of the tortoise, snail shell, old dresses, pictures, candles and such likes to/from prophetic services/counseling results in marital problems, confusions amongst friends/family, no progress as a result of such patronages and practices. Mr. Kussi even said, out of curiosity he went to one prophet to test how true their prophecies are, and lo and behold, his suspicion was confirmed…all false prophets. He concluded that the bible is already sealed and no one should add to or subtract from it.

Mr. Ambrose Donkor\(^{59}\) also a 35year old Taxi driver in the Assemblies of God church at Nkawkaw shared his story of a miraculous breakthrough of a new job when he lost his previous job as a filling station assistant. Consultation, counseling and prophetic

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\(^{58}\)Interview with Rita Tornyie, self – employed Hairdresser at Sofoline and Mr. Ernest Kussi, taxi driver at star junction (Odeneho Kwadaso) all of Church of Christ on June 4\(^{th}\) 2015.

\(^{59}\)Interview with Mr. Ambrose Donkor, Taxi driver in the Assemblies of God at Nkawkaw on June 4\(^{th}\) 2015.
directives (akwankyere) from a prophet at Nkawkaw led to this new job as a taxi Driver and his advice was: yes, there are false prophets and those who follow them are selling their soul to the devil. Those followers of false prophets should engage the services of their various Pastors for divine intervention. He gave some clues to identify a True Prophet which includes, one who would lead you to salvation, encourage you to develop your own relationship with God and thoroughly teach you God’s Word.

3.5 Summary of Various Comments
In sum, the impact of prophetism in Ghana is both of joy and sadness: joy because it seems to bring jubilations, excitement, problems - solved and crowds to some churches/fellowships but on the other hand, we seem to have quite a number of deviations in practice and in doctrine as testified, example being spiritual manipulations, fear and panic, breakdown of marriages divisions of families due to mistrust as result of a prophetic directive, taking advantage of clients by milking them financially and worst of all is the monetary and wrong motivations for ministry.

3.6 Conclusion
There is no doubt that contemporary prophets are meeting some needs of their followers. However, this study is observing widespread cases and instances of abuse, excesses and the creation of fear/panic in their hearers through so called “death prophecies”. The dependency on the prophet and his instructions rather than the Word of God also indicate our shortcoming as churches, fellowships etc in making the Word of God the basis of our faith and practice. The use of the prophetic ministry/gifts to extort money from the society raises an important question of how our prophets are trained and equipped for ministry. Improper motives and motivations for ministry is another issue to look at with our emerging prophets. The proportions of abuse are now widespread and urgent steps need to be taken to contain this canker.
CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTEMPORARY PROPHETIC MINISTRY IN GHANA

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher brought to light the state and nature of the prophetic ministry as practiced in contemporary Ghana and its impact on our Ghanaian folks. In this chapter an assessment and analysis is made on the issues that have emerged out of the previous chapter.

4.2 The Prophetic Ministry and Church Growth

Carefully looking at Ephesians 4: 11-13 and 1 Corinthians 14: 3-5, the prophetic ministry is intended for the edification of the church. Churches are built up in Christ through the ministry of the Prophet and the exercise of all the prophetic giftings. However, there are instances of concerns regarding the prophetic ministry in Ghana today. The researcher seems to observe three categories of operators of the prophetic ministry;

i. Genuine and True Prophets whose activities are scripturally based, and fulfilling what Apostle Paul in scripture mandated Prophets and Prophecies to do, that is edifying the church. Few are the numbers here and on the minority. These are the true remnants of Biblical Prophets/Prophecies, who are paying the price in bringing order and sanctity to the Church. The church today can still pride herself with true Prophets ministering according to New Testament Patterns.

ii. Another category is a mixture of Prophets and Prophecies who have the Word of God plus other additions which source, could be, man –made, demonic or
African traditional Religion (ATR). The category of Prophets/prophecies here have managed to combine both biblical precedence with all kinds of unscriptural ethos to their trade. This group of prophets are the ones who dish out what is popularly referred to as *akwankyere* synonymous to the divinations we have in ATR. Even though, they preach the Word of God, the prophetic directives that given are mostly unscriptural and the faith of teeming followers is now been grounded on such vain and unprofitable *akwankyere*. Aside the weapons of our warfare that we know of recorded in the scriptures; the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the Spoken Word, faith, holiness, prayer how can one use physical things like salt, porridge, cutlasses, lemons, pure water to engage demonic spirits, strongholds and curses? Even though we observe multitudes flock to such Prophetic gatherings, services, and ministries, there is the need to investigate such Growth.

iii. The researcher observes a final group of Prophets who are categorical false Prophets, prophesying lies, mischief, and all kinds of abominations. These ones are predominantly in business, manipulating their followers for their selfish ends. Their sole motivation in ministry is their ‘stomach’ and not the saving of souls. These Prophets have sold their souls and conscience to the devil and his schemes, they follow – deception, divisions, exploitations.

All of the above groups of prophets by and large have followers and multitudes at their gathering; it is another question whether these are true disciples of Jesus or people who are interested only in getting solutions to their problems. Have new converted souls been added to the Church, as a result of the activity of such prophets and prophecies? The researcher believes little has been done in the area of evangelism and discipleship by the prophetic ministry, even though it can boast of large gatherings and followers,
This is because little has been done in pointing men to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and the power of His Word to build new believers is resigned to the background of contemporary prophetism.

### 4.3 Prophetic Direction (Akwankyere) and Christianity

A disturbing trend noted by the researcher with the phenomenon called *akwankyere* is its new dimensions of significance and relevance in contemporary prophetism in Ghana, such that people prefer such *akwankyere* than the Word of God and quite a number are prepared to pay money (huge and little) for such *akwankyere*. The researcher finds no direct biblical backing, principle or teachings behind most of such *akwankyere*. Even though, we do have glimpses of some prophetic directives in both the New and Old testaments, its usage now has become ritualistic and monotonous void of the Holy Spirit guidance. Several people/clients are given the same prescription for action in solving their problems or petitions. How do we truly confirm the authenticity of such *akwankyere*, when several people are ministered to with same ‘dosage’ unlike in biblical times where specific instruction goes to specific individual?

Modern day *akwankyere* is becoming another shortcut antidote to acquiring blessings (spiritual and physical) including good jobs, marital blessing, financial prosperity, deliverance from all forms of demonic oppression, travelling mercies and many others. This is gradually replacing scriptural admonitions like “the just living by faith, seeking first the kingdom and its righteousness and all other things shall be added unto us, the principles of sacrifice and service, Christian suffering, taking up our cross and following the Master Jesus. Christianity due to *akwankyere* is been reduced to a ‘give me or come and get’ party, whereas our first century predecessors only desired the recommendations of the Father saying ‘well done, thou good and faithful servant’.
Pastoral care and counseling is intended to bring spiritual growth and members involved in ministry unto the Lord but our contemporary *akwankyere* is making ‘messiahs or thin gods’ of our so called Prophets.

Is it not manipulation or inducing fear and panic by another, when death is often spoken of? Death is magnified, used as tool in extorting monetary benefits from clients in today’s prophetic meeting. With some of the *akwankyere*, one would not hesitate to ask whether it is divination or African Traditional Religion (ATR) been re-introduced into Christianity? Such directives seem to be unbiblical, scripturally unsubstantiated, heretic, mystical, and superstitious.

### 4.4 Prophecy and Church Unity and Cohesion

Jesus’ prayer in John chapter17 verse 21 was that ‘we would be one’ and oneness is seen as a principal characteristic of the Christian family. To a large extent *akwankyere* seem to have done little to promote oneness, unity and cohesion. There are a number of testimonies to that effect whereby; majority of the *akwankyere* are contrary to the scriptures and so-called prophets believe that, they carry a superior anointing as compared to Pastors who oversee the various church families. Where Pastors would advise the patient manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit and christlike character, the Prophet would prophesy the ‘overtaking anointing’, the ‘return to sender anointing’, the ‘sharp sharp *akwankyere*’, ‘you are also called as an Apostle’. All these immature display of incompetence in handling spiritual challenges, have eventually led to various kinds of divisions, disunity and discord in the church family.
4.5 Conclusion

There is no doubt that contemporary prophets are meeting some needs of their followers and there is some level of continuity as seen in biblical times. However, it can be noted that, there is a widespread divergence from biblical prophecy and a steady growth of this divergence calls for immediate steps and guidelines which need to be instituted to rectify these deviations.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Study

The study assessed from a theological perspective biblical prophecy and contemporary prophetic ministry in Ghanaian neo-prophetic ministries. It was divided into five chapters with some subdivisions where necessary. The work considered the general introduction, which focused on the background to the study, statement of problem, aims and objective of the study, significance of the study and the research methodology. Also the views of some scholars which have a bearing on the study were considered. The scope and content was also outlined. Definition of some concepts such as Prophet, Prophecy, akwankyere and AIC was explained.

The work further examined some background issues to the prophetic movement; here issues such as prophecy from biblical perspective, Old Testament prophecy, prophecy in the New Testament, history of the charismatic and neo-prophetic movement in Ghana and the Holy Spirit and the Church were considered. Furthermore the study evaluated contemporary prophetic ministries in Ghana under these subheadings Christianity and Prophetism, the nature of Ghanaian Prophetic Ministry under these traditions Africa Independent Church (AIC) Charismatic, Pentecostal, Neo Pentecostal / Neo prophetic and the impact of prophetism in Ghana. It assessed the contemporary Prophetic Ministry in Ghana under these headings the Prophetic Ministry and Church Growth, Prophetic direction (akwankyere) and Christianity, Prophecy and church unity and cohesion.

The work concludes with a summary of the study, the general conclusion and some recommendations.
5.2 General Conclusion

The study set out to theologically assess biblical Prophets/prophecy and contemporary Prophets/prophecy. It has been established that, there are three categories of operators of the Prophetic Ministry; True and Genuine Prophets whose activities are scripturally based, after the order of New Testament standards, another category are those Prophets/prophecies who have a mixture of the Word of the God and other questionable additions, which source could be man - made, demonic and African Traditional Religion, the final group are those categorical false Prophets, prophesying lies, mischief and all kinds of abominations.

It was also established that, very little have been done by contemporary prophetism in terms of disciplining believers and mobilizing them for evangelism and church growth. Contemporary prophetism is making ‘messiahs or thin gods’ out of so - called Prophets. A disturbing trend is when akwankyere is becoming the basics of faith and conduct instead of the Word of the Living God. Akwankyere seem to be threatening Church and family unity and cohesion.

It can be concluded that contemporary Prophets are meeting some needs of their teeming followers and there exist some level of continuity as seen in biblical times, however, it can be noted that there is widespread divergence from biblical prophecy and the steady growth of this divergence calls for immediate steps and guidelines to rectify these deviations.

5.3 Recommendations

The study recommends that Theological Institutions consider the issue of developing curricula of courses in prophetism to help the church become better enlightened on this particular arm of its ministry.
Church leaders should intensify sound biblical teaching in their churches and have more senior and mature prophets raise upcoming prophets by organizing frequent ‘School of prophets/prophecies’.

Pastors and leaders conferences should consider developing a system of mentorship for Christian leaders and workers, especially the prophets, for many of their excesses may be attributable to their lack of mentorship.

Religious bodies such as the Christian Council of Ghana, Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council, the Council of Gospel Churches and the various Ministers Fellowships/Associations to regulate the activities of their members to ensure sanity and also curb religious extremities in Ghanaian Christianity.
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Apostle Robertson Aboagye – Darko (Spiritual Leader, General Overseer and Chairman of the Executive Council – ROC – INT) on 6th February 2015 during their National Ministers Retreat in Kumasi-Adom Fie Retreat Centre (Apire)


Evangelist Rexford Boateng and Participant Observation at Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre on Sunday 17 May 2015.

Mrs. Augustina Opoku Danso, Principal Superintendent Teacher at Buokrom M/A School (Block B) on June 4th 2015.

Isaac Owusu Ansah (Footballer) and Michael Asante(Professional Barber) at the Barbering Shop at A- Line Buokrom on June 4th 2015.

Philomena Achiaa, unemployed housewife at Kurofrom- Kumasi, on June 4th 2015.

Oheneba George, Student at KNUST, Kumasi on May 17th 2015

Dominic Boakye, Director of an Adom Aluminum Fabrication Shop near Sepe – Dote in Kumasi on June 4th 2015

Rita Tornyie, self – employed Hairdresser at Sofoline and Mr. Ernest Kussi, taxi driver at star junction (Odeneho Kwadaso) all of Church of Christ on June 4th 2015.

Mr. Ambrose Donkor, Taxi driver in the Assemblies of God at Nkawkaw on June 4th 2015.
APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE

PERSONAL DETAILS (Optional)

Name [Rev, Dr. Prophet, Pastor, Elder, Deacon/ness, Mr., Mrs.]

Optional…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

i. Age 18 – 29 [ ], 30 – 49 [ ], 50 – 65 [ ] Above 65 [ ]

ii. Gender/Sex …Male [ ] Female [ ]

iii. Level of Education. Community Literacy Education [ ]
   1. Middle School / Junior High School [ ]
   2. Senior High School/ Technical/ Vocational [ ]
   3. Training College/ Polytechnic/ University/Professional Course Church Denomination………………………………………………

vii. Position……………………………Marital Status – Single [ ] Married [ ] others [ ]

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever visited or attended a Prophetic Centre or Service or Counselling Session? ………………………………………………………………………

2. When was the visit or attendant date/time /place/name of Centre or service/Prophet?

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

3. Why or what were the reasons for this visit or attendance?

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................................................................................................................................................................................
4. Were you personally given a prophetic message/word or directive (in Akan ‘akwankyere)?

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5. From your perspective, was this message/word/directive (or Akwankyere) Biblical or non Biblical?

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6. Why do you say so in the above (5) answer?

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7. Have you read or heard of any precedent in the Bible (Old and New Testament) with respect to the prophetic message /word / directive (akwankyere) which was personally given to you by the Prophet/Man of God

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8. Did you carry out, obeyed or fulfilled the Prophetic directive given to you?

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9. Did you get the expected results or answer to your request, need or petition?

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10. What would you advise anyone who intends to visit or attend such centers, sessions, or services and those who patronize such events via FM’s and TV Stations?

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Any other comments or remarks?

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THANK YOU
APPENDIX II

RELEVANT PICTURES

Researchers with Rita Tornyie, Hairdresser at Sofoline

Researchers with Mr. Ernest Kusi a Taxi Driver at Star Junction, Kumasi
Church of Hossana at Kromoase New Site, Kumasi.

Researcher with Mr. Dominic Boakye, Director of an Aluminium Fabrication Shop near Sepe Dote in Kumasi.