

***I will pass over you:***  
***The relevance of the Passover to the understanding of***  
***salvation in contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostalism –***  
***A critical reflection from an Akan perspective***

Dissertation

zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades Dr. theol.

dem Fachbereich Evangelische Theologie in der Fakultät für

Geisteswissenschaften der Universität Hamburg

vorgelegt von

Joseph Williams Acheampong

aus Ghana

Hamburg, den 21. Oktober 2014

**Erstgutachter: Prof. Dr. Ulrich Dehn**

**Zweitgutachter: Prof. Dr. Corinna Körting**

**Tag des Rigorosums: 29.01.15**





## Acknowledgement

My deepest appreciation goes to the Lord who has brought me this far in my academic pursuit. I also remain indebted to the Missionsakademie for the offer of sponsorship I received from them in support of my stay in Germany and for working on this dissertation.

I would like to express my hearty thanks to my supervisors, who supported me in various ways in bringing this work to completion. I therefore take this opportunity to mention Prof. Dr. Ulrich Dehn, Prof Dr. Corinna Körting and Prof. Dr. Werner Kahl. Your constructive criticisms and the insights you gave me at various stages of this work have contributed in no small way to make the dream of writing this dissertation a reality. I remain grateful.

I am also grateful to my Church, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana for allowing me to pursue this further study. Your spiritual and non spiritual support to me and my family during the period of working on this dissertation cannot go unrecognized.

I am also indebted to all my previous lecturers at the Trinity Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary whose encouragement and mentorship also contributed in shaping my dream of writing this dissertation.

The encouragement and support from friends also have to be acknowledged. I am indeed grateful to you all. May the good Lord bless you all. The same can be said of my parents and my siblings whose prayer support and encouragement need to be acknowledged.

The last but not the least, I would like to express my profound appreciation to my wife Golda and our children, Immanuel, Stephanie and Ephraim for their love, sacrifice, and support during the course of writing this dissertation. For the most part of the period, I was not available to play my role expected of me from you, but you cooperated and supported me with your love, prayers, and encouragement. *Mede Awurade da mo ase pii.* (May the Lord bless you).





## Table of Content

<b>Acknowledgement.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Chapter One.....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1 <b>Salvation and the Exodus (Passover) motif.....</b>	<b>19</b>
1.2 <b>The neglect of the Passover motif in the scholarly discourse in           Ghanaian Pentecostalism .....</b>	<b>31</b>
1.3 <b>Methodology.....</b>	<b>34</b>
1.3.1 <b>The comparative paradigm .....</b>	<b>43</b>
1.3.2 <b>Information on Pentecostals and the African Traditional Religion (ATR)           .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Chapter Two.....</b>	<b>51</b>
2.1 <b>Salvation (or <i>nkwayee</i>) in traditional Akan thought/context .....</b>	<b>51</b>
2.2 <b>Meaning of life (or <i>nkwa</i>).....</b>	<b>51</b>
2.3 <b>Life and the Spirit world of the Akan.....</b>	<b>53</b>
2.3.1 <b><i>Nyame</i>.....</b>	<b>53</b>
2.3.2 <b><i>Asase Yaa</i> .....</b>	<b>56</b>
2.3.3 <b><i>Nsuo</i> or Spirits in water bodies .....</b>	<b>58</b>
2.3.4 <b><i>Nananom Nsamanfoo</i> or the Spirit of the Ancestors .....</b>	<b>60</b>
2.3.5 <b><i>Abosom</i>.....</b>	<b>60</b>
2.3.6 <b><i>Asuman</i>.....</b>	<b>64</b>
2.4 <b>Determinants of “abundant life” .....</b>	<b>66</b>
2.5 <b>Life and destiny (or <i>nkrabea/hyεbea</i>) .....</b>	<b>68</b>
2.6 <b>Hindrances to ‘abundant life’ .....</b>	<b>71</b>
2.6.1 <b>Taboo (or <i>Mmusuo</i>).....</b>	<b>70</b>
2.6.2 <b>Curses (or <i>duabo</i>) .....</b>	<b>73</b>
2.6.3 <b>Evil Spiritual Powers and Witchcraft.....</b>	<b>76</b>

2.6.4	The lifestyle of an individual .....	77
2.7	Salvation (or <i>nkwagyeε</i> ) and 'abundant life' .....	78
2.7.1	Understanding of <i>nkwagyeε</i> (or salvation) .....	78
2.7.2	The need for <i>nkwagyeε</i> (or salvation) .....	79
2.8	Overcoming the hindrances.....	81
2.8.1	Preventive steps.....	81
2.8.1.1	Pleasing the deities.....	81
2.8.1.2	<i>Abisa</i> (or Consultation/divination).....	80
2.8.1.3	<i>Nsaguo/apayεε</i> (or libation) .....	83
2.8.1.4	Seeking Protection From A Deity .....	84
2.8.2	Curative measures .....	87
2.8.2.1	Performance of Rituals ( <i>mmusuyi</i> ).....	89
2.8.2.2	Reversing curses (or <i>duabo daneε</i> ) .....	93
2.8.2.3	<i>Nsaguo</i> (or libation) .....	95
2.9	Salvation and life after death .....	96
2.9.1	Understanding of death .....	96
2.9.2	Understanding of life after death .....	99
2.9.3	Salvation and life after death .....	100
Chapter Three .....		105
3	Understanding of salvation among Pentecostals .....	105
3.1	The Meaning of salvation .....	105
3.1.1	Salvation and the Exodus .....	107
3.2	Salvation as a present day experience .....	111
3.2.1	Spiritual Empowerment .....	112
3.2.2	Physical/material.....	116
3.3	Salvation as a future experience .....	121
3.4	Hindrances/enemies of salvation .....	122
3.4.1	Spiritual obstacles .....	123
3.4.1.1	Sin .....	123
3.4.1.2	Curses.....	126
3.4.1.3	Evil Spirits .....	128
3.4.2	Non-spiritual.....	130



3.4.2.1 Ignorance .....	130
3.4.2.2 Laziness .....	131
3.5 Overcoming the hindrances .....	133
3.5.1 Spiritual Development .....	133
3.5.1.1 The Word of God .....	133
3.5.1.2 Prayer .....	135
3.5.2 Deliverance and salvation .....	139
3.5.2.1 Meaning of deliverance .....	139
3.5.2.2 The need for deliverance .....	143
3.5.3 Giving and offerings .....	144
3.5.4 Personal effort .....	144
 Chapter Four .....	 147
 4 Traditional worldview and Pentecostalism .....	 147
 Chapter Five .....	 161
5.0 The Content of Ex 12 .....	161
5.1 Introduction .....	161
5.2 Translation of Ex 12 .....	162
5.3 Presentation of the content of Ex 12 .....	166
5.4 The Passover ritual: Its composition .....	168
5.4.1 The flesh of the animal .....	168
5.4.2 Unleavened bread .....	169
5.4.3 Bitter herbs .....	170
5.4.4 Hyssop .....	170
5.4.5 The Blood of the Passover animal and its significance .....	171
5.4.5.1 Origin of the blood ritual .....	172
 Chapter Six .....	 173
6.1 Reception and interpretation of Exodus 12 in Pentecostalism: Case studies .....	173

6.1.1	Introduction .....	173
6.1.2	Royal House Chapel .....	174
6.1.2.1	The Holy Communion as a form of Passover .....	175
6.1.2.2	The apotropaic function of the blood.....	175
6.1.2.3	The Passover as means of experiencing “abundant life” .....	179
6.1.2.4	Covenant.....	180
6.1.2.5	Miracle.....	182
6.1.3	Sermon of Pastor Mensah Otabil.....	184
6.1.4	Sermon of Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams.....	188
6.2	Summary of case studies .....	193
6.3	Evaluation .....	196
6.3.1	Neglect of the historical context.....	197
6.3.2	“Selective” interpretation and appropriation of text.....	197
6.3.3	Blood of the Passover animal as a means of grace.....	202
6.3.4	(Mis)interpretation of the apotropaic function of the blood of the Passover animal.....	202
6.4	Blood in ATR of the Akans .....	206
6.5	A “conflationist” reading of the Bible .....	211
Chapter Seven .....		213
7	General conclusion on the hermeneutics of Pentecostals in Ghana with respect to their interpretation of Ex 12 .....	213
Bibliography.....		218
Appendices .....		228

**Abstract**

Pentecostal type of Christianity is growing at a very fast rate in Ghana, compared to the historic Mission Churches. Studies have established that this trend is attributable to the ability of Pentecostals in Ghana to take the traditional African worldview into account in their proclamation of the Gospel message.

An observation of Pentecostals in Ghana also suggests that salvation, and issues related to it, is central in the discourse of contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostalism. In their discourse on the subject of salvation, Pentecostals allude to the Exodus motif in general and the Passover in particular, especially during the celebration of the Holy Communion. Even though studies have shown that the New Testament is generally preferred by Pentecostals to the Old Testament, this work seeks to demonstrate that the Exodus motif remains a significant point of reference to Pentecostals in their discourse on salvation.

The work also explores the interpretation of the Passover text in Ex 12 by Pentecostals, with particular attention to the factors that influence their interpretation and appropriation of the text. Finally, conclusions are drawn on the hermeneutical tendencies of Pentecostals in their reading of Ex 12 in particular and the Old Testament in general.



## Chapter One

### 1.0 Introduction: The relevance of exploring the Passover motif to the understanding of salvation in contemporary Pentecostalism

Salvation is central to the belief systems of Pentecostals in Ghana.<sup>1</sup> Generally, their understanding of salvation is expressed in the belief that accepting Jesus as one's savior does not only lead to the forgiveness of sins, but also, salvation should be experienced dramatically by the believer physically in the here and now; as he or she awaits the final appearance of the Lord in the "Parousia." In other words, salvation should also be experienced in concrete terms in the present life of the believer. Salvation should result in having one's physical needs met, as the Christian also looks forward to being eternally with the Lord in the future. Bishop James Saah of *Action Chapel International* observes that through salvation, a person is redeemed from darkness into the kingdom of God's son. In expressing this view, James Saah remarks that: "I believe that everything God has promised I can receive it here and now. I am not going to receive it in the life hereafter. So salvation, which also leads to "life in fullness", means whatever God has promised in His word, I have access to it

---

<sup>1</sup> Different strands of movements and church organizations have been classified as "Pentecostals". Due to the changing faces of the phenomenon over time, giving it a definition becomes a challenge. Allan Richardson has noted that: "In seeking a working definition of *Pentecostalism* we need to acknowledge that such a definition might prove elusive and always depends on the paradigms and criteria of the individual attempting to make it." See Allan Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions" in Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder et al (eds) *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 27. The difficulty in giving a working definition to Pentecostalism is partly due to the peculiarity of each denomination or movement which considers itself as Pentecostal or Charismatic. It can be observed that no two Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches or movements have exactly the same liturgy or doctrines on all subjects. However, as Allan Anderson has noted about global Pentecostalism, they have close similarities. In spite of the similarities, J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu has pointed out the role culture plays in shaping Pentecostalism. In the light of this, Asamoah-Gyadu has proposed a definition that takes the cultural context of Africa into account. He observes "[P]entecostalism refers to Christian groups which emphasize salvation in Christ as a transformative experience wrought by the Holy Spirit and in which pneumatic phenomena including 'speaking in tongues', prophecies, visions, healing, and miracles in general, perceived as standing in historic continuity with experiences of the early church as found especially in the Acts of the Apostles, are sought, accepted, valued, and consciously encouraged among members as signifying the presence of God and experiences of his Spirit." See J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 12. His definition describes both the context and the Christian group who will be considered for this work. The term "Pentecostals" will therefore be used to refer to Christian groups with Pentecostal and or Charismatic persuasion. In Ghana, Pentecostalism cannot be limited only to what may be described as the "mainline" Pentecostal and Charismatic groups only. This is because almost all the "Historic Mission Churches" such as the Methodist Church, Ghana, the Anglican Church, Ghana, the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, etc have groups which may be described as "Pentecostal" or "Charismatic." See Cephas N. Omenyo, *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism: A Study of the Development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches* (Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum, 2006).

now and not in the hereafter alone.”<sup>2</sup> He mentions divine health, prosperity and peace of mind as some of the promises of God for the Christian.<sup>3</sup> Salvation is thus experienced holistically. Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong of the *Word Miracle Church International* also shares the view that salvation enables the Christian to receive the blessings of God. According to him, blessing is part of the nature of God. Therefore if the believer becomes the child of through salvation, then he or she inherits the nature of God which includes blessing. He continues that “when somebody is blessed, it shows in ... his health, his wealth ...” For him this is “part of the good life that God makes shine out of a person when one is in line with His purpose and His will.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, blessing which is expressed in physical wellbeing is emphasized in the discourse of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana. This understanding is similar to the perception of the traditional religion on salvation.<sup>5</sup>

Some Pentecostals believe that God has a plan for each individual. This view is often based on Jeremiah 29:11.<sup>6</sup> The transition from being saved to the full realization of the plan (or purpose) of God in the life of a person (which is usually referred to as “The Promised Land”), is characterized by obstacles most of which are spiritual. It is therefore believed that through salvation, the Christian is empowered to overcome the forces and circumstances which serve as hindrances to reaching God’s plan.<sup>7</sup> This belief is emphasized by Catechist Abboa Offei<sup>8</sup>, who believes that salvation empowers the Christian to emerge victorious in his/her journey into the God given

---

<sup>2</sup> This observation was made by Bishop James Saah in an interview with him on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Accra.

<sup>3</sup> These views were expressed in an interview with Pastor Wright on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong is the Administrative Bishop of the Word Miracle Church International. He made these observations in an interview with him on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu has, thus, noted that “[s]alvation in both Ghanaian traditional and biblical contexts has a strong existential import.” Cf. Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 202.

<sup>6</sup> Pastor Mensah Otabil, the General Overseer of the *International Central Gospel Church* (ICGC) preached a sermon captioned “There is hope for the future” based on Jeremiah 29:11. In this sermon, Otabil emphasized that God has a definite plan for the life of every individual to prosper him or her. According to him, this plan of God could be realized only when the individual becomes “born again.” This sermon which was preached in Accra is captured on a tape.

<sup>7</sup> These include anything that can serve as an impediment to a person as he/she seeks to realize God’s purpose for his/her life. Examples include death through an accident, poverty, sickness (especially chronic ones), etc. In Pentecostalism, these are perceived to be circumstances that happen as a result of the activities of evil spiritual forces. Therefore they are emphasized during prayer meetings of Pentecostals.

<sup>8</sup> Catechist Ebenezer Abboa Offei is the leader of the *Grace Deliverance Team*, a popular prayer centre of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in Akropong Akwapem. He made these observations in an interview with him on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Akropong.

plan. He maintains that salvation becomes effective “when one becomes a captain of what one is destined to be; when one becomes a positive reference point in his/her field of endeavor.” The use of “captain”, “positive reference point” and “rule” emphasizes the authority the Christian is supposed to receive as part of the salvation “package”. According to him, the “life in fullness” Jesus was referring to in John 10:10 was in terms of the understanding of life in the world of the Old Testament. In explaining what is meant by this understanding of life, he cites the life of Abraham and Sarah as examples, and posits that the “life in fullness” one receives upon becoming a Christian “includes a direction or a destiny [...] that a person has to go through [...] which is also unique to that person”. He explains that God had a plan for Abraham and Sarah concerning child bearing, yet it was realized only after a considerably long time with a lot of challenges. In the same way, the Christian may have to go through a lot of challenging times before the complete realization of God’s purpose for his or her life. In other words, Abraham becomes a ‘model’ for the life of the believer.

Even though he received a promise of a blessing from God, he had to go through some ‘challenges’ before these promises were materialized. Therefore, according to Abboa Offei, the Christian also needs to be “empowered” in order to experience the purposes of God for his or her life. These observations of Abboa Offei also emphasize the belief among Pentecostals that God has a purpose for the life of every believer to prosper him or her. It is also worthy of note, how Abboa Offei links his understanding of “fullness of life” promised in the New Testament to the Old Testament. His association of “fullness of life” to the life of Abraham can be understood as in terms of the perception what constitutes a “blessing” which is expected to be expressed in the physical and material wellbeing of the believer. In relating the life of the believer to that of Abraham, Bishop Agyei Frimpong of the *Word Miracle Church International* (WMCI) also maintains that God promised to bless the seeds of Abraham and since the Christian is a seed of Abraham, he or she becomes blessed, possibly alluding to Galatians 3:29. In relating the blessings of God in the life of the believer to that of Abraham there is much emphasis on the “physical” aspects of the blessing.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong is the Administrative Bishop of the *Word Miracle Church International*. He expressed these views in an interview with him on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Accra.

Bishop David Oyedepo of Winners Chapel illustrates this point and explains his conviction that the Christian is born a winner, by tracing how God liberated the Israelites from the Egyptians, as well as the various battles they encountered and how they emerged victorious. He continues to argue that their victory was the result of the covenant of God with Abraham, their ancestor, quoting Genesis 12:2-3 to buttress his point. For him, since the Christian is also a true descendant of Abraham in the sight of God, the promise to the Israelites applies to Christians of today as well. In his words:

“Every truth in the Old Testament is a figure, a type, a shadow of some real things in the New Testament. The children of Israel were a picture of the believers under the new covenant. They enjoyed those victories on the basis of the covenant received by Abraham, We are the true Israelites. Although God is still committed to Israel after the flesh, we are the very Israel of God [...] so you are Abraham’s seed.”<sup>10</sup>

Thus the promises of blessings to Abraham and the subsequent deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt into the Promised Land play a significant role in the discourse of salvation among some Pentecostals. Expressing his view on why salvation should be experienced physically or materially, Pastor Chris Oyikhilome of *Christ Embassy* observes that the Christian should be rich and prosperous because he/she is a child of God. For him, prosperity is the birthright of Christians, since they are the seed of Abraham. He maintains: “As a child of Abraham, you will spend your days in prosperity [...] because you are Abraham’s seed, connected to eternal resources.”<sup>11</sup> This is also affirmed by Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong. He maintains that through salvation, the Christian becomes a seed of Abraham, and thus shares in his promise of blessings, which, according to him, reflects in the health and the wealth of the

---

<sup>10</sup> David Oyedepo *Born to Win* (Dominion Publication House: Lagos, 2008), 77-78. Bishop Dr. David O. Oyedepo is the President of the Living Faith Church Worldwide Inc., which has its headquarters in Nigeria. He is also Nigerian. His inclusion in this work which is focused on Pentecostals in Ghana is based on the fact that he has a branch of his church in Accra, Ghana called the *Winners Chapel International*. Besides, he can be said to have had considerable influence on Pentecostalism in Ghana through his numerous publications and his emphasis on miracles through faith. This work will make references to some of his books. Interviews conducted with Pastors of his church for this work will also be used.

<sup>11</sup> This was contained in a sermon preached by Pastor Chris Oyakhilome titled “Prosperity and wealth.”

It is available on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QahhnhVdGuA&feature=related>, accessed on -23.01.12.



Christian.<sup>12</sup> In other words, salvation ushers the Christian into the realms of the blessings of Abraham, which has to be tangible in the life of the Christian.

The blessings of the Christian are supposed to exceed that of the physical descendants of Abraham, the Israelites. The argument here is that the relationship of the Israelites to Abraham was a physical one while that of the Christian is a spiritual one. As a result, the Christian has better access to the blessings of God, compared to the physical descendants of Abraham. This understanding is captured by Bishop Oyedepo in the following words:

“...many believers have underrated themselves. They do not seem to understand their true standing before God. These children of Israel are the children of the flesh. Their relationship with Abraham and the covenant is based on physical inheritance alone. But you are the spiritual Israel. God is more eager to prove His victory covenant to you than He will to Israel.”<sup>13</sup>

Bishop Oyedepo believes that as “spiritual Israelites”, Christians are better placed, more than the physical Israelites, to lay claim to the promises of Abraham which include prosperity, liberation from ancestral past, good marriage, child bearing, good health, long life, success etc.

Beyond the understanding of some Pentecostals that the Old Testament is a type or a shadow of the New Testament,<sup>14</sup> the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land is considered as “a type” of salvation/deliverance in the understanding of some Pentecostals in Ghana.<sup>15</sup> This work will explore the use of the Exodus, with particular reference to the Passover, in the discourse on salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana. This is informed by the observation that the reference of Pentecostals to prosperity, especially in material terms, is a part of the “package”

---

<sup>12</sup> Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong expressed these views in an interview with him on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

<sup>13</sup> David Oyedepo, *Born to Win*, 80.

<sup>14</sup> Rev. John Abu Baidoo of the *International Central Gospel Church* and Bishop Oyedepo of the *Winners' Chapel International* share this view.

<sup>15</sup> This notion was affirmed by Bishop James Saah and Rev. Gracer Bonsie of *Action Chapel International*, Pastor John Adelego, Senior Pastor of the *Winners' Chapel International*, Rev. Nana Benyin Arhin of the *Word Miracle Church International* during my interviews with them.

of salvation is rooted in their belief that the Christian is a spiritual descendant of Abraham.

As indicated by Frimpong and Abboa Offei already, the reality of circumstances which seek to hinder the believer from the realization of “abundant life” forms part of the understanding of salvation. These can be spiritual or physical forces. There is a strong belief among Pentecostals in the existence of a spiritual world populated with evil spiritual forces (or demons), whose purpose is to oppose the Christian in his/her quest to experience fullness of life. It becomes expedient, therefore, for one to overcome these “powers of darkness” in order to experience life here and now in accordance with the purpose of God for him or her. With this understanding, Pentecostals are very emphatic on the involvement of the Christian in “spiritual warfare” against spiritual evil forces, whose purpose is to afflict the Christian with adverse situations in life, thus depriving him/her of the realization of the plan of God for his/her life.

This warfare may be encountered at both personal and cooperate levels, and it is dramatized in “warfare prayer” and “deliverance prayer”, even though it is not limited to these. What can be considered to be the general view of Pentecostals in Ghana on the place of deliverance in their understanding of salvation has been aptly described by Atiemo as “a necessary stage distinct from, and subsequent to salvation, through which every Christian must pass.”<sup>16</sup> This observation describes the understanding of Pentecostals in Ghana, who posit that the Christian does not automatically become liberated from “the grip of the devil” after he or she accepts Jesus Christ “as Lord and personal savior.” In the Ghanaian context, deliverance is a necessary phenomenon every Christian has to experience to ensure complete liberation from “satanic grips”.<sup>17</sup> It is believed to create an avenue for the Christian to

---

<sup>16</sup> Abamfo Ofori Atiemo “Mmusuyi and Deliverance: A Study of Conflict and Consensus in the Encounter between African Traditional Religion and Christianity” (Unpublished Master’s Thesis, 1995), 91.

<sup>17</sup> While it can be said that Pentecostals believe in deliverance as an important aspect of the process of salvation, opinions differ on when and how deliverance takes place in the life of the Christian. Some believe that once a person is saved, he/she becomes automatically delivered. For instance, Bishop Hansel Agyei-Frimpong of the *Word Miracle Church International* believes that “a true Christian is already delivered ... deliverance is therefore not a must for every Christian”. He submits that deliverance may be necessary for the Christian only when he/she allows the devil to manipulate him/her through ignorance. Others, like Pastor Ransford Obeng of the *Calvary Charismatic Church*, posits that it may be necessary for the Christian to be taken through deliverance depending on the background of the person prior to his/her becoming a Christian. Bishop Agyei Frimpong and Pastor Obeng made these observations during my interview with them on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 respectively.

“break” contact with his or her “past”, which can serve as a platform for “demonic activities” against the believer.

In this perspective, deliverance provides an avenue for “victory in spiritual warfare” in which the believer is involved.<sup>18</sup> Without this “victory” the Christian will remain hindered in his or her bid to experience fullness of life which comes through salvation. As a result, themes bordering on spiritual warfare feature prominently in Pentecostal liturgy and lectionary, especially in their discourse on salvation. The opposing forces are described in both physical and spiritual categories, such as “the enemy”, and “negative forces”. This is a manifestation of the “militant” attitude of some Pentecostals towards these “forces.” It also underscores the emphasis on the need to “fight” and “overcome” as a pre-requisite for the realization of the purpose of God for the believer which believed to be expressed in “abundant life”.

### **1.1 Salvation and the Exodus (Passover) motif**

Reflecting on the Exodus from a liberation perspective, Mercy Amba Oduyoye has observed that the Exodus is a “well rehearsed event, and in Africa it has not grown stale. Just as the Jews retold it and relived it every time they were in need of, or were thankful for, deliverance, so do African Christians.”<sup>19</sup>

This observation is reflected in the beliefs and practices of some Pentecostals with respect to their understanding of “abundant life” which is associated with their understanding of salvation. Pentecostals stress on the power in the Name of Jesus Christ and the power in the blood of Jesus Christ. The miracles of Jesus Christ are also emphasized by Pentecostals in their discourse on salvation. Other parts of the New Testament are also used to explain the belief in experiencing “abundant life” in the here and now, which is expected to express itself in material blessings and prosperity. Werner Kahl has argued that African Christians generally are more interested in New Testament texts, themes and motifs because of the opportunity

---

<sup>18</sup> This is what Abboa-Offei refers to as “the challenge “the Christian must overcome in order to experience the purpose of God for his or her life.

<sup>19</sup> Mercy Amba Oduyoye “Creation, Exodus and Redemption—An African Perspective on the Biblical Narrative” in *Christianity, Missions and Ecumenism in Ghana: Essays in Honor of Robert K.Aboagye - Mensah*. Kwabena Asamaoah—Gyadu (ed.) (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2009), 63.

they offer the believer to experience the power of God, which is expected to overcome any demonic forces. Referring to these reasons for the preference for the New Testament, Kahl observes:

“Es bietet aufgrund der durch Jesu eröffneten Partizipationsmöglichkeit an göttlicher Allmacht die *Mittel* zur Überwindung *sämtlicher* gegenwärtiger Probleme, und zwar durch Besiegung der sie hervorrufenden Dämonen.”<sup>20</sup>

Kahl suggests that the New Testament references to the power of Jesus to overcome demonic powers which threaten “abundant life”, makes the New Testament more attractive than the Old Testament to African Christians generally.

However, it can be observed that the Exodus also informs Pentecostals in their discourse on salvation.<sup>21</sup> The Exodus is considered as a “type” of salvation for the Israelites. According to Pastor Enoch Ghartey of *Winners Chapel International* the “Exodus of the Israelites is a type of salvation in Christ, in the Old Testament.”<sup>22</sup> This view is reinforced by Pastor Ransford Obeng of *Calvary Charismatic Church*. For him, the Exodus is “a picture of what Jesus came to do for us on the cross.”<sup>23</sup> Allusions are therefore made to various aspects of the Exodus in their discourse on salvation. For instance, “Egypt” is perceived as a “type” for the previous background of a person prior to one’s conversion.<sup>24</sup> The focus of this work is to point out that in spite of the attractiveness of the New Testament in African Christianity, allusions and references are made to motifs in the Old Testament in the discourse of salvation, especially among Pentecostals in Ghana.

---

<sup>20</sup> Werner Kahl, *Jesus als Lebensretter: Westafrikanische Bibelinterpretationen und ihre Relevance für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007) 111.

<sup>21</sup> The Exodus motif is generally employed by Pentecostals in Ghana in their discourse on salvation. Some events of the Exodus have even become symbols of annual programs among some Pentecostals. For instance, “Passover” and “Crossover” are used by the *Action Chapel International* and the *International Central Gospel Church* respectively for their 31<sup>st</sup> December annual Vigil prayer.

<sup>22</sup> Pastor Enoch Ghartey is a pastor at the *Winners Chapel International*, Accra. He made these observations in an interview with him on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Accra. Pastor Gracer Bondzie of the *Action Chapel International* also shared the same view of the Exodus as a type of salvation. This was expressed in my interview with him on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2012 in Accra.

<sup>23</sup> Pastor Ransford Obeng is the General Overseer of the *Calvary Charismatic Church*. He made these comments in an interview with him on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Kumasi.

<sup>24</sup> Some Pentecostals believe that the background of a person can be a recipe for spiritual attacks on a Christian. For instance, on whether the believer needs “deliverance”, Obeng holds the view that this will depend on the “spiritual” background of the person, prior to his or her conversion into Christianity. He gave this information during the interview referred above.

It is a generally held view in Pentecostalism that the traditional religion is “demonic.” Because the traditional religion is demonized, it is believed that the Christian has to break any links with the past, which is normally considered to be polluted by ancestral curses and evil spiritual covenants.<sup>25</sup> Some Pentecostals use Egypt to represent an undesirable condition they have to endure. According to Pastor John Adelego of *Winners Chapel International*, Egypt symbolizes the kingdom of darkness.<sup>26</sup> For Bishop Joseph Nyarko Antwi of *Action Chapel International*, Egypt is a type of the world or bondage from which one must be delivered.<sup>27</sup> In other words, Egypt represents any condition, spiritual or physical that deprives a person of the fullness of life that the Christian is supposed to enjoy. Therefore an “Egypt” creates a desire for liberation into a place or situation which is in line with the purpose of God for the Christian. Such condition is also symbolized with the “Promised Land”.<sup>28</sup> Testifying to the fulfillment of a prophecy concerning how his church would build their own place of worship at a specific place in the nation’s capital, Rev. Sam Korankye Ankrah of *Royalhouse Chapel International* relates the movement of the church from a hired property to their own chapel to the Exodus. He considers it “a significant move, a crossing over from ‘Egypt’ to the ‘Promised Land’”<sup>29</sup>. Usually the understanding is that it takes “divine intervention” to leave “Egypt”. Therefore one has to be taken through “deliverance” in order to be freed from any such influences from

---

<sup>25</sup> For a more detailed discussion of how the traditional African worldview is “demonized” by Pentecostals, see Birgit Meyer, *Translating The Devil: Religion and Modernity Among The Eve in Ghana* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1999).

<sup>26</sup> Pastor Adelego expressed these opinions in my interview with him on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Accra.

<sup>27</sup> Bishop Nyarko Antwi shared this thought in an interview I conducted with him on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Accra.

<sup>28</sup> The “Promised Land” is a term used often among Pentecostals to symbolize a desired state or condition. It is used synonymously with having achieved the purpose or plan of God concerning a person. According to Saah of the *Action Chapel International*, the “Promised Land” can be about life here and now or life after death. He observes that “[w]hen Charismatics talk about Promised Land, we are talking about two things. For me as a highly educated Charismatic, my understanding of it is about a certain place of glory and honour temporal on this earth. When we say ‘receive your promised land’ we are talking about some material things you can receive in the here and now. On the flip side, ‘Promised land’ also refers to heaven which will be inherited post death, where Abraham and the lot are watching from the balcony. That is another promised land. Depending on the context, one will know which of the two is being referred to. If it is blessing people then the Promised Land will be about material things but if it is about post death, then we are talking about eternal life.” This information was provided during an interview with him in June 2012 in Accra.

<sup>29</sup> Derick Amanor, “The Rising of the Sun: Shining from Obscurity”. An autobiography of Sam Korankye Ankrah, (Unpublished), 115.

the “past”, or anything which has the tendency to deprive an individual or a community of the “blessed” state God has planned for them.

Apostle Paul Oko Hackman of the *International Deliverance and Prayer Ministry* throws more light on this belief. Hackman, who sees the main aim of life as surviving in the “here and now”, and in the life to come, a view held by many Pentecostals, also posits that salvation opens the way for the believer to gain access to the world to come, but it takes deliverance for the believer to experience well-being in the here and now. In his words:

“[...] there is the goal of salvation which you have to score [...] simply by accepting Jesus as your personal savior to enable you enter the Kingdom of Heaven. In terms of being well to-do here in the world, you definitely need deliverance from the curses which have been permanently established in your life due to alliances which your grand and great grandparents entered into with gods, demons, witches, etc.”<sup>30</sup>

To experience life enhancement associated with salvation, one has to be “set free” from any “alliances”, as Apostle Hackman puts it. The connection of the Christian to his “past”, which involves what he or she has done in the past, as well as some of the actions and inactions of his ancestors, has to be broken to make way for the Christian to experience salvation fully in the here and now.

“Pharaoh” is also perceived as the representation of the authority or “the strong man” behind the forces that seek to prevent the Christian from being liberated from the “past”.<sup>31</sup> This represents the force which hinders a person from achieving the purposes of God for his/her life. Just as it took a demonstration of the “power of God” in Egypt before Pharaoh allowed the Israelites to leave Egypt for their Promised Land, it is believed that the Christian will have to experience a dramatic demonstration of the power of God against any hindering force that could possibly place one form of limitation or another (or a curse) on him/her. To experience this “liberation”, one has to emerge victorious in the spiritual warfare. With this

---

<sup>30</sup> “Who Needs deliverance”, Samuel Sarpong Frempong (Unpublished), I.

<sup>31</sup> According to Pastor John Adelego, Pharaoh symbolizes Satan, who prevents people from being liberated. This is reiterated by Pastor Enoch Ghartey who also sees Pharaoh as a type of the devil since he kept the people of God in oppression and bondage. These observations were made in my interview with Pastor Adelego and Pastor Ghartey on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Accra.

understanding, the Exodus of the Israelites is used directly or indirectly as a motivation to seek liberation from any form of bondage and to experience the liberation which comes with salvation. In other words, accepting Jesus Christ as one's "Lord and savior" is understood as the starting point of liberation for the Christian. Just as the command from God to Pharaoh: "Let my people go..." (Exodus 8:1;9:1,13;10:3;etc) was directed at Pharaoh to release the Israelites, accepting Jesus Christ as a "personal savior" is understood to be the starting point of the liberation of the person. Rev. Nana Benyin Arhin of the *Word Miracle Church International* relates "Let my people go..." to using the name of Jesus Christ to command an evil Spirit to leave a person.<sup>32</sup> According to Pastor Enoch Ghartey, when one becomes a Christian, the price of slavery has been paid already so the devil is commanded to "let such people go out" of any form of oppression from the devil.<sup>33</sup>

The command is also related to the authority the Christian is thought to receive owing to the belief in Jesus Christ. Pastor Ransford Obeng observes that just as the command was followed by miracles which Pharaoh could no longer bear, so does the Christian get empowered to do the impossible because the "devil" loses control over the life of the believer.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, the command from God to Pharaoh to release the Israelites from their captivity becomes a basis for the Christian to "claim" liberation from any situation that poses a threat to the realization of the goal of reaching one's "*Promised Land*". The emphasis here is to draw the attention of the Christian to the need to explore the "power of God" to receive freedom from the "past", and any forces that may prevent him/her from moving on towards reaching his/her "blessed" state of life which is believed to be the plan of God for him/her.

Another aspect of the Exodus which is alluded to in Pentecostal discourse on salvation is the Passover. This is considered a very significant event for the eventual

---

<sup>32</sup> This information was gathered from him in an interview on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2012 in Accra.

<sup>33</sup> Rev. Ghartey made this submission in my interview with him on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Accra.

<sup>34</sup> Pastor Obeng shared this view in my interview with him on 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Kumasi.

release of the Israelites from Egypt. The potency of the blood of the lamb, which the Israelites used to mark their door post as a means of identification and protection for them and their first born who were not smitten as Yhwh passed through the land of Egypt (Exodus 12) is emphasized in their application of the blood of Jesus. The Passover is considered the single most significant demonstration of the power of God which led to the release of the Israelites from their oppression under Pharaoh.<sup>35</sup> Referring to the Passover, Mensah Otabil notes that:

“In the first Passover, there were many acts of God, but those acts of God did not bring the desired deliverance. But there was this major act of God that brought about the deliverance. I think if we discern what the Passover was and what it is now, then we can also take hold of this major act of God, so that even if there have been many things happen in your life that have not brought that desired deliverance, at Communion we can expect a major work of God to bring deliverance to our lives.”<sup>36</sup>

This is part of a sermon preached during a communion service. The reference to the “first Passover” is to the Passover of the Exodus over against Jesus who is the “lamb of God” and his blood that is used as an element in the Holy Communion. Perceived as a “major act of God”, the Passover is used to highlight the “power of the blood of Jesus” to liberate. In fact, there are instances where the blood of Jesus can be said to be used as an element which is supposed to achieve for the Christian, what the blood of the Passover lamb achieved for the Israelites. According to Oyedepo,

“[e]very morning when you wake up, say ‘I cover myself with the blood of Jesus’, and you become a ‘no trespass’ territory to Satan. ... Every time you plead the blood of Jesus, you have turned a switch on in heaven. That blood begins to speak, ‘Passover’. By the blood of Jesus, every evil shall pass over you.”<sup>37</sup>

Here is an allusion to the Passover, using the blood of Jesus as an “element”. If in the Passover the blood of the lamb was a mark of protection for the Israelites against

---

<sup>35</sup> A considerable part of this work will focus on exegesis of the Passover in Exodus 12 as a basis for evaluating the use of the Passover in the discourse of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana.

<sup>36</sup> Pastor Mensah Otabil is the General Overseer of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC). Otabil made these observations in a sermon titled “Celebrating the Passover.” recorded on a DVD. This sermon will form part of the sermons to be analyzed later in the work for insight into the influence of the Passover on the discourse of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana.

<sup>37</sup> David O. Oyedepo, *The Blood Triumph*, (Lagos: Dominion Publishing House, 1995), 22-23.



the angel of destruction sent by God not against the Israelites but the Egyptians, the blood of Jesus is to be used as a “covering”, which makes the Christian a “no trespass territory” to Satan.<sup>38</sup>

A similar observation has also been made by Archbishop Duncan Williams. According to him, “[t]he blood of Jesus is the most powerful weapon for every believer”. He therefore urges Christians to “[d]eploy the blood like Moses did. Speak and plead the blood over all areas of your life. ... It will make you untouchable. It will cover your belongings and protect them from the hand of the evil one. It will barricade your family and deny all access by the devil.”<sup>39</sup> The exhortation for the Christian to deploy the blood “like Moses” and the perception of the blood as a “barricade” which makes the Christian “untouchable” as Duncan Williams suggests can be regarded as allusions to the Passover, even though there is a reference to “the blood of Jesus”.

From the above, it can be concluded that even though the Pentecostals mention the blood of Jesus Christ as a weapon in their spiritual warfare, the Passover forms the background of this understanding. Other experiences of the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land are also used as a point of reference by some Pentecostals either as a “type” of a challenge that might confront a Christian, or as a source of motivation for the Christian in his/her personal journey to his or her “Promised Land”. Some examples include the persistent refusal of Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt (Exodus 6); the Red Sea, and the Jordan which the Israelites had to cross before reaching the Promised Land (Exodus 14; Joshua 3:1-17). These are perceived typologically to be referring to impediments and challenges that might confront the Christian. Oyedepo describes the Red Sea as “a great obstacle”, and the pursuit of the Israelites by Pharaoh and the Egyptians as “an unsettling problem”.<sup>40</sup> According to Saah, “Pharaoh is a ‘type’ of Satan who does not want to release us to go to our blessing and our Promised Land”. He also relates the Red Sea and the Jordan to what he calls “the three enemies of the Christian”, which are the world, the

---

<sup>38</sup> This notion will be highlighted in the analysis of selected sermons and observations for study on the use of the Passover among Pentecostals.

<sup>39</sup> This is quoted from the back page of a book titled *“Deploying the Blood”* displayed on the facebook page of Nicholas Duncan Williams.

<sup>40</sup> Oyedepo, *Born to win*, 71.

devil and the flesh.<sup>41</sup> Frimpong suggests that Pharaoh's persistent refusal to let the Israelites go out of Egypt represents the authority in the world that prevents people from coming out of the world to become Christians.<sup>42</sup> The various battles the Israelites fought with the Canaanites (Numbers 21), or the King of the Amorites, (Numbers 21:21-32, Deuteronomy. 2:24-37), etc., are also used to stress the belief in the reality of a spiritual warfare for the Christian and assurance of victory over the enemy.<sup>43</sup>

Referring to the conquest of the Israelites in some of these battles, Oyedepo maintains that

"[t]hey marched on from victory onto victory. There was no nation that could stand against them. They made a mess of Jericho, Ai, King Og, and the Amorites – the five Kings."<sup>44</sup>

From the observation above, the warfare of the Israelites can be said to be "physical." However, it can be observed from the discussion that the "warfare" in which the believer is involved is a "spiritual" one. It is worth noting that in spite of this understanding, individuals are sometimes targeted as the "enemy" of the believer, and therefore they are "attacked" in the "warfare" prayers of the believer. According to Oyedepo

"[t]hose who attempted to wrong the people of Israel paid dearly for it. Those who attempted evil against Moses even on the camp of Israel paid for it...Nobody can take advantage of you and go free."<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> These remarks were contained in an interview with Bishop James Saah conducted on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Accra.

<sup>42</sup> This was part of my interview with Bishop Agyei Frimpong on 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Accra.

<sup>43</sup> The "enemy" is used by Pentecostals to refer to forces which hinder the Christian from achieving what may be considered as a blessed life. By "the enemy", Pentecostals may be referring to beings in either physical or spiritual categories. Cephas Omenyo and Abamfo Atiemo have elaborated on the perception of "the enemy" among the different forms of Pentecostals in Ghana. (Ref. Cephas N. Omenyo & Abamfo Atiemo, "Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo-Prophetism in Ghana" in *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, Vol. No1. July 2006, 55-68. It can also refer to a sinful behavior which is difficult for the Christian to quit. This view can be inferred from Saah's observation of the flesh as one of the enemies of the Christian.

<sup>44</sup> Oyedepo, *Born to Win*, 73.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. 82.

This is a reference to human, rather than spiritual beings. Those who pose as enemies of the Christian are expected to be dealt with by God because, according to Oyedepo, the physical Israel won all their battles “with impunity” so the Christian can do much more since he or she is born of God.<sup>46</sup> Thus, although the “warfare” of believers is supposedly targeted against Satan and his demons, it is also believed that human agents are used by the devil to carry out his plans. With this understanding, both the “spiritual agent” and the “human agent” who may be perceived to be envious or jealous of a Christian are expected to be physically affected by the “warfare” prayer of the Christian.

The following prayers which are considered by Atiemo and Omenyo as a typical declaration intended to affect the perceived enemy, also illustrate the point being made above:

*Awurade e,  
Otamfo biara a  
Omma mennye yie, no,  
Se mebo me nsa mu bo mpae a  
Apranaa nte ngu ne so  
Car mbo no nkum no  
Se oye me maame o,  
Se oye me papa o,  
Ma won nyinaa ntete ngu*

#### Translation

Lord,  
When I clap my hands  
May the enemies who work against me  
Be struck by thunder;  
May they get hit and killed  
By a car;  
Whether it is mother,  
Whether it is my father

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. 82-83.

Or whoever it is that is my enemy  
Let them all fall.

Below is another prayer about canning the enemy

*Yesu din mu*  
*Wo Otamfo a wo mpe*  
*Me yiedie;*  
*Me bebo wo abaa*  
*Wo Yesu din mu*  
*Wo nnwuma a*  
*Wo reye tia me nyinaa*  
*Me see no wo Yesu din mu*

Translation

In Jesus' name  
You enemy who does not  
want me to prosper  
I cane you.  
I destroy you  
In Jesus' name.  
I destroy all your works  
against me in the name of Jesus.

According to Omenyo and Atiemo, the perceived human agent may even be symbolically shot as in the following prayer:

*Otamfo anaa atamfo a*  
*Worehaw me*  
*Na omme me yie no*  
*Yesu din mu me bo no tuo-pee*

Translation

The enemy or enemies  
That is harassing me  
And working against my prosperity

I shoot them in Jesus' name - pee <sup>47</sup>

Omenyo and Atiemo have suggested that sometimes diseases and problems such as barrenness and impotence are returned to the enemy who is believed to have caused the condition.<sup>48</sup> These emphasize the belief among Pentecostals that there are hindrances to the experience of “abundant life” which is believed to be available for the Christian. Some Pentecostals believe that such prayers (which are sometimes referred to as “dangerous prayers”) can lead to the physical death of the human agent who might be associated with the plight of the believer. The killing of every firstborn in the land of Egypt (Exodus 12) and the drowning of the Egyptians are used to support the view that sometimes the prayers of the Christian can translate into the death of a human agent. According to Adelego, sometimes some people have to die in order for somebody to experience real liberation. Even though he was not advocating for physically attacking perceived enemies, he is of the view that through prayers for liberation, some human agents will have to die. He observes that,

“...there are actually those who should die for you to live. It is a hard truth but the truth because there are those who have vowed you will not live, you will not go forward, and you will not make it. And if you will make it, it is over their dead body. Such a person will not take an appeal or a plea. They will have to be executed that you may go on if you really want to go on with your life.”<sup>49</sup>

Much as the observation of Adelego above raises questions about whether or not such a claim is in harmony with “the biblical New Testament teachings of love”, the traditional worldview supports such a practice.<sup>50</sup> Referring to how the Egyptians were killed in the Red Sea, Oyedepo suggests that God would do everything to save His people, even if it will mean the death of other people. In his words, “[t]here is no limit to what He [God] will do to give you the victory. You cannot number how many

---

<sup>47</sup> Omenyo & Atiemo, “Claiming religious space”, 64, 65.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Pastor John Adelego made these observations in an interview on June 4 2012 in Accra.

<sup>50</sup> This will be discussed into more detail in Chapter Two of this work.

people, nations and kingdoms God killed to bring victory to the physical Israel. God is committed to your success and victory much more.”<sup>51</sup>

The parallel being drawn by Oyedepo suggests that God can even kill a perceived enemy of the Christian to ensure that he or she reaches his or her “Promised Land.” Even though Oyedepo believes that the “warfare” is spiritual, he clearly suggests that physical (human) agents can be affected by warfare prayers. This opinion is reinforced by Duncan-Williams. In a sermon titled: “Anointed for Battle”, he remarks that the existence of some people can pose a threat to the realization of one’s dream of reaching his/her Promised Land. He observes:

“[T]here are certain people in your background ... as long as they live, you will never break through. This is because they will always offset you and allow the devil to create problems in your life.”<sup>52</sup>

He further suggests that unless those people repent of their ways, when the Christian “starts doing the right things, the earth will open its mouth and swallow them”.<sup>53</sup>

In this instance, Duncan Williams was making reference to Numbers 16 where the earth opened its mouth to swallow Korah and some Israelites who rebelled against Moses. It can be observed from the discussion that the Exodus motif and other related examples in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, strengthens the view of some Pentecostals that the Christian can pray for something bad to happen to human agents (or the enemy) perceived to be “bewitching” them. There have been instances of physical attacks on perceived agents of the devil.

A dramatic instance of dealing with a perceived “spiritual warfare” problem with a “physical weapon” occurred in November 2010 in Ghana, when a 72 year old woman believed to be a witch was physically tortured and eventually set on fire by a

---

<sup>51</sup> David Oyedepo, *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Sermon titled “Anointed for Battle” preached by Duncan-Williams, recorded on a CD. (Unknown date).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

professed pastor and a group of people. This was in an attempt to exorcise her of witchcraft.<sup>54</sup>

## **1.2 The neglect of the Passover motif in the scholarly discourse in Ghanaian Pentecostalism**

Such readings of the Exodus by Pentecostals in Ghana raise some issues worth investigating. For instance, how do the Exodus motif in general and the Passover in particular influence the discourse of Pentecostals on salvation? In trying to draw parallels with various aspects of the Exodus, especially the Passover, how do the Pentecostals use Scripture? How appropriate is it to relate salvation to the liberation experience of the Israelites from Egypt? What other factors may have influenced the interpretation of the Passover among Pentecostals in Ghana? What influence does the social, cultural, religious, economic and political background of the Pentecostals have on their reading of the Passover text in relation to salvation? It can be said that in spite of the relevance of these questions to the understanding of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana, the role of the Exodus motif and the Passover in particular in contemporary Pentecostalism has been neglected in the scholarly discourse on Ghanaian Pentecostalism.

Studies conducted by Eric Anum and Justin Ukpong in the 1990s on the use of the Bible in churches in Ghana and in Nigeria have shown that the New Testament is more frequently used than the Old Testament.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, from the use of the Exodus motif among Pentecostals in their discourse on salvation as discussed above, one can infer that references to the Old Testament among Pentecostals are also significant. In spite of this significance, no study has been done about Biblical interpretation among Pentecostals with regards to their appropriation of the Exodus motif in general and the Passover in particular. Theological investigation into Pentecostalism in Ghana by scholars such as J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, Cephas

---

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11848536>, accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2013.

<sup>55</sup> Kahl, *Jesus als Lebensretter*, 107.

Omenyo, Paul Gifford, and Kingsley Larbi has focused mainly on the characteristics of Pentecostalism in general and its dynamism in Ghana.<sup>56</sup>

In his work, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, Asamoah-Gyadu discusses among other things, the understanding of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana. He highlights various expectations Pentecostals have with regards to salvation. These, according to him, include transformation, empowerment, healing, deliverance, and prosperity. It must be pointed out that his discussion can be said to be more of a description of the understanding of the Pentecostals on salvation than “exegetical.”

In a recent work, Asamoah-Gyadu, discusses “interpretations” of Pentecostals on various themes.<sup>57</sup> It must be noted that also this discussion does not include the interpretation of Pentecostals on salvation, as a theme. Besides, the discussions of the interpretations are not based on a critical exegetical assessment.

Larbi’s *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* discusses salvation among new Christian religious groups, including Pentecostals. It also focuses more on the historical developments of how the African cosmology, as well as the social, economic, and political background of the Gold Coast/Ghana were taken seriously by these religious groups in their beliefs and practices on salvation. Larbi also draws the reader’s attention to how these considerations of the religious groups have led to a high growth rate of the “newer” Christian groups in Ghana, compared to the churches established by Western missionaries who neglected the African cosmology in their evangelization efforts. In an article, Larbi draws further attention to how the concept of salvation among Ghanaian Pentecostals has both continuities and discontinuities to African cosmology.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African context* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013); E. Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: CPCS, 2001); Cephass Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism: A study of the development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana* (Zoetermeer: Boeckencentrum, 2006).

<sup>57</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 132-232.

<sup>58</sup> See Emmanuel K. Larbi, “The Nature of Continuity and Discontinuity of Ghanaian Pentecostal Concept of Salvation in African Cosmology” [www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj10/larbi.html](http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj10/larbi.html), accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2013.



Another major work on Pentecostalism in Ghana is Cephas Omenyo's *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*. This work emphasizes the fact that Pentecostalism in contemporary Ghanaian Christianity is not "limited" to what may be described as the "mainline" Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches. He points out the fact that "Pentecostalism" can be found in the churches established through Western missionary initiatives in the nineteenth century.

Another scholar on Pentecostalism whose contribution to the scholarly discourse on Pentecostalism is worth mentioning is Paul Gifford. However, the hermeneutical aspect of Pentecostalism has not been discussed by him as well.<sup>59</sup> In his dissertation at Hamburg University, *Priesthood in Context*, John D.K Ekem discusses the understanding of salvation from the traditional Akan perspective in one section.<sup>60</sup> Even though this work also involved exegesis, it was based on the New Testament book of Hebrews. Besides, Pentecostalism was not a subject for discussion.

The work of Werner Kahl, which can be said to be a systematic study of the interpretation of the New Testament among Pentecostals in Ghana is, perhaps, the only scholarly contribution dedicated to exploring issues related to Biblical interpretation among Pentecostals from a New Testament perspective, with only passing comments on their use of the Old Testament.<sup>61</sup>

It can thus be said that the scholarly discourse on Pentecostalism in Ghana has not yet given attention to their appropriation of the Old Testament.<sup>62</sup> This neglect might,

---

<sup>59</sup> Some of the works of Paul Gifford which discusses Pentecostalism in Ghana include "Ghana's Charismatic Churches" in *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 24/3 (1994), 241-265.; *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: Hurst & Co., 1998); Gegenwärtige christliche Spiritualität in Ghana, in EMS (ed.), Ghana Informationsbrief 4 (2000), 3-8.; Neuere Entwicklungen im afrikanischen Christentum, in Evangelisches Missionswerk, Kirchen und Demokratisierung, 9-39.; etc.

<sup>60</sup> See John D.K. Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Akan Traditional Priesthood in Dialogical Relation to the Priest-Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews and its Implications for a Relevant Functional Priesthood in Selected Churches Among the Akans of Ghana* (Hamburg: Lottbek, 1994).

<sup>61</sup> See Kahl, op.cit.

<sup>62</sup> This neglect might, perhaps, not be peculiar to the Ghanaian situation. Writing from the Tanzanian context Brighton Mufuruki Katabaro, in his dissertation at Hamburg University, has explored how the teachings and practices of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches and church groups in Tanzania on justification has resulted in the migration of members of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania to Pentecostal churches. The discussion of this phenomenon does not include Biblical interpretation among the Pentecostals in Tanzania.

perhaps, not be peculiar to the Ghanaian situation. Writing from the Tanzanian context Brighton Mufuruki Katabaro, in his dissertation at Hamburg University, has explored how the teachings and practices of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches and church groups in Tanzania on justification has resulted in the migration of members of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania to Pentecostal churches. The discussion of this phenomenon does not include Biblical interpretation among the Pentecostals in Tanzania.

The focus of this work, therefore, is to provide a case study of the single Old Testament topic which is increasingly gaining popularity among Pentecostals in their discourse on salvation. That is the Exodus motif in general and the Passover in particular. The study will explore particularly the use of the Passover by Pentecostals in their discourse on salvation, with a view to assessing trends in Biblical interpretation among Pentecostals, in the light of critical Biblical scholarship on Ex 12.

### 1.3 Methodology

A significant part of this work involves the Exodus motif, with particular reference to the Passover and its usage among Pentecostals in Ghana in relation to salvation. This calls for a scientific hermeneutical study of the Exodus motif in order to get a basis for evaluation of the use of the Exodus motif in the discourse of Pentecostals on salvation. To undertake this study on the Exodus motif, the “neo- indigenous”<sup>63</sup> hermeneutical approach with its socio historical orientation will be used. The proponents of this approach are biblical scholars of African descent, with scholars such as Gerald West from South Africa, and Justin Ukpong from Nigeria at the fore front.???????????? This approach seeks to ‘decolonize’ biblical interpretation from the traditional historical-critical method, without necessarily getting rid of it. In other words, an approach that “analyses an interpretation that is freer of western influence

---

See Brighton Mufuriki. Katabaro, *Rechtfertigung und Erfolg: Pfingstcharismatische Lehre und Praktiken als Herausforderungen für die Lutherische Rechtfertigungslehre in Tanzania* (Göttingen: Cuvillier, 2009).

<sup>63</sup> This term will be explained subsequently.

than what is normally the case in the traditional mainstream interpretation.”<sup>64</sup> On the need for this ‘shift’ in contemporary biblical interpretation among Africans, Pobee observes that

“Bible Study in Africa is a Passover of Language which seeks to pass over from the language of Euro-centered and Euro-constructed theology to an African-centered and African-constructed theology so as to speak effectively to Africans, body, soul, and spirit, so that they may repent and have life, and that in abundance.”<sup>65</sup>

This method, which has been advocated mainly by scholars from Africa and those interested in Bible scholarship in Africa, seeks a way of reading the Bible, such that its message becomes a message of good news for the African. The appeal of this approach, for me, lies in the fact that it does not only use the ‘traditional’ historical-critical method of biblical exegesis (as African scholars inherited from their Western counterparts), but also that it applies the meaning so acquired to the African context, making the Bible respond to the existential realities of the African Christian.

Gerald West<sup>66</sup> has argued that all interpreters come to the Bible (or any text) with two interests – these are ‘interpretive interests’ and ‘life interests’. By life interests, he is referring to the concerns and the commitment that drive the interpreter to come to the text.<sup>67</sup> West gives examples of such interests in South Africa today as religious and cultural concerns, socio political commitments, questions about race, class, gender, healing, protection, and HIV/AIDS. Life interests are shaped by our experience of the world, as well as our commitment to the world, and it is with this background that Africans come to the Bible, hoping to hear how it addresses these issues.

---

<sup>64</sup> D.T. Adamo, *Reading and Interpreting the Bible*, in S.O. Abogunrin (ed.), *Decolonization of Biblical Interpretation in Africa* (Ibadan: NABIS, 2005), 24-25.

<sup>65</sup> John S. Pobee. “Bible Study in Africa: A Passover of language”, in Gerald West and Musa W. Dube (eds.), *“Reading With”: An Exploration of the Interface Between Critical and Ordinary Readings of the Bible – African Overtures* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 176.

<sup>66</sup> Gerald West, “Interrogating the Comparative Paradigm in African Biblical Scholarship” in Hans de Wit and Gerald West (eds.), *African and European Readers of the Bible in Dialogue* (Leiden: Brill 2008), 38-64.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 38.

This view is not limited to readers who come to the Bible with intellectual spectacles only. As the report of the Glasgow consultation<sup>68</sup> has shown, Africans come to the Bible for answers to real life situations which confront them. Among other things, the study showed that in Nigeria (West Africa), it is “the harsh realities of daily living, of sheer struggles to survive, which molded popular readings.”<sup>69</sup> The study indicated that the Bible is seen as a source of succor for those facing personal difficulties and that “the major motivations for reading the Bible were the search for spiritual support against evil and enemies, and the use of prayer.”<sup>70</sup> In the situation of Christians in Ghana in general, and among Pentecostals in particular, it can be said that the Bible is read with the expectation that it responds to questions about life in general, and the specific existential location of individuals as well. This is because the Bible is read with the expectation that it responds to questions affecting the situation of the life of the people. In other words, the testimony of the Glasgow consultation regarding the expectations of the Bible from various readers can be said to be true of the Ghanaian context.

In this study, I will attempt to demonstrate how the Exodus motif lends itself as an aspect of the story of the Israelites which correlates with the social, economic, political, cultural and religious realities of the Ghanaian, and how the Bible is expected to provide answers to these realities. This expectation is informative of how the Bible is read and interpreted in the Ghanaian context. The relevance of the life interests of the African to their approach to biblical interpretation has also been highlighted by Werner Kahl when he observes that

“So begeben sich afrikanische Theologen inklusive Exegeten auf die Suche nach Überlappungen biblischer Überlieferung und afrikanischer Kultur, um unter Berücksichtigung afrikanisch-traditioneller Plausibilitätsannahmen und sozio-ökonomischer Relevanz Anknüpfungspunkte zur Vermittlung biblischer Texte, Themen und Motive auszumachen.”<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> John Riches, “Interpreting the Bible in African Contexts: Glasgow consultation,” in Gerald O. West and Musa W. Dube (eds.), *Semeia* 73 (Atlanta: Scholars Press 1996), 181-188.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 183.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Kahl, *Jesus als Lebensretter*, 74-75.

The second interest with which interpreters come to the Bible, according to Gerald West, is the 'interpretive interest'. This has to do with dimensions of the text that are of interest to the reader.<sup>72</sup> Examples he gives include the historical and sociological dimensions of the text, literal and thematic and symbolic dimensions, or combinations of them.<sup>73</sup> According to Gerald West, academic biblical interpretation in Africa is best carried out with the two interests in mind. In his words, "African biblical interpretation is deeply constituted by an explicit methodological commitment that links life interests and interpretive interests."<sup>74</sup> Thus the life interests as well as the interpretive interests are vital elements for a methodology that aims at a relevant Biblical interpretation for the African context.

In a related study, Justin Ukpong, a Catholic New Testament exegete from Nigeria, who was one of the main advocates of the need for a methodology which will be more accommodating for biblical scholarship in Africa, has also added to it. In the article "Can African Old Testament scholarship escape the historical-critical approach?"<sup>75</sup> Ukpong assesses the relevance of the historical-critical method for biblical scholarship in Africa. He identifies two strands of biblical studies in Africa today. These include the 'western orientation', which uses western critical tools without openly and directly relating to the African context. The second is the "African orientation". This refers to the use of western biblical tools in the study of the Old Testament with the text being interpreted in relation to the African context.

According to Ukpong, different methods are employed in the African orientation. However most of these methods continue to employ elements of the western orientation, either directly or indirectly. Methods which fall under the African orientation, according to Ukpong, are: Comparative studies, Evaluative studies, Africa in the Bible studies, Inculturation hermeneutics, Liberation hermeneutics, Black theology hermeneutics and Feminist hermeneutics. Ukpong argues further that of

---

<sup>72</sup> Gerald West, "Interrogating the Comparative Paradigm in African Biblical Scholarship," 38.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>75</sup> Justin Ukpong, "Can African Old Testament scholarship escape the historical-critical approach?" in *Newsletter on African Old Testament Scholarship*, Issue No. 7, (1999).

these methods, the evaluative studies was the most popular approach in studies relating biblical texts to the African context. It must be added however that this view has been challenged by Gerald West, almost a decade after Ukpong made these suggestions.<sup>76</sup> According to West, the comparative paradigm has dominated African biblical scholarship.

Referring to Ukpong, questions have been raised about the relevance of the historical-critical approach to the African context. This is because of its inclination towards the text rather than the message of the text - a situation which does not seem to meet the interest of the African who come into the Bible for its message and not the text. In other words, the historical-critical method does not fully answer the questions relating the life interest with which Africans come to the Bible. For Ukpong, however, the historical-critical approach remains relevant for the following reasons: First, African academic reading must be critical, especially in this post-enlightenment era. The second reason for the relevance of the historical-critical reading of the Bible is that, it helps to avoid the abuses of the Bible in Africa, citing the Apartheid in South Africa as an example. Ukpong's third reason for the usefulness of the historical-critical approach in biblical scholarship in Africa is that, African biblical scholarship has the tendency to link the Bible to the African context. In doing this, there is the potential danger of making a direct imposition either of the text on the African context or vice versa. In order to avoid this, Ukpong suggests that the historical-critical method must be employed to ensure a credible link. Through historical criticism, the text is analyzed in the light of its original context, and this ensures that the two contexts are comparable and not completely divergent.<sup>77</sup>

Ukpong cautions, however, that the historical-critical method must be used only as a tool and not as an end in itself. He then proceeds to suggest how the historical-critical approach should be employed so that the method achieves its optimal usefulness in the African context. According to him, this will demand that the history-of-ideas-approach be replaced with an approach that has the social and cultural history of the context of the text as a focus. In his words,

---

<sup>76</sup> Gerald West, *op.cit.*, 37.

<sup>77</sup> Ukpong, "Can African Old Testament scholarship escape the historical critical approach?"

“The type of questions posed in the western approach has to be replaced with those generated by insights obtained from the African context. Models of questions determined by the historical, sociological and anthropological contexts of Africa must be made to frame the historical enquiry in African biblical scholarship.”<sup>78</sup>

Ukpong acknowledges that the Biblical scholar is faced with the task of determining the facet of the historical background of a text that should be the focus of attention in the exegetical process. As a solution, Ukpong suggests that the scholarly community has to decide on it, taking the experience of their context (and well as their life interest) into consideration. For him, there is the need to acknowledge the presence of the supernatural in the biblical text as we undertake the interpretation enterprise. This view of the role of the supernatural in biblical interpretation among Africans appears to be prevalent among intellectuals as well as popular readers of the Bible. Pobe also suggests that “God’s Spirit sometimes leads us into God’s truth without immediate human aid.”<sup>79</sup>

On the task of the African biblical scholar in identifying which aspect of the text to focus on, some scholars have suggested that particular dimensions of the text better serve the life interest of the reader than others. For instance, Gerald West cites the suggestion of Itumeleng Mosala, who has argued that concerns for racial and economic liberation in South Africa require attention to the sociological and historical dimensions of the biblical text.<sup>80</sup>

According to West the historical-critical method is relevant to biblical interpretation in Africa. He acknowledges the persistent dominance of aspects of the method to biblical scholarship in Africa. West observes that the interpretive interest in African biblical interpretation is dominated by historical and sociological interests. He argues that African biblical interpretation continues to be strongly shaped by the historical-critical interest of western biblical scholarship – text criticism, form criticism, source

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> John Pobe “Bible Study in Africa: A Passover of Language” in *Reading With*, 173, 175.

<sup>80</sup> West, “Interrogating the Comparative paradigm in biblical scholarship,” 38.

criticism and redaction criticism with socio-historical dimensions of the biblical text gaining the most interest among African biblical scholars.<sup>81</sup>

West ascribes the following reasons for the persistence of aspects of the historical-critical approach to biblical scholarship in Africa: First, most biblical scholars are trained in Europe or America, or by those trained there. Secondly, the socio-historical interpretive interests give attention to the religious and cultural contexts, and social and political contexts that lie behind the text. These, according to West, resonate with the life interests of most African biblical scholars. This gives the African biblical scholar access to the religio-cultural and the socio-political contexts of present Africa. Therefore the socio-historical interpretive interests are important since they provide tools for peeling off the dominant layers of discourse in an attempt to hear the voices that these layers have suppressed and re-presented.<sup>82</sup> In line with this, Pobee has called for a “Passover of language”<sup>83</sup> if the Bible is to speak to the African. According to him,

“[A]frican theology has been concerned to discover new and relevant symbols for describing the eternal Word of God so as to dialogue with African peoples. Therefore it is attempting to move from the inherited language and idiom of the North to a new language and idiom relevant for Africa.”<sup>84</sup>

For him, the study of the Bible is an “interpretive translation” which takes the culture of the people into account. Since language is a key element of culture, the need for the use of contemporary language of the community undertaking the interpretation cannot be over emphasized. In his words,

“Bible Study whatever else it may be is interpretive translation of the Bible into contemporary/contextual language. Just as there is need for a dynamic equivalent translation (and not only a formal one), we need a dynamic equivalent interpretation of the Bible. We may then in our culture and socio-economic situation become contemporary with the biblical text. That becomes our Passover – we are led out of

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Pobee attributes this term to Jean-Marc Ela.

<sup>84</sup> Pobee. “Bible Study in Africa: A Passover of Language,” in *Reading With*, 164-165.



Egypt, not only our ancestors. Scripture becomes the told story which lets us experience the exodus today.”<sup>85</sup>

Using the Exodus of the Israelites as a metaphor, Pobee suggests that the “Passover of Language” will nourish African theology which is expressed in proverbs, art, music, liturgy, stories and biography. These elements are not new to the African, since they are all found in traditional African religion. Among the Akans of Ghana, for instance, there are proverbs which give meaning to the beliefs and practices of adherents of traditional religion. The *Adinkra* symbols of the Akans, for instance, provide insights into the perception of the people about *Onyame/Onyankopon* (or God). Folktale stories (or *Anansesem*) also abound in ethical and moral instructions. This is still being used among the people, especially in the rural communities. Biographies of some legends in the history of the Akans can also be used as a platform for understanding some aspects of the Christian faith among the people. An example is Tweneboah Koduah who was believed to have sacrificed himself for the Asantes. There are others who are known to have sacrificed themselves in place of other people. Such known events in the historical past of the people can be a useful platform for the propagation of the sacrificial death of Jesus the Christ. Situating scholarly biblical study in such known media of communication has the potential to make it more accommodating for the African peoples. Pobee has suggested that it is only when the language of a people’s culture, hopes and fears are engaged by the word of God that full dialogue can be achieved.<sup>86</sup> Ela, like Oduyoye, also suggests that in order to keep the Christian faith alive among Africans, the cultural background of the people should not be neglected.<sup>87</sup> In the words of Ela,

“If the faith of the Africans is not to die, it must become the vision of a world that they can feel is theirs; European cultural orientations must be stripped away. There is an urgent need to reject present foreign models of expression if we are to breathe new into the Spoken Word. Our church must express a Passover of Language, or the meaning of the Christian message will not be understood. One of the primary tasks of Christian reflection in Black Africa is to totally reformulate our basic faith through the mediation of African culture. In place of the cultural presuppositions of Western Christianity, namely

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 170.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> See footnote 1 for the view expressed by Oduyoye on the place of culture in the interpretation of the Bible.

logos and ratio, we must now substitute African symbolism. Beginning with the ecclesial furrow where the language of faith germinates, we must restore the Gospel's power to speak to Africans through the primordial symbols of their existence."<sup>88</sup>

In other words, the Gospel (or the biblical text) must be able to speak to the life interests with which Africans come to the Bible, bearing in mind the cultural and indigenous religious background of the African people. This work will seek to demonstrate how the traditional religious worldview of Pentecostals influences their interpretation and appropriation of the Passover in Egypt. As Pobee suggests, the Exodus can be the story of the African today, and for that matter, the story of the Ghanaian. In analyzing the use of the Passover account in Ex 12 among Pentecostals in Ghana, it will be pointed out that similar motifs in the Passover and the traditional African worldview inform the emphasis on aspects of the Passover by Pentecostals in Ghana.

In line with the call of Pobee for a "Passover of language" for the interpretation of the Bible, West indicates that African biblical interpretation is more interested in themes of liberation and reconstruction. The result is that there are variations in the emphasis placed on the socio-historical realities of the text. This could be attributed to the differences in the socio-economic, political and cultural locations of readers of the Bible. Pobee indicates that, the conflicting interests in the society (social, economic, ethnic), will lead to conflicting readings of the Bible.<sup>89</sup> The role and the emphasis on the life interests of the interpreter in African biblical interpretation make it distinctive from biblical interpretation in other contexts. Coming from the traditional religious background, where religion is expected to provide meaning to existential circumstances, biblical interpretation for the African must be carried out with the Bible as the 'word for today', since it is expected to address the existential context of the African.

What exactly then, does African biblical interpretation entail? This has been captured by Gerald West in his observation that "African biblical interpretation is deeply

---

<sup>88</sup> Jean-Marc Ela, quoted in *Reading With* 164.

<sup>89</sup> Pobee, *ibid.*, 168.

constituted by an explicit methodological commitment that links life interests and interpretive interests.”<sup>90</sup> This is carried out, using the comparative approach.

### **1.3.1 The comparative paradigm**

This brings us to a full discussion of West’s view on the comparative approach. This paradigm emerged as a response to the negative perception of African Traditional Religion which dates back to the colonial and missionary era. There are three phases of its development. These are: An early reactive phase (1930s-1970s); a reactive proactive phase (1970s-1990s); a proactive phase (1990s). In each of these phases there was a dialogue between the socio-historical dimensions of biblical texts and religio-social realities of African life. A number of factors accounts for what facilitated these dialogues.

In the first place, the Bible is regarded as an object with strange powers. As indicated earlier on, the Glasgow consultation report indicates that people believed that the Bible, as an object, has power to ward off evil powers. Some even put it under their pillows as “medicine” against witchcraft. In Ghana, people use the Bible as a sacred object with mystical powers. It is used as an ‘object’ of swearing to prove the innocence or trustworthiness of a person. This factor cannot be neglected in biblical scholarship in Africa. For Asamoah-Gyadu, the perception of the Bible as “sacred” is a contributory factor to the vibrancy of Christianity in Africa today. In his words, “[t]he dynamism of Christianity in contemporary Africa is due in part to the sacredness or supernatural character of the Bible that has been maintained in the African Christian imagination.”<sup>91</sup> This is not to advocate for a literal interpretation of the Bible. Rather, it is meant to stress the need to maintain the role of the supernatural in the act of interpreting the Bible in the African context – a context where religion is expected to address the existential issues of the people.

---

<sup>90</sup> West, “Interrogating the Comparative Paradigm”, 40.

<sup>91</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretation from an African Context*, (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 170.

Second, through this paradigm, “the Bible speaks to the Africans in their own language, in forms and content, which resonate with their cultures and contexts.”<sup>92</sup> This encounter between indigenous Africans and the missionary-colonial enterprise, West maintains, has resulted in “neo-indigenous hermeneutics.”<sup>93</sup> This kind of biblical hermeneutics has African knowledge systems as its foundation, and also takes advantage of the translation of the Bible into African vernacular. West identifies two strands of neo-indigenous biblical hermeneutics – academic strand, which comprises a few who are into scholarship in biblical studies,<sup>94</sup> and a second strand which he describes as a “broader non-scholarly” strand.<sup>95</sup> This is true of Pentecostals in Ghana. Until recently, theological education was not very much emphasized. Even now, it can be said that a considerable number of Pentecostal leaders in Ghana have not received “formal” theological education. The translation of the Bible into the vernacular of Africans made the Bible accessible to the ordinary reader of the Bible and also ushered the African into a period which made a critical reading of the Bible possible.<sup>96</sup> In the words of Bediako, the Bible became

“an independent yardstick by which to test, and sometimes to reject, what Western missionaries taught and practiced” and this “provided the basis for developing new, indigenous forms of Christianity.”<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>93</sup> This is the terminology Gerald West uses to describe the emerging methodology of biblical interpretation in Africa.

<sup>94</sup> This strand of the neo-indigenous biblical hermeneutics lies in the spheres of those who might have been equipped academically with the art of interpretation of the Bible. For such people, the interpretation of the Bible should be done from a critical perspective. In the words of Werner Kahl, they “should employ literary and historical tools of analysis that allow for an understanding of a given biblical text within the parameters of its original setting. ... they should be able to reflect on their own life-contexts, intentions, preunderstandings, and methods employed for analysis.” Werner Kahl, “Growing Together: Challenges and Chances in the Encounter of Critical and Intuitive Interpreters of the Bible.” in *Reading Other – Wise: Socially Engaged Biblical Scholars Reading Their Local Communities*, Gerald West (ed.) (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 149.

<sup>95</sup> West, “Interrogating the Comparative Paradigm”, 47.

<sup>96</sup> With insights from Gerald West, Stephen C.A. Jennings has described the ‘ordinary reader’ as “persons who are from politically, socially, and economically poorer groupings, who are often not (very) literate in the official languages of their societies, and who are often not theologically trained and therefore precritical in their interpretation of scripture(s).” See Stephen C.A. Jennings “ “Ordinary” Reading in “Extraordinary” Times: A Jamaican Love Story” “ in *Reading Other – Wise*”, 49.

<sup>97</sup> Kwame Bediako, quoted in Gerald West, “Interrogating the Comparative Paradigm” 45.

Not only has the ‘vernacularisation’ of the Bible resulted in the vibrancy of Christianity in Africa, but also it has contributed, in no small means, to the development of a more nuanced approach to biblical interpretation in Africa. LeMarquand contends that

“the work of translation has aided the spread of Christianity more than almost any other factor, ironically because vernacular translations gave the Bible a degree of independence from the European world view of the missionary and gave Africans a source of Christian authority external to the missionary.”<sup>98</sup>

The translation of the Bible into the local languages of the people marked its ‘incarnation’ into the world of the readers, thus making them share in the ‘ownership’ of the Bible. Even though there remain symbols and elements which may be alien to the Ghanaian (or most Africans), reading the Bible in one’s mother tongue brings its message closer to the reader.<sup>99</sup>

What may be described as the “decolonization” of the Bible has led to the quest for an African biblical interpretation which seeks a dialogue between the socio historical context of the biblical and the socio-economic and religio-cultural realities of the African contexts.<sup>100</sup> To achieve this goal in biblical scholarship in Africa, the comparative approach is used. The credibility of this approach lies in the comparison of the contexts involved, using scientific tools. This fact is affirmed by other African biblical scholars. Eric Annum, a New Testament scholar from Ghana has made the following observations on the comparative approach:

“The comparative method arose as a response to a colonial conception of African Traditional Religion and culture on the part of missionaries who believed that African cultures were satanic and pagan and needed to be totally abandoned if Christianity was to thrive in Africa. Thus, what African biblical scholars tried to do was to identify similarities between the biblical world and African religio-cultural

---

<sup>98</sup> Grant LeMarquand, “New Testament Exegesis in (Modern) Africa” in *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*, 75.

<sup>99</sup> A typical example of such elements is the invitation from the prophet Isaiah to the people to come to the Lord for their sins to be washed so that they will be “as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). It never snows in any part of Ghana. Therefore until a Ghanaian experiences the color of snow, perhaps in the temperate zones, this imagery cannot be fully appreciated.

<sup>100</sup> West, *ibid.*, 47.

practices and to use their scholarly and scientific tools to show the relationship between African Traditional Religion and Christianity.”<sup>101</sup>

Much as the approach seeks to identify the similarities between the two contexts, it does so scientifically, to avoid a simple imposition of one context on the other as pointed out earlier. Highlighting on the critical nature of this approach, West submits that the comparative approach is not simply a strategy for validating anything and everything in the African socio-historical world that shows some similarities with the socio-historical world behind the biblical text. Rather West maintains that, on the contrary, the comparative approach is always evaluative.<sup>102</sup>

West outlines the five approaches to this evaluative orientation of the comparative paradigm of biblical interpretation as suggested by Ukpong as follows:<sup>103</sup>

“The first approach seeks to evaluate elements of African culture, religion, beliefs, concepts or practices in the light of the biblical witness, to arrive at a Christian understanding of them and bring out their value for Christian witness. The historical-critical method is used in analyzing the biblical text. The belief or practice is analyzed in its different manifestations and its values and disvalues are pointed out against the background of biblical teaching”<sup>104</sup>

Here Ukpong seems to suggest that there is a standard biblical teaching, and Christian teaching on specific subjects. However from the discussion so far, it can be said that biblical interpretation cannot be done without a critical reflection on the text against the background of the reader. Since the same text is read with different backgrounds, it may be difficult to arrive at one biblical teaching or Christian understanding on a subject which may be applicable to all contexts.

The second approach is concerned with what a biblical text or theme has to say in the critique of a particular issue in the society or in the church's life, or what lessons

---

<sup>101</sup> Eric Annum, quoted by West, 42.

<sup>102</sup> West, *ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-48.

<sup>104</sup> Justin Ukpong, “Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Africa: Historical and Hermeneutical Direction” quoted in West, “Interrogating the Comparative Paradigm”, 47.

may be drawn from a biblical text of theme for a particular context. It is similar to the first above but with the difference that in the first approach the contextual realities studied are assumed to be values or at least to contain values whereas in this one they are presented as liabilities to be challenged with the biblical message. The study involves analyzing the biblical text and pointing out the challenge it issues to the context or drawing its implications for the context. Generally, historical critical tools are used for the study.<sup>105</sup>

In the third approach biblical themes or texts are interpreted against the background of African culture, religion and life experience. The aim is to arrive at a new understanding of the biblical text that would be informed by the African situation, and would be African and Christian. Historical critical tools are used in analyzing the biblical text. The basis for this approach is the realization that any interpretation of a biblical text or theme is done from the socio-cultural perspective of the interpreter. Approaching a theme or text from an African perspective is therefore expected to offer some fresh insights into its meaning even though the tools of interpretation still remain Western.<sup>106</sup>

The fourth approach emphasizes on erecting 'bridgeheads' for communicating the biblical message. This means making use of concepts from either the bible or African culture, with which Africans can easily identify, to show the continuity between African culture and Christianity, for the purpose of communicating the biblical message.<sup>107</sup>

The fifth approach focuses on with the study of the biblical text to discover biblical models or biblical foundations for aspects of contemporary church life and practice in Africa. Generally, such studies use the tools of historical critical research in analyzing the biblical text.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 48.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

The five approaches point to the evaluative/critical aspect of the comparative paradigm. In this later work, Ukpong confirms what he had argued out in an earlier work that biblical interpretation in Africa cannot abandon entirely the traditional historical-critical method. With the approaches above, Ukpong demonstrates how the historical critical method should not be used as an end in itself, but rather as a means to an end. This because the socio-cultural location and other life interests of the African context are not dispensed with in each of the approaches suggested above. In other words, the dialogue between the socio-historical context behind the text and the life interests with which the African biblical scholar comes to the Bible is explicitly expressed in the approaches Ukpong suggests.

Much as these proposals from Ukpong have been commended by West, they have received some criticisms. West has described the formulation of the relationship between exegesis and application as “orthodox”, and suggests that Ukpong’s formulation “concedes too much to the dominant (and dominating) discourse in biblical scholarship” and “does not do justice to his actual interpretive practice.”<sup>109</sup> West argues that African biblical interpretation goes beyond exegesis and interpretation.

Drawing extensively from the works of Hans Gadamer and Keith Whitelam, West argues that African biblical interpretation is influenced by the African context and also for the African context. The current study will subscribe to this view. The attempts at interpreting biblical texts for the Ghanaian context will be done, as much as possible, from the African (Ghanaian) socio-cultural background of the current researcher.

The third evaluative approach of Ukpong quoted above will be used in evaluating the interpretation of the Passover in selected Pentecostal churches. This is because it combines scientific tools of historical-critical study of the text without overlooking the cultural, social, political and economic context in which the interpretation is done by Pentecostals in Ghana. The Passover text in Exodus 12 which is the chosen text for the exegetical work will be critically studied in order to bring out the function of the ritual and the role of Yhwh in the liberation of the Israelites from the bondage of the

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 49.



Egyptians. The study will also bring out the implications of the Passover for the relationship between the Israelites and Yhwh. Furthermore, a good understanding of the text will form a base for evaluation of the use of the Passover in the discourse on salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana.

### **1.3.2 Information on Pentecostals and the African Traditional Religion (ATR)**

It has been pointed out that the focus of this work is to investigate the influence of the Passover and the traditional African worldview on the discourse of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana. The understanding of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana will be investigated through description. This will be done through qualitative interviews of leaders of selected churches and groups belonging to the Pentecostal type of Christianity in Ghana. The understanding of the Passover in relation to salvation will also be investigated through the interviews. Another source of information for the understanding of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana as well as the Passover and how it influences the beliefs and practices of Pentecostals on salvation will be books produced by members and leaders of the Pentecostal fraternity. In order to appreciate the interpretation tendency of the Passover among Pentecostals, case studies of selected sermons preached by selected Pentecostal leaders on the subject will be analyzed. Sources which will be relied upon for these materials are books, recordings on CDs and DVDs. Analysis will also be made on observations made during services of the Pentecostals associated with the Passover. All these activities will be used as a means of bringing out the use of the Passover in the discourse on salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana.

The traditional religious worldview is also believed to play a significant role in the interpretation of the Bible. As a result, the traditional understanding of salvation will also be described. The investigation will bring out the influence of the traditional worldview on salvation has on the interpretation of the Passover among Pentecostals. The main source of information for this investigation will be relevant literature. Interviews will also be conducted with traditional priests and priestesses in order to gain understanding of salvation from the perspective of the traditional African worldview. Insights gained from these investigations will be helpful in identifying

possible similar motifs in the traditional worldview on salvation and the Passover.<sup>110</sup> This will also contribute to an informed evaluation of the use of the Passover among Pentecostals in Ghana in their discourse on salvation.

---

<sup>110</sup> It will be pointed out that Pentecostals make considerable allusions to the Passover in their discourse on salvation. This informs the choice of the Passover for this study. It will be noted that the New Testament has been found to be the most attractive to Pentecostals in Africa, and for that matter, Ghana. That notwithstanding the Old Testament, with particular reference to the Passover, continue to be used by Pentecostals in their discourse on salvation.

## Chapter Two

### 2.1 Salvation (or *nkwagyee*) in traditional Akan thought/context<sup>111</sup>

The understanding of salvation in the traditional African worldview can be said to be a factor which informs and shapes the beliefs and practices of Pentecostals on salvation. This chapter will be focused on a discussion of salvation in the traditional worldview of the Akans based on available literature on the subject, as well as information gathered from the field for this work. A good understanding of the traditional view on salvation will facilitate a good appreciation of the influence of the African Traditional Religion (ATR) on the discourse of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana.

### 2.2 Meaning of life (or *nkwa*)

The understanding of salvation in traditional Akan thought is related to the understanding of life. The Akan word *nkwagyee* is what is translated as ‘salvation’. *Nkwagyee* is composed of two words *nkwa* and *gye*. *Nkwa* is a noun which means “life” while *gye* is from the verb *ogyee*. *Gye* has different meanings but in the context of salvation, it refers to “the act of salvation, deliverance, redemption”.<sup>112</sup> In other words, *nkwagyee* in the traditional thought of the Akans presupposes the existence of life on one hand, and the presence of life-threatening condition(s) on the other. It is therefore appropriate to have a look at the meaning of *nkwa* (or life) within the traditional thought of the Akan in order to bring *nkwagyee* into a proper perspective.

Life (or *nkwa*) refers to the existence of an individual on earth or the period between birth and death. Real life goes beyond mere existence or being alive. Life is supposed to be experienced in a harmonious, peaceful, healthy and wealthy way. Thus, the period of existence of an individual should be characterized by what the society, as well as the individual considers to be an abundant or a good life. Such life

---

<sup>111</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all translation of Akan words will be done by this researcher who is an Akan.

<sup>112</sup> J.G.Christaller, *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language called Tshi (Twi)* (Basel: Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, 1933), 158.

is also described as ‘blessed’. This is the hope and aspiration of all. The blessed (or good) life a person hopes for is expressed in long life with good health, prosperity, getting married to a responsible spouse, being able to give birth to children (both male and female), leading a dignified and respectful life, etc. Such life, which may also be said to be a fulfilled one, should be devoid of any form of trouble, or what the society considers disgraceful. These include indulgence in acts which the society abhors and incurable diseases such as madness, impotence, barrenness, epilepsy, blindness, etc. Other conditions which stand opposed to the desired good life include premature death, as well as any act which may cause the society to look down on the individual concerned as a social miscreant. Such a situation brings dishonor not only to the individual but to the family (both nuclear and extended) as a whole.

Because of the belief in the influence of external factors, including deities on the *nkwa* of an individual, it has been a long held practice among the Akans to seek *nkwa* from the deities who either prescribe a cure for an existing life threatening situation or prevent such situations from occurring. Traditional herbal medicine (or *aduro*<sup>113</sup>) is prescribed by medicine men or spiritualists (or *dunsini*) who are believed to be people who are spiritually connected to the deities. In fact it is believed that the deities are the source of the competence of the medicine man. The practice persists until now; people would still want a pastor to pray for them before they go for medical treatment at the hospital. This is not to suggest a lack of competence in the available medical facilities as such. In fact Ghanaians in well advanced countries with advanced medical facilities would still want to pray before they see their doctor, especially if it involves a surgery. Traditionally, people consult deities with the hope of being enabled to live a “trouble free” life with good health. They also consult deities to secure a successful life.

To gain a better understanding of the traditional understanding of the involvement of the deities in the affairs of humanity, I will discuss the spirit world of the Akans.

---

<sup>113</sup> *Aduro* ordinarily refers to medicine. However in the Akan language, it is the word used for western medicine, as well as herbal medicine sold on the market. The same word is used to describe medicine which is believed to have been prescribed through metaphysical means such as through a deity for good or evil intentions. It is also used to refer to the deities. In this work, references to it are in the metaphysical sense. For a detailed discussion of the place of *aduro* in the life and religion of the Akans, see Jochen Seebode, “*Aduro kum aduro*”: *Ritual, Macht und Besessenheit in Asante (Südghana)* (Münster: LIT, 1998).

## 2.3 Life and the Spirit world of the Akan

The Akans perceive the universe to be comprised of the physical (or the world of the living) as well as the spiritual (or the unseen world), which is saturated with spirit beings. The events in the physical world are highly influenced by the world of the spirits, who are generally perceived to be stronger than physical beings.

These spirits can be broadly categorized into two main groups: Those who help people to live a good life and wish them well (benevolent), as well as those who hinder people from having a good life by bringing misfortunes in their life (malevolent). The spirits have the ability to influence how people conduct their life so as to attract the blessings of the deities or their punishment. It is therefore very expedient to keep a good relationship between the two worlds in order to maintain the stability and harmony of the created order, and also to shelve individuals and the entire community from disaster. Here is an overview of the spiritual world.<sup>114</sup>

### 2.3.1 *Nyame*

The spiritual beings in the world of the Akans are hierarchical with *Nyame/Onyankopon* or the Supreme Being (God) as the highest authority. He is the creator of the universe. He created the physical and the spiritual beings. He wields ultimate power and all other beings, both spiritual and physical, derive their existence and powers from him. Although a spiritual being, *Nyame* is both directly and indirectly, actively involved in human affairs.

*Nyame* is *bɔrebɔre a ɔbo adeɛ*, meaning “God is the creator”. This emphasizes the continuous and progressive nature of the creation activity of *Nyame*. In the words of Mbiti, “God [*Nyame*] created when there was nothing, and he continues to create new things. ... He also continues to shape and reshape what he has created.”<sup>115</sup> This understanding does not necessarily suggest that *Nyame* is creating new things in the universe as such. It rather points to the understanding that *Nyame* can always

---

<sup>114</sup> Since much work has already been done on this, this study will be done with a strict attention to this research.

<sup>115</sup> John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion* (Oxford: Heinemann, 1991), 49.

reinvent history by helping people out of their troubled situation since “he can easily change the condition of the weather.”<sup>116</sup> This is a saying of encouragement, suggesting that *Nyame* has the power to change the course of life of a person in unimaginable ways. *Nyame* is therefore believed to have the ability to provide for all creatures and also sustain his creation—for the big and the small, for the weak and the strong. Akans therefore have a saying that when *Nyame* provides for the elephant, he also remembers the ant. He is the *Ototrobonsu*, which stresses *Nyame*’s provision of rains<sup>117</sup> and other water resources, as well as sunshine to support lives by giving a good harvest to the people. He is therefore referred to as *Tweaduampɔn* which literally refers to a tree on which one can lean without fear of falling down. This is to say that *Nyame* is the almighty and dependable one. He provides for all his creatures, according to their existential needs.

There has never been any one of his nature before time, and there will be no one to come who can compare to *Nyame*. Thus, *Nyankopon* or *Nyame* is unique. *Nyame* is regarded as a male, and also as the only one of his class. *Nyame* is regarded as a male, and also as the only one of his class. This is captured in the title *Onyankopon Kwame*<sup>118</sup> (i.e. the only great *Nyame*, born on Saturday). In a sense, *Nyame* of the Akans has been identified by certain unbelievers and by Akan Christians with the God of Christianity. Drawing from the appellations given by the Akans to people born on the various days, Danquah<sup>119</sup> posits that some of the appellations for *Kwame* make the name more fitting for *Nyame*. In other words, the titles the Akans give to *Onyankopon* gives a clear picture of their perception of God in relation to life. A few of them will be discussed at this point. For instance, *Onyankopon Kwame* is referred as *Atoapoma* (or the ever ready shooter); and *Otanankaduro*, (or master of serpent’s antidote). These accolades, which are ascribed to the name *Kwame* to emphasize ultimate power and ability, are also believed to fit the traditional perception of *Nyame*

---

<sup>116</sup> This is a literal translation of “*Ɛwiem nyɛ Nyame nsakyera na*”.

<sup>117</sup> Being an endemically farming community without modern technology of irrigation, the Akans depend very much on natural water resources, such as rain, rivers, etc for their agricultural activities. Good timing of rainfall in substantial quantity is therefore a determining factor of food supply of the people. The situation in the present day is not very different in this regard.

<sup>118</sup> Each child born to an Asante has a name given to him by *Onyankopon*. This name is determined by the gender, as well as the day on which the child is born. *Kwame* is the name given to a male child born on a Saturday.

<sup>119</sup> J.B.Danquah, *The Akan Doctrine of God* (London: White Friars Press, 1944), 48.

among the Akans. Among other things, *Onyame* is perceived to be the one who is ever battle-ready to fight on behalf of people to defend them from the wishes of their enemies.<sup>120</sup> Because he has the ability to counteract the efforts of the enemies of life, *Nyame* also determines when a person should die. The Akans have a saying that *sɛ Nyame nkum wo a oteasefoɔ yɛ kwa*. Literally meaning, if God has not caused your death, no living being can kill you. Yet another saying is *atanfo nyɛ Nyame* (our enemies are not God). Such sayings ascribed to *Nyame* imply that the Akans perceive him to be the one who has the ultimate determinant of how the life of a person unfolds. They also point to the understanding that there are opposing forces to life and therefore there is the need to depend on *Nyame*.

The above discussion on the perception of the Akans about *Nyame* points to how supreme he is, in relation to his creation, including humans. In spite of his supremacy, *Nyame* is not far removed from human affairs. All things concerning life depend on him. The Akans give the accolade *Nana* to *Nyame*. This literally means grandfather or grandmother, depending on the gender of the person being referred to. *Nana* is also the title for the chief or the King. As a chief or a King, *Nyame* is believed to be interested in the well being of his people. He settles disputes, and also deals justly with his people. In this light, *Nyame* is perceived as the greatest judge, who shows no favoritism. This understanding informs the saying: *mede me nsem nyinaa ama Nyame* or “I leave my case to *Nyame* to settle on my behalf”, which is especially used when someone feels cheated by a stronger person.

*Nyame* is also perceived as the greatest judge. *Nyame* punishes evil acts of individuals, as well as entire communities through sickness, accidents, famine, natural disasters, drought, or through any other condition that hinders what may be classified as abundant life. In such an instance, the required rituals have to be performed to restore the situation. The opposite is also true: *Nyame* rewards a life that is in line with the acceptable norms of the society.

He is also *Obaatanpa*. This title also alludes to the parenthood of *Nyame*. Even though *Obaatan* literally refers to a nursing mother, it is used figuratively by Akans to

---

<sup>120</sup> The enemy being referred here can be any life experience that limits or hinders the desired abundant life of a person. This includes sickness, barrenness, poverty, leading an ignoble life, etc. The enemy can also be a human agent through whom a person gets into one form of trouble or the other.

refer to fathers who demonstrate good parenthood. Referring to *Nyame* as *ɔbaatanpa*, therefore, emphasizes the parent-figure that is projected on him. *Nyame* can therefore be said to be far at the center of the day to day life of the Akans in general and the Akans in particular.

Apart from *Nyame*, the Akans believe in the existence of other spiritual beings that are associated with nature. It is believed that *Nyame* (or the Supreme Being) is uniquely great and that he cannot be represented in any way in worship. In fact, *Nyame* is perceived to be so remote that he is out of reach of the direct worship of humans. Worship is therefore performed through lesser deities who derive their powers from *Nyame*. These deities are discussed below:

### 2.3.2 *Asase Yaa*

One of such lesser deities is *Asase Yaa*<sup>121</sup> or the spirit of the Earth. As a special creation to support life,<sup>122</sup> *Asase Yaa* serves as the residence of other spirits found in water bodies, trees, strings, rocks, mountains and in some animals.<sup>123</sup> As a deity, *Asase Yaa* has some regulations which must be observed by the people. The Akans observe some sacred days in regard of her, in which the land is not supposed to be tilled.<sup>124</sup> On such days, fishing, farming, hunting, and no other activities are allowed. In line with her name, the sacred day normally coincides with Thursday, even though

---

<sup>121</sup> *Yaa* is the name for a female born on a Thursday among the Akans. Among the Fantes, who also belong to the Akans, the earth deity who is also a female is called *Asase Efua*. This means, for them, the earth deity is a female born on Friday. It must however be noted that the different names refer to the same deity. From my Asante background, the discussion will be based on the name *Asase Yaa* given to the deity by the Akans. The earth is considered as a mother on whom the living depends. Besides, even in death, human beings are buried in the bowels of the earth. Therefore whether dead or alive, it is believed that life depends on her.

<sup>122</sup> K. Nkansa-Kyeremateng, *The Akans of Ghana: Their Customs, History and Institutions* (Accra: Sebewie, 2004), 88.

<sup>123</sup> According to Nana Asabere II, who is the *Otumfuo nsumankwaa Mmamahene*. This is the titles of one of the positions in the palace of the King of the Akans, *Otumfuo*, responsible for issues and activities concerning the traditional religion at the palace and in the Asante Kingdom as a whole. According to him, some of these natural phenomena are the spiritual foundation of the community. Therefore they should be regarded as such in order to keep the comic balance. He expressed these views in an interview for this work on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Kumasi.

<sup>124</sup> The strictness of the adherence to this rule depends on the community. Until the period of this research, it is allowed for people to visit the farm to fetch firewood or even collect food items from the farm in some communities. But in other places, nobody is allowed to go to the farm for whatever reason. In either case, however, leaders of the traditional religion, such as the traditional priests /priestesses are allowed to visit the forest for the performance of rituals.



some communities have different days for such observance.<sup>125</sup> To defy this regulation is to invite the wrath of *Asase Yaa* not only on the offender, but on the entire community as well. This can lead to any form of evil one can think of, including death. This regulation also has the function of protecting the environment.<sup>126</sup>

According to Opoku, *Asase Yaa* receives sacrifices and offerings during occasions such as the beginning of the planting season. The farmers themselves make sacrifices and make offerings as a way of seeking her permission for the land to be tilled, and also for a good harvest. Furthermore, before burying a dead person, libation is poured to seek the permission of *Asase Yaa* to receive her child into her bowels.<sup>127</sup> The Akans believe that human beings come from the bowels of the earth through birth, and the human body returns to it after death. Because of human dependence on *Asase Yaa* for existence, it is very expedient not to offend her, since that attracts tragic consequences such as a curse on either the individual who committed the evil act, or on the entire community, as the case may be. There is the need to keep the sacredness of *Asase Yaa* in order to avert possible tragedy on the community or on the family or the individual concerned. Should the spirit of the land be offended, it becomes critical that the offence and the offender be identified. The deities are then consulted for what would be required to appease them to avert an eminent tragedy on the people. When the right rituals are performed, the person and the community enjoy a harmonious life. If such a thing happens, the traditional priest will have to be involved in restoring the situation. For instance if *Asase Yaa* should be

---

<sup>125</sup> For instance, in the Offinso Traditional Area, Tuesday, instead of Thursday, is regarded a sacred day, in which farming activities are prohibited. This is because the Offin river, which is believed to be a sacred river to the people of Offinso and its surrounding villages is believed to have Tuesday as her sacred day. Some of the shrines also bear the names of the days. For instance, the deity of Nana Kwaku Bonsam, a popular traditional priest in Ghana is called *Kofi Kofi*. *Kofi* refers to a male born on Friday; that of Okomfoo Yaa Bea is called *Kwabena* Sugye. *Kwabena* is the name of a male born on Tuesday; the deity of Nana Kwaku Duah is also called *Akwasi* Mmee. *Akwasi* refers to a male born on Sunday. These are names borne by people, depending on their gender and the day of their birth. They are believed to be names given by Nyame to any individual who is born. Giving such names to the deities suggests that they are given personal attributes among the Akans.

<sup>126</sup> I gathered from my field research through the traditional priests such as Nana Afia Kyere and Nana Kwaku Duah that these days are considered to be sacred because the spirit beings associated the rivers and the forests needs sometime for themselves, so the days are preserved for them. It was therefore a taboo to visit the prohibited places on some specific days. Kwasi Sarpong has also suggested that the motif behind the 'sacred' days is environmental protection. He attributes the depletion of our forests and the near extermination of some animals and plants in our forest and the general degradation of the environment to the disregard of these traditional practices in our present society. This could be the case because traditionally, 'taboos' are also used to enforce certain virtues in the society. See Peter K. Sarpong, *Dear Nana: Letters to my Ancestors*, (Takoradi: Franciscan Publications, 1998), 29-30.

<sup>127</sup> Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion* (Accra: FEP, 1978), 57.

offended, either through sexual intercourse in the bush, or when somebody is murdered in the bush, the required rituals can be performed only by the traditional priest.<sup>128</sup>

### 2.3.3 *Nsuo* or Spirits in water bodies

Water bodies are believed to possess spiritual powers, which enable them to play intermediary role between humans and *Nyame*, the Supreme Being. Some rivers are believed to have very strong spiritual potency. They are therefore revered for the role they play in the spiritual aspects of the life of the people, which translates in their general physical well being. Such water bodies are deified, with shrines erected for them. They also have priests/priestesses who offer sacrifices to the spirits, and also do divination on behalf of those who consult them for their assistance.<sup>129</sup>

Located mostly in the forest zone of Ghana, rivers constitute almost the only form of water body among the Akans, with one lake, *Bosomtwe*. This is not to suggest that their reverence for the water spirit is limited only to the water bodies available to them. Even though the sea is nowhere in the Asanteland, the Akans also recognize the sea *Bosompo*. This attests to their belief in the sea spirit as well. I consider Rattray's comment on the close association of waters in Asante with power to be a summary of the spiritual role of the waters among the Akans when he said:

“...rivers in Ashanti, some in a greater, others in a lesser degree, are all looked upon as containing the power or spirit of the divine Creator, and thus being a life-giving force.”<sup>130</sup>

As Rattray has indicated, the water bodies are considered children of *Nyame*<sup>131</sup>. As the children of *Nyame*, they are believed to have strong spirits. I learnt from my field

---

<sup>128</sup> I owe this information to Nana Asabere II, *Asantehene Nsumankwaa Maamahene* in an interview with him on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Kumasi.

<sup>129</sup> People consult the river deities for various reasons, all of which border on their quest for abundant life. These range from individual, family and community needs. For instance I learnt from Nana Afia Kyereh, the queen of traditional priestesses in the Offinso Traditional Area that people who consult her shrine are those with sicknesses such as madness, epilepsy, impotence, barrenness, etc which are regarded as spiritual sicknesses. Others come to her shrine to seek better fortunes for their businesses, marriages, travelling abroad. Some come seeking a reunion with their family members whom they have lost contact with for a long time.

<sup>130</sup> R.S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), 146.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

research that Akans believe that *abosom* (deities) which derive their powers from water bodies have a greater spiritual potency than *abosom* of other sources.<sup>132</sup> As a result of this view, water bodies are supposed to be kept ritually whole (for ritual purposes) and hygienically clean (for domestic use). To ensure adherence to this, there are taboos in connection with how some communities deal with water bodies, especially in the rural communities.<sup>133</sup>

The water spirit may be the main *abosom* of the chief and the people of a town or village, although other deities in a community may draw their power from other rivers as well. For instance, the main deity for the chief and the people of the Offinso traditional area in Asante is the Offin River. The spirit of the *Akobaa* river in Sekyedumasi is also believed to be the main deity of the chiefs and people of the town; and river *Nyamaa* has the spirit of the deity of *Antoa*. The main traditional priest of the traditional area and his associates consult the water spirit in situations which are perceived to be beyond ordinary. For instance when there is a calamity on any of the communities in the traditional area, the deity is consulted through the priest/priestess for directions on the right rituals to restore normalcy. Through their priests/priestesses, the water spirits can be consulted by individuals also for their assistance to cope with various challenges of life. The spirits are also regarded as a source of receiving justice. The *Antoa Nyamaa* shrine in the Ashanti Region of Ghana is known for how people consult it in their quest to seek justice.<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> I am indebted to Okomfoo Yaa Bea of Agona Asamang in the Ashanti Region of Ghana for this information.

<sup>133</sup> Till today, people who are considered to be ritually unclean are denied any direct contact to a source of water for domestic use in some rural communities. Such people include a woman in her menstrual period. This prohibition serves two purposes. In the first place, it prevents offence against the deities associated with the river. It also ensures that the river is kept in a hygienic condition. Another taboo is the use of poisonous substance for fishing in a river, thereby killing the living organisms in the river. This researcher learnt that the basis of this act being a taboo is not only due to the lack of consideration for the health implications of the approach to the catching of the fish, but also the damage to other living organisms in the water. Furthermore, the use of poison can lead to the depletion of some species in the river. This information is credited to Nana Asabere, the *Nsumankwaa Mmamahene* of the Otumfuo Asantehene in my interview with him in October 2010.

<sup>134</sup> This particular deity is very popular in Ghana for the perception that it is swift in dispensing justice to people. Politicians use it to challenge those who accuse them of misconduct or the other. On 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012, it was reported that six Pastors who had been cursed with the *Antoa Nyama* (a river deity) went to the Chief Priest (of the traditional religion) of the King of the Asante Kingdom to perform the necessary rituals to reverse a curse which had been imposed on them. (<http://news.peacefmonline.com/news/201205/112312.php>), accessed on 5<sup>th</sup> September, 2012.

### 2.3.4 *Nananom Nsamanfoo* or the Spirit of the Ancestors

The Akans hold, as one of their strongest beliefs, that death is only a physical departure from this earth. The dead are believed to be continuing their life in the other world (or *asamando*) just as they did in the land of the living. The spirit of the dead or the ancestors assumes the role of a mediator between the living and the world of the spirits. In this light, they have been described as “the living dead”<sup>135</sup>. The Akans call them *Nananom nsamanfoo* (or “our grandparents in the other world”). They are believed to be the real grandparents of families, clans and the entire community.

Due to their special role in various aspects of the life of the Asante, not everyone who passes to the other world is accepted into the fold of the ancestors. The Akans have a standard of who qualifies to be in the fold of *nananom nsamanfoo* or the ancestors. One must have lived a life worthy of emulation, and must have died at an old age. Besides, one might have had children.<sup>136</sup> The reason is that the ancestors play a key role in mediating between the living and *Nyame* (or God). They are therefore expected to have exhibited certain character traits in their life in the land of the living. This is required of them owing to their extra ordinary role as mediators. Sarpong captures this thought as follows:

“No one wants to remember a good-for-nothing person, a thief, a murderer, a rapist, or people who, in general, have no respect for themselves. It is those whose lives are worth emulating that are venerated as ancestors.”<sup>137</sup>

Another reason for the high moral expectation from potential ancestors is their role as custodians of morality among the living.<sup>138</sup> Being the ones who have gone ahead of the living, and who have also left good examples for the present generation to follow,

<sup>135</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religion & Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 83ff.

<sup>136</sup> Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, 36.

<sup>137</sup> Peter K. Sarpong, *People Differ: An Approach to Inculturation in Evangelism* (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2002), 98.

<sup>138</sup> Opoku, *op. cit.*, 155.

the ancestors are believed to reward the obedient members of the living community who keep what is socially acceptable, and punish those who fail to live up to their moral obligations.

Having passed on from this life into the other where they are perceived to be closer to *Nyame*, the ancestors or *nananom nsamanfoɔ* are seen to be stronger than humans. They are therefore venerated for their power as well as for the good and exemplary lives they bequeathed to generations after them to emulate. In spite of their present state of existence, they are regarded as being present and actively involved in the affairs of life here and now, as well as life in the world of the spirits. The ancestors are considered an integral part of the family among the Akans.<sup>139</sup> This belief informs the practice of giving food and drinks to the ancestors on some occasions and especially during libation. The belief of the presence and interest of the ancestors in the day to day endeavors of the living also informs the reservation of *nsamandan* (or ancestor's room) in some houses.

Their notion of the spiritual role of the ancestors finds expression in the traditional prayers of the Akans. *Nananom Nsamanfoɔ* can be classified into household, family, clan and community deities, depending on the extent of the influence they had during their life on earth. For instance, in a family prayer, only the ancestors with direct lineage to that family will be mentioned. In a community event, however, the ancestors who are mentioned are those who gained prominence and also contributed positively to the enhancement of that community. Thus the ancestors who are mentioned in libation depend on the jurisdiction of the one praying.

Much has already been discussed by scholars in this field about the fact that the traditional religion is not ancestral worship<sup>140</sup> and so I will not get into that discussion, suffice it to say that the ancestors serve as intermediaries between the spirit world and the living. It is believed that since they are closer to *Nyame*, they stand a better chance of interceding on behalf of the living before *Nyame*. Danquah has therefore rightly observed that

---

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> See Sarpong, 1998, 2002; Opoku, op. cit., 1978; Mbiti; 1985.

“(t)hey act as friends at court to intervene between man and the Supreme Being and to get prayers and petitions answered more quickly and effectively.”<sup>141</sup>

This observation revealing in two sense: In the first place, looking at the ancestors as friends stresses the ever cordial relationship existing between them and the living, on one hand. On the other hand, it points to the continuous interaction between the living and the ancestors, as well as the interest of the “living dead” in the existential issues of the living.

Second, Danquah’s observation underscores the spiritual authority wielded by the ancestors, and the reliance of the living community on this authority for survival, which is ultimately dependent on the Supreme Being (or *Nyame*). To express this relationship, the Akans normally extend kind gestures to the ancestors by giving them food and drink.

### **2.3.5        *Abosom***

The *abosom* (*ɔbosom*, singular) or “lesser gods” refer to spiritual beings which are believed to have been created by the Supreme Being *Nyame*, and inhabit physical objects and natural phenomena such as rivers, the sea, mountains, rocks, trees, etc. It is believed that the *abosom* are children of *Onyame*, and they owe their source of power to *Nyame*. They mediate between *Nyame* and humankind through the traditional priests or priestesses who are human agents of these deities. Akans send their compliments and requests to *Nyame* through the *abosom*. Through their human agents, the *abosom* provide medicine, both for the physical and the spiritual health of the people.

Nana Afia Kyere, the queen of traditional priestess in the Offinso Traditional Area disclosed to me that among those who visited the shrine were people who had “spiritual diseases”. In that case western medicine could not bring about healing. However, after the spiritual dimension of the sickness is dealt with, the same drug

---

<sup>141</sup> J.B. Danquah, “Religion in the Ghanaian Society”, speech made at the Student Christian Movement Conference, Aburi in 1963, quoted in Opoku, *West African Tradition Religion*, 37.

which could not cure the ailment earlier on begins to heal the sick person.<sup>142</sup> Good health is considered as the most important indicator of “abundant life” since it is believed to be the guarantee for life. The most important prayer of the Asante therefore, is to live in good health. This is captured in the saying that *Su nkwa na nnsu adeɛ*, pray for life and not wealth. The *abosom* provide herbal medicine to cure physical sicknesses. They are also able to deal with any evil spirit which might be held responsible for any bad situation a person may be engulfed in. This may include infertility, barrenness, madness, poverty, etc.

The *abosom* also provide counsel to the people on a venture they want to undertake. People consult the shrines on decisions on marriage, embarking on a journey, business, etc. Others also consult the *abosom* for *aduro* (spiritual medicine) as a form of protection against “witchcraft attacks” or any form of evil that may bedevil them.<sup>143</sup> It must be added that the *abosom* can also be consulted for destructive purposes. They have the power to destroy the life of somebody on the request of another. This can take any form of destruction, not excluding death. However not all the *abosom* get involved in destructive activities. For instance, the *abosom* which belong to communities are supposed to protect the interest of individuals and the community as a whole. They are therefore perceived to be protective of the people, and so they cannot be used to destroy other people. In other words, such *abosom* have the responsibility of being parents to the people in that community. Nana Afia Kyere tells me that her *obosom*, being the parent or guardian of the entire Offinso traditional area, does not destroy the people, but rather protect them and at the same time help them to have abundant life.

*Obosom* can be owned by a whole community, a family, or an individual. Those in charge of whole communities have the responsibility to cater for the spiritual needs of the chief and the people by providing the required guidance with respect to averting evil and the kind of rituals needed to forestall the catastrophe associated with whatever taboo which might have been committed. They also provide the necessary directions to take in order to stop a disaster which might have happened in a

<sup>142</sup> This information was provided in an interview with Nana Afia Kyere on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 at Offinso.

<sup>143</sup> Nana Afia Kyere, traditional priestess of the *Taagya* shrine in the Offinso Traditional Area, Okomfoo Yaa Bea of the Kwabena Sugye shrine near Agona Asaman as well as Nana Kwaku Duah all shared these ideas with me during my interviewing and my interaction with them regarding the functions of the *abosom*, and some of the requests of their patrons.

community for an offence committed. In some cases, the community *abosom* help maintain the harmony in the created order by fostering a good interaction between this world and the world of the spirits when the need arises, to restore harmony between the people and the world of the spirit to avoid evil consequences.

Family *abosom* are also acquired by families for the protection of the members against all forms of evil, and also to help the members of the family to live a good life, which expresses itself in long life with good health, wealth, good marriage with children - both males and females, earning respect, death at a good old age through a “natural” means etc.<sup>144</sup>

### 2.3.6 *Asuman*

Akans also believe in *suman* (singular) *asuman* (plural) (or “medicine”, charms, talisman, sorcery and amulets). These are made of physical objects and they are acquired by individuals usually from the priests of *abosom* or from mallams<sup>145</sup> of the Islamic religion. The power of *suman* is generally perceived to be less than that of *abosom*, and each *suman* is for a specific task. Some are acquired for protection against evil (mainly “witchcraft” attacks). Others are acquired with the intention of achieving a particular aim. For instance, a person may acquire it for a successful marriage, a good farming season, good hunting, successful business, etc.<sup>146</sup> This spiritual power is also believed to be acquired by individuals who may have diabolic intentions concerning others. The belief is that out of envy or hatred a person may acquire a medicine (or *aduro*) to destroy the otherwise good fortunes of others. In that case, malevolent spirits are invoked against that person. It will take a sacrifice to the deity involved to reverse the intended evil. Medicine can also be used to manipulate a person into an evil act against his or her will. This is usually influenced by the desire to destroy someone. This exposes the person to danger, as the misdeed may lead to the anger of the deities who will in turn punish the person. This may express itself in a misfortune of any sort, including premature death.

<sup>144</sup> The Akans believe that death through any form of accident or any sickness considered to have been inflicted by evil spiritual forces is not a natural death.

<sup>145</sup> This refers to some leaders of the Islamic religion who are believed to be able to help people deal with evil spiritual issues affecting their life.

<sup>146</sup> Cecilia Arthur, “Akanfoɔ Amammere ho Adesua 2: A textbook on Akan culture”, (unpublished manuscript), 22-23.



The Akans also believe in *Sasabonsam* (or evil spirit) which lives in the forest. This is sometimes described as a forest monster. *Sasabonsam* is associated with “witches” due to some characteristics they share together. Both *sasabonsam* and “witches” are believed to fly. They are also perceived to feed on human blood.<sup>147</sup> Witchcraft is believed to be a spiritual power that possesses the soul of a person (a “witch” or a “wizard”) which is mostly used to destroy other people from the same matrilineal background. Among the Akans, witchcraft is seen as the most common and destructive spiritual power which fights against the achievement of “abundant life”. According to Nana Asabere II, witches (or *abayifo*) are the greatest fears of the Akans because they hinder the progress of family members. They are capable of preventing people from becoming wealthy; they can cause people to be “good-for-nothing”, impotent, blind, and infertile, etc. It is worth noting, however, that the Akans also believe that there are some who use their witchcraft for progressive purposes.<sup>148</sup> Such “witchcraft” is called “white witchcraft”.

From the discussion of the understanding of the world of the Akans, it can be said that it is a world composed of a complex structure of numerous spiritual beings, which are in constant interaction with the physical world. These spiritual beings have the power to influence the course of life either for good or for evil. The events in the physical world are the result of the relationship between the physical world and the spiritual world. How a person experiences life in the here and now can, thus, be said to be a product of the interaction of the physical circumstances of the person and the world of the spirit concerning him or her. A life which is considered good and well approved by the deities is rewarded with “abundant life.” Similarly, a life which is considered reckless here on this earth in the sight of the spirits also attracts the punishment of the deities. Such a life usually becomes characterized by misfortunes. The reward or punishment from the deities can be trans-generational. In other words, how a person experiences life in the here and now may not necessarily be the direct

---

<sup>147</sup> Kyeremateng, 92.

<sup>148</sup> Nana Asabere II explained to me that witchcraft is normally expressed in a form of an animal and that some are in the form of a lion. “Witches” or “wizards” of that nature protect their children from the attack of other “witches”. He gives an example of a man who gave birth to thirteen children and by the time of his death at old age of over a hundred years, all his children were still alive and all of them had become people of substance. The success of his family life was attributed to the fact that his witchcraft was a lion so he protected his children from any possible attacks on them from witches and wizards. Furthermore, he did not use his witchcraft to feed on the children of others so he did not have to bring any of his children for others to eat.

result of his or her own relationship to the world of the spirits but rather that of his or her forefathers. To live in harmony with them is to experience life here and now with their full blessings, which translates into “abundant life”.

## 2.4 Determinants of “abundant life”

The Akans hold the belief that the physical life is influenced greatly by the world of the spirits. Whether the life of a person will be good or otherwise is greatly influenced by what happens in the spirit world concerning the person. This is due to the belief that the deities can influence life for good or for bad. This is directly related to morality, since moral uprightness is believed to be rewarded by the deities, while immoral behavior is punished. Ideal life, therefore, consists of long and a decent life which is in line with acceptable social practices. Wealth without socially acceptable practices is regarded as “dirty wealth”. The one whose life is ideal avoids socially unacceptable lifestyles which have the tendency to shorten one’s life. Such a life is lived with a constant consciousness of the role of the deities in the affairs of life in the here and now. As a result of this belief, prayer (through pouring of libation) plays a vital role in the life of individuals (right from conception till death), families and the larger community. This is to solicit the support of the deities to facilitate the longed-for “abundant life” in the here and now. The question is what are the determinants of ‘abundant life’ for the Akans? In fact when the Akans say *su nkwa, na nnsu adee*, (literally: cry for life and not for wealth), what is really meant is that it is better to pray for *nkwa* than to pray for wealth and riches since a life approved and blessed by the deities is perceived as the vehicle which facilitates “abundant life.” Here are some examples of traditional prayers which reveal aspects of the understanding of the people with regards to how life (or *nkwa*) must be:

*Asomasi se ɔpe se ɔtu kwan ko aburokyire*  
*Mommue ɔkwan mma no. Monnyina n’akyiri akyigyina pa,*  
*Monnhyirahyira no, na ɔmfa agyapadee mmara.*  
*Momma no nkowu ho, momma bone biara nka no*  
*Momma no nya nkwa ne akwanhosan.*

The above can be translated as follows:

This person has expressed his/her desire  
to travel abroad.  
Open the door for him/her,  
and support his/her course.  
Shower your blessings on him/her,  
so that he/she will return home with a good  
deal of property.  
Protect him/her from premature death  
while he/she is abroad,  
And also protect him/her from any form of evil.  
Let him/her have a prosperous  
and healthy life.

Among the petitions being presented to *Nyame* through the intermediaries in the above prayer is an 'open door' for the petitioner to travel overseas as he/she is requesting. To travel overseas, for instance, to Europe or North America, is considered an opportunity for people to gain wealth. In other words, it is perceived as a means to the end of becoming wealthy. Wealth gained through socially acceptable means is seen as an indicator of 'abundant life'. Because of the belief in the reality of malevolent spirits, "abundant life" can only be guaranteed when one enjoys the support of the deities. A call for their support therefore takes prominence in the traditional prayers. Another feature of the traditional prayer is the request for the blessings of *Nyame* through the intermediaries. This is because of the firm belief that when a person receives the blessings of *Nyame*, no enemy can overturn that blessing. An "abundant life" is one which is lived to the 'fullest' in terms of longevity and strength. This is believed to emanate from *Nyame*. People pray for long, peaceful and healthy life. For the Akan, good health is almost equivalent to wealth, as depicted in the saying, *se wowo nkwa a wowo ade*. That means, if you have life, you have wealth. Other things which are requested in traditional prayers include fertility, favor before people in authority, fame, focused life, a high sense of responsibility, etc. The traditional prayer also offers a platform for people to express what they would want to avoid in their quest to experience "abundant life." These desires expressed in the traditional prayers (or during *nsaguo*) give indications of what constitutes "abundant life".

## 2.5 Life and destiny (or *nkrabea/hyɛbea*)

The Akans believe that how a person experiences life here and now is connected to his or her *nkrabea* (or destiny). To throw more light on this understanding, I want to look at the word *nkrabea*, which is composed of two words “*nkra*” and “*bea*”. *Nkra* is the noun form of the infinitive “*kra*”, which has been translated as follows: 1. taking leave, 2. errand, mandate, order, commission, word, message, information, notice.<sup>149</sup> In this context, *nkra* is referring to the farewell the “soul” of a “person” bids *Nyame*, prior to his arrival here on earth through birth. “*Bea*” also has different shades of meaning,<sup>150</sup> but in this context, Christaller’s explanation is apt. He translates *bea* as “manner” of state or doing, when it is used to form a compound word with an infinitive. This fits the word *nkrabea* under consideration. *Nkrabea* can therefore refer to the manner in which the soul of a person bids *Nyame* farewell before birth.

For the Akans, it is during the farewell interaction between the “soul” (or *okra*) and *Nyame* that a person receives a commission (or *nkra*) from *Nyame*, regarding the kind of life he will be leading in his/her journey on earth. This includes important aspects of life such as the length of time a person will live, the occupation of a person, as well as how the life of a person in general will turn out to be. It is expected of everyone to be engaged in a recognized occupation, through which one can earn a living and also meet social obligations. The character of a person is also believed to be determined by (although not limited to) the *nkrabea* of that person. Since morality plays a vital role in the worldview of the Akans in relation to “abundant life”, it is expected of everyone to live up to the socially acceptable norms. It is also a worth noting belief among Akans that everybody receives a good *nkrabea* from *Nyame* to live a life that is honorable and good. It is however required of the individual to identify his commission from *Nyame* for his life in this world and work towards fulfilling it.

---

<sup>149</sup> Christaller, 262.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 11.

This is a significant step towards living an abundant and fulfilled life, which is the dream of the average Akan. It is in identifying this commission that one realizes the optimum benefits from whatever endeavor one engages in, even with the least effort. Failure to identify the right commission the soul received from *Nyame* leads to a troubled and unfruitful life, irrespective of the efforts one may put in. Such a life is a try and error one, and in the end it usually does not pass the test of an “abundant life.”

Some sayings and proverbs of Akans reveal other aspects of their belief in destiny. One proverb says that “*Onyame nkrabea nni kwatibea*”. This means what *Nyame* has destined is what will happen. This suggests that the life of a person is already programmed by *Nyame* and therefore whatever happens in the life of a person is directly controlled by *Nyame*. Things happen because they are bound to happen. This view is widespread among Akans. One of the common inscriptions on cars and shops *Abuburo kosua: adeɛ a ebɛyɛ yie no nsɛɛ*, [the egg of the dove: whatever is destined to succeed will never fail]. People usually say this to urge themselves on, when there is a near-loss or failure. When it happens that things did not work out, they would say that “*aduanɛ a wo noa a ebɛhyɛ no, wo toto nso a ebɛhyɛ*” [if the food being prepared is bound to get burnt, it will surely get burnt, whether it is roasted or boiled]. Whether a person will occupy a prestigious position in his life time or not is also related to the *nkrabea* of the person. There is a saying that “*Wowoo Opanin ansa na wowoo ohene*” [The elderly person was born before the king was born.] This implies that, position or prestige does not necessarily come with age. The king may be younger with the elderly as his subjects. All these sayings and proverbs express the understanding of the people about what determines how the life of a person life will turn out to be. It is as if life is already programmed for people to follow it without any human effort. The notion also suggests a sense of helplessness on the part of humans with respect to how life should be. If that is the case, then nobody could be held responsible for whatever they do, since life is already programmed from *Nyame*. In fact, that would mean there would also be no moral obligation for anyone. There are, however other sayings which emphasize the human factor to the realization of abundant life. For instance there is a proverb that “*se wowo obi to esie so a onkyɛre nyini*.” [It does not take long for the person who was born on top of an anthill to grow.] The implication here is that the family background of an individual can serve as a

platform for the person's development. The one who is born into a rich family has better chances of being wealthy than his counterpart with a poor financial background. Another proverb in this direction is "*aboa no repɛ kɔkɔɔ ayɛ nti na ɔde ne ho twitwiri esie*." [The animal scratches its skin against the anthill so that its color will turn red]. In other words, people get connected to others with the view to enhancing their own life. This proverb also touches on the contribution of friends and loved ones to the achievement of "abundant life", thus affirming the sense of community among Akans. They believe that no individual can solely achieve "abundant life," without the support of somebody else. This is because, as another proverb goes, "*Ɔbaakofoɔ biara ahodɛ nso no akwankorɔ*" – "No individual is self-sufficient." In spite of this high communal sense of interdependence, individuals are also encouraged to do their best to ensure abundant life. From the foregoing, it becomes clear that for Akans the fulfillment of the *nkrabea* of a person is determined by *Nyame*, as well as by human effort. In spite of the view of *nkrabea* being necessarily a good one from *Nyame*, the real life situation is sometimes contrary to the expected "ideal" life.

This raises the question of whether some souls received a rather bad *nkrabea* from *Nyame*. For instance, not all trades are acceptable among Akans, and those who consistently engage in activities which the society abhor are considered as social miscreants, and are therefore considered by some as having a bad *nkrabea* or bad *hyɛbea*<sup>151</sup>. Examples include a person who engages in prostitution or stealing for a

---

<sup>151</sup> *Hyɛbea* is a word which is usually used interchangeably with *nkrabea*, (cf. Christaller, 262). *Hyɛbea* is composed of two Twi words: *hyɛ* which can be translated as command, and *bea* which also translates as the manner in which something is done. Based on this, a school of thought believes that *hyɛbea* is the compulsive force that causes people to act negatively against their will. The compulsive force could be physical (through the influence of bad associations) or spiritual (through the influence of *abusuyɛfoo* or malevolent spirits). Throwing more light on this, Baffour Asabere Kogyawoasuu Ababio III remarked that such malevolent spirits have the sole aim of destroying other people. According to him, this accounts for why somebody may set off on a journey and travel for hours without knowing exactly where he or she was going or the mission for the journey. He also attributes scandalous incidents like rape extreme anger, sexual promiscuity, drunkenness, laziness, etc to activities of malevolent spirits. All this can happen to a person either through his or her own disobedience which has made the behavior chronic, or backed by a spiritual force through a curse or a spell which is cast on the person to destroy his or her life. In other words, for him, *nkrabea* is supposed to be good but when it is not materialized, *nkrabea* turns into *hyɛbea*. Thus, *hyɛbea* does not come from *Nyame* but rather it is something a person picks from the earth either through the physical environment in which he finds himself or through the influence of evil spiritual force. Meyerowitz holds a different view to the former even though there seem to be an agreement in some aspects. Both Meyerowitz and Baffour Asabere agree on the element of compulsion in *hyɛbea*. A remarkable point of departure, however, is that Meyerowitz relates *hyɛbea* to life after one physically passes on from the earth. She argues that each *kra* has to give an account of himself or herself before the ancestors. The *kra* of those who are found to have not passed the morality test while they lived on the earth is sent to be reborn in a child of the mother's family. The child in whom the *kra* is reborn is given a command (or *hyɛbea*) from *Nyame* to perfect the *kra* by doing good deeds. This command which has to be realised to the full is what Meyerowitz refers to as *hyɛbea*. Meyerowitz's understanding of *nkrabea* corresponds with the view I have expressed on the subject already. In the light of this Meyerowitz seem to categorise *hyɛbea* as a form of *nkrabea*.

living. Such a person is said to have a bad *nkrabea*. This also applies to lifestyles such as drunkenness, acute laziness, lack of seriousness, etc. These behaviours are perceived as disgraceful to those who indulge in them and their families as well. Such conditions have the potential of depriving the individual of any meaningful recognition from the society.

Other situations which are usually attributed to bad *nkrabea* include sicknesses and diseases which are considered to be caused by spiritual forces. Such diseases are called *abonsam yadee* (or the devil's disease). These include such diseases as epilepsy, madness, impotence, barrenness etc. The death of a child is also usually attributed to bad *nkrabea*, especially if a parent loses more than one child. With the introduction of western medicine, one may find the causes of some of these occurrences. That notwithstanding, the belief still persists among the Akans that the *nkrabea* of a person is a determining factor of how his or her life will be. What accounts for a bad *nkrabea* then? The Akans believe that bad *nkrabea* is the result of the activities of malevolent spirits such as witchcraft, in the life of that individual, even though there is also the view that human factors may play a role. Even then, what may be seen as a human factor is also believed to be influenced by the malevolent spiritual powers, with the aim of depriving the individual of the desired "abundant life."

## 2.6 Hindrances to 'abundant life'

It is a strongly held belief among the Akans in general that the quest for a good life or abundant life does not come without possible opposing forces. These are mainly spiritual, even though physical factors cannot be ruled out entirely. As indicated earlier on, the spiritual beings which saturate the cosmology of the Akans are basically there to play an intermediary role between *Nyame* and humanity. However, they can also be a source of the woes of a person, a family or even an entire

---

This reasoning stems from the fact that *nkrabea*, as she puts it, is "that which you stipulate when leaving" or "the manner of taking leave" or "allotted life". Therefore if *hyebee* is a command a *kra* receives from *Nyame* to accomplish, that command may be seen as the allotted life the *kra* received from *Nyame*. It is also worth pointing out that in the view of Mayerowitz, as was also expressed by Barffour Asabere, *hyebee* has something to do with those whose life does not meet the socially acceptable standards. While Baffour Asabere refers to the life of those who are living in the here and now, Mayerowitz refers to the *kra* of those who once passed on to the other world, and had to come back for perfection in order to inherit a better place. In our everyday language one can hardly see any difference in the use of the two words. People generally refer to good and bad *nkrabea*, as well as good and bad *hyebee*, depending on who is speaking and the source of his or her information. Most of this information is gathered through the oral tradition until now and this comes with its attendant discrepancies.

community. This comes about when the deities are offended by an individual, a family or a community.

### 2.6.1 Taboo (or *Mmusuo*)

Whenever *mmusuo*<sup>152</sup> or a taboo is committed, the causal agent incurs the wrath or punishment of the deities. The taboo may be a disregard for a specific instruction a person, a family or a community received from a deity as part of the covenant agreement between the party and the *deity*. For instance, a woman in her menses is perceived to be ritually unclean, and so she is prohibited from all places and activities associated with worship in the traditional religion. Furthermore, a traditional priest, at least, among the Akans is forbidden from invoking a curse on anybody.<sup>153</sup> Flouting the rule amounts to committing a taboo which attracts the punishment of the deities. Apart from what may be considered as general taboos, different deities have regulations which all their adherents have to comply with. These regulations can be in the form of something to abstain from (because it is an *akyiwadee* or a “forbidden thing” of the deity), or a practice an individual, a family or a community will have to stay away from. Most *akyiwadee* (or taboo) are deity specific. In other words, what may be a “forbidden thing” for one deity may not necessarily be forbidden by another deity. Adherents of a deity are supposed to abstain from the *akyiwadee* (or taboo) of their deity; else they face the consequences of their disobedience. According to Nana Amponsah, *Pampaso Obaapanin*<sup>154</sup> there is a town in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. In this community there were *abosom* such as *Ekyem Tano*, *Diamono*, and *Atewaaso*.

Those who consulted these shrines were supposed to abstain from anything produced from palm nut since it is the *akyiwadee* (or taboo) of these deities. If a couple should contact any of these deities to assist them in childbirth for instance, the parents are supposed to stay away from palm nut until the child is matured and

---

<sup>152</sup> This is the term used for a grievous evil. Certain acts of evil are considered to be so grievous that they have the potential to incur the wrath of the deities. These include illicit sexual relationships, using a poisonous substance for fishing, etc. In my interview with Nana Asabere II on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2010, he disclosed that it is a taboo for a man and a woman to have sexual intimacy in the forest.

<sup>153</sup> I owe this information to Barffour Asabere Kogyawoasusu III.

<sup>154</sup> Nana Amponsah gave me this information in an interview conducted with her on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2010 in Kumasi.



responsible enough to keep that rule. In that case the parents are free from the rule. Should such rules be flouted, the deities could punish the offender with any misfortune, which can be any life threatening disaster, or even death. In the same way, if a family consults a deity for any form of assistance in their life enterprise, they are also required to keep the rules they received from the deity in order to avoid any curse as a form of punishment. In the case of a family, the punishment can manifest itself in various forms, such as sicknesses which defy cure, premature deaths, accidents, barrenness, impotence, poverty, madness, etc. When such things happen to members of a particular family consistently, for a period of time, it is generally believed that the family has been cursed by a deity, possibly due to an offence by a member of the family against the deity.

This phenomenon is in relation to those who seek the assistance of a deity. In that case the regulations of the deity become binding only to the adherents as a form of a covenant or an agreement. Offenders in this instance are supposed to be people who flout the regulations, conscious of the consequences of their actions.

### **2.6.2 Curses (or *duabo*)**

Another source of hindrance to the realization of “abundant life” is *duabo* or a curse. *Duabo* is the consequence a person suffers from committing an offence which draws the punishment of a deity. The offence and its consequences (the curse) can be related to an individual, a family or a community. A curse can occur in different ways. It can come into effect whether the offence is noticed by others or not. For instance, it is a taboo to visit some rivers and some parts of certain forests on some specific days. These days are considered as sacred days for the deity of the river and the forests in question. Whether a person is aware of this prohibition or not does not prevent any form of punishment for the individual and, in most cases, the community as a whole, should this regulation be ignored. The offence might also not have been noticed by anybody and yet the consequences come upon the offender and the community. The punishment ceases only when the cause has been detected, either through personal confession by the offender, or through consultation with the deity in question to know the cause of the curse, in the event that the offender refuses to confess the offence committed or is unaware of it. In either scenario, the traditional

spiritual stakeholders consult the deity in question for a prescription of the right rituals to be performed in order to stop the curse on the offender and the community. When the offender is known, he or she is made to pay for the cost involved in performing the appropriate ritual to reverse the curse.

This serves as a punishment from the community to him or her for bringing such a curse on the community. If the offender conceals his offence, he could suffer any form of a misfortune such as madness, leprosy, death, etc. This is at the discretion of the deity and the magnitude of the taboo committed. Nana Afua Kyere who is the queen of traditional priestesses in the Offinso Traditional Area and also doubles as the traditional priestess of the Taagya Shrine informed me that it is a taboo to visit both the Offin and Abankoro rivers in the traditional area on Tuesdays. Under no circumstances is anyone allowed to fetch water from these rivers on this day. Anyone who disregards this rule brings a curse on himself and the community as a whole. When the person is arrested, he is made to provide the materials needed to perform the required rituals to appease the deity as a measure to avert a curse on himself and the entire community. According to Nana Kyere, it also happens that usually those who visit the riverside on forbidden days see what may be considered as strange beings by the river. These beings are believed to be the river spirits which demonstrate themselves in physical appearance to those who flout the rule. The river in the physical form can tell the offender directly that because he has come to the riverside on a forbidden day, he will surely die, whether he confesses it to the spiritual leaders of the community or not. In that case, according to her, nothing could be done to reverse the death.

The punishment from a deity to individuals can also go beyond the offender to generations after him/her. According to Okomfoɔ Yaa Bea, the traditional Priestess of the Kwabena Sugye Shrine at Agona Asamang in the Ashanti Region of Ghana gave information about a family in the neighborhood of her shrine. According to her, a number of children born in this family had an unusual growth around the mouth. The shrine revealed to her that the family had been cursed by the spirit of the river behind her shrine. This is because some time in the past a member of that family came fishing in the river and in the process, took away one of the children of the river in the form of a fish. The river then imposed a curse on the family that from time to time

every child born in that family would have such unusual growth in the face.<sup>155</sup> According to her, the curse on the family which was precipitated by the actions of an individual in the family was stopped after the right rituals had been performed to appease the deity.

Akans also believe that somebody can pronounce a curse on another person. This usually happens when someone feels aggrieved by the actions of another person. Out of pain of the deep hurt, the person may utter bad wishes against the offender. Some common examples are those whose items are stolen. The deities are invoked to visit their wrath on the offenders. Specific calamities are usually mentioned. Someone may invoke a deity and call for blindness, impotence, sickness, a tragic death, upon the offender. In such instances, once the offender experiences such misfortune, it is interpreted as punishment. If nothing is done about it, whatever evil wish that was expressed by the offended person becomes a reality. If the offence was committed by an entire family, the curse invoked would also affect the members of the family line for generations. The offence might have been committed by an individual in the family but if the one invoking the curse mentions the descendants of the offender, his entire family line will be affected by the curse. This view of a curse on an individual extending to later generations of the offender is also confirmed by Nana Agyei Akyeamfour, one of the *Akyeamehene* (or chief linguists) of the King of the Asante kingdom. Nana Agyei Akyeamfour tells the story of a family in one of the suburbs of Kumasi. According to him, members of the family hardly died a natural death at an old age. They usually died of accidents, flooding, etc. The family is also characterized by madness, bad and unfruitful marriages, etc. Because of these things which happen to members of this family, they are stigmatized by their neighbors. This, according to him, is the result of a curse which was imposed on one of the forerunners of the family who was alleged to have stolen some huge sums of money to build the family house. A curse was pronounced on the family and that explains the sad story of the current members of the family.<sup>156</sup> This reveals another aspect of curses. It may not necessarily be the result of one's own conduct. Rather, one may

---

<sup>155</sup> Okomfo Yaa Bea provided this information during my interview with her on 27th November, 2010 at her shrine.

<sup>156</sup> This was part of the information Nana Agyei Akyeamfour gave me during my interview with him on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2010.

come under a curse by virtue of his/her family background. A misfortune such as madness or dying at a particular young age among males or females or both may be occurring in a particular family consistently or on a regular pattern. Such incidences are also attributed to a curse in a family. In other words, the *abusua* (or family) from which a person comes can be a hindrance to the realization of “abundant life”. Families with such curses are classified as “bad” family or *abusuabone*. This is a situation every Asante would wish to avoid. Akans therefore have a saying that “*abusua bone mu ye tena na*”, which means it is a difficult situation to be born into a bad family.

Some common offences which usually cause people to resort to *duabo* include theft (especially that which involves valuable items), marital infidelity, false accusations, etc. In the case of false accusation, the one who feels wrongly accused consults the deities to clear his name of the accusations made against them. This practice reinforces the view of the deities as custodians of morality.

### 2.6.3 Evil Spiritual Powers and Witchcraft

The realization of abundant life by an individual may be hindered through no fault of his/her or a member of his family but through the evil intentions and wishes of somebody else. The Akans believe that somebody may contact malevolent spirits to manipulate people to conduct themselves in such a way that can deprive them of the realization of “abundant life.” This can express itself in any self-destructive behavior such as extreme laziness, extreme drunkenness, extreme smoking, etc. It is usually said of such people that “*yeŋ nku wo nanso na yeasɛ wo*”, which means, they will not kill you but they will destroy you. This may be motivated by sheer hatred or jealousy, or for some selfish interest of somebody. People are able to destroy the life of others in this way by making them addicts to drugs, alcohol, sex, etc. It is believed that some people contact *asuman* (or talisman sorcery, magic, mallams) or some *abosom* to achieve their destructive plans against other people. They use these spiritual powers to destroy marriages, and businesses, inflict sicknesses – what is referred to as *nto yadeɛ*<sup>157</sup> (or a sickness which has been acquired and projected on

---

<sup>157</sup> *Nto yadeɛ* literally means a “purchased sickness”. It is believed that one may be sick as a result of somebody else contracting a malevolent spirit to project that sickness on that person.

someone else). They can also use these powers to make others infertile, impotent, etc.

*Bayie* or witchcraft is also believed to play a very important role in destroying the life of people. Akans believe that “witches” and “wizards” are capable of turning a person’s good destiny into a bad one, thus undermining abundant life.

#### 2.6.4 The lifestyle of an individual

Actions which attract praises from people are usually considered to be good and rewarding. It is believed that in the same way, certain behaviours also attract unpleasant comments which have the tendency to adversely affect the life of a person. The strong belief of Akans in the power of words finds expression in the saying, *ano a edi nkyene no eno ara na edi mako* [It is the same mouth which consumes both salt and pepper]. This is to say that the mouth can be a source of both pleasant and unpleasant things. With this understanding, it is expected that people conduct themselves well, so as to win the approval of others and not their curses. This is because, *dinbo*<sup>158</sup> *antum wo a etete wo ntama*<sup>159</sup> [If your name is always mentioned for the bad reasons, it will surely have a negative impact on your life]. This saying implies that the comment of other people in relation to the actions of an individual has the capacity to influence life either for good or for bad. This is especially so with the words of the elderly. It is said that “*Opanin ano ye obosom*”, which means the mouth of the elderly person is a deity. If he or she blesses a person, it materializes. The opposite is also true, when an elderly person pronounces a curse on somebody. It is therefore expected that young people give maximum respect and regard to the elderly in order to attract their blessings and not their curses. This power associated with words in general and that of the elderly in particular in the traditional African understanding has been emphasized by John Mbiti when he observes that “[t]here is mystical power in words, especially those of a senior person to a junior one, in terms of age, social status or office position. The words of parents, for example, carry ‘power’ when spoken to children; they ‘cause’ good fortune, curse,

<sup>158</sup> *dinbo* literally means ‘name calling’. In this context, it refers to mentioning the name of somebody repeatedly because of a bad behavior of the person.

<sup>159</sup> *Ntama* (clothing) is used here as a metaphor of dignity, as it prevents nakedness.

success, peace, sorrows or blessings, especially when spoken in moments of crisis.”<sup>160</sup>

## **2.7 Salvation (or *nkwagyee*) and ‘abundant life’**

### **2.7.1 Understanding of *nkwagyee* (or salvation)**

As observed earlier, *nkwagyee* which is the Akan word translated as ‘salvation’ comes from the two Akan words: *Nkwa* (or life) and *gyee* (or receive, get, rescue, save, deliver). *Nkwagyee* can therefore be said to be any act which delivers or secures the life of a person, family or a community from disgrace, misfortune or any life threatening condition. The condition may be something happening now or something which may occur in the future. *Nkwagyee* can be associated with various degrees of needs. For instance, it can be a situation which may be considered ‘ordinary’ such as offering a cup of drinking water to a thirsty person. Thus providing a cup of water for a thirsty person can make somebody *agyenkwa* (or savior). It can also take place within the context of rescuing someone, a family or a community from a deadly disease, a disgraceful situation, or any occurrence which may be considered as life threatening. The one who intervenes to facilitate the experiencing of *nkwa* is seen as *agyenkwa* (or the one who saves) or *Onyame bofoɔ* (or an angel/messenger of *Nyame*). The one who helps to rescue a life is seen as *Nyame bofoɔ* because *Nyame* is believed to be the source of life. He is also perceived to be the one who has the ultimate authority over how the life of a person will turn out to be. The Akans believe that *se Onyame nkum wo a wo nnwu*. That is, “if *Nyame* has not sanctioned the death of a person, he/she will not die.” In other words death is subject to the authority of *Nyame*. Even though the prevention of death is not the only condition that calls for salvation, death is seen as the greatest threat, and enemy of human beings. If someone offers a timely intervention to a person in danger, it is often said that ‘*Onyame bofoɔ sene bofoɔ pa*’ which can be literally translated as ‘the angel of *Nyame* is better than a good angel’. This suggests that the one who rendered the help needed at that crucial moment is sent from *Nyame* to rescue the one from the life threatening situation. Sometimes the agent of the assistance, being it a human being or a deity, is said to be the *Nyame* of the person, family or the

<sup>160</sup> John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1985), 197.

community who was rescued. This is not to deify the person as such. It is rather a pointer to the fact that the agent of the 'rescue exercise' has rendered a service on behalf of *Nyame*, or that *Nyame* has used that person or deity to effect *nkwagyee* (or salvation). Another name used for the one who helps to redeem a life from danger is *ogyefo*<sup>161</sup>, or "one who delivers."

Thus in the traditional understanding, there is no one savior, neither is there a definite medium of *nkwagyee* (or salvation). *Nyame* is the one who ultimately saves or secures a life but he uses different agents, all of whom can be classified as *agyenkwa* (or savior).

### 2.7.2 The need for *nkwagyee* (or salvation)

According to Baffour Asabere Kogyawoasu Ababio III,<sup>162</sup> *nkwagyee* (or salvation) becomes necessary when someone ends up in a serious need or suffering which is beyond his/her ability to control or help himself or herself. This is expressed in the Akan language as *Obi ato afena mu*, which literally means 'someone has fallen into the sword'. *Afena* is a sword and the expression suggests a state of acute helplessness; a situation which can lead to a grave consequence, not excluding death. Such a situation calls for a relief, which comes about in the context of *nkwagyee* or salvation. The magnitude of the problem may range from 'very minor' to 'very huge'. In other words, *Nkwagyee* becomes necessary whenever "abundant life" of a person, family, or a community is threatened in such a way that the affected party does not have the ability to overcome the threat. *Nkwagyee* can come about through the efforts of the party who needs the salvation (by calling for assistance, as in the case of someone who has been attacked by a sickness) or through the promptings and assistance of somebody else. It can happen as a response to the cry of a party in a life threatening situation.

<sup>161</sup> *Ogyefo* is an Akan word which can be translated as the one who delivers or the one who rescues. In moments of distress, the Akans cry out, *asem ato me, ogyefo mmra*. That is, 'I am in trouble, I need a savior.'

<sup>162</sup> Baffour Asabere Kogyawoasu Ababio III is the *Nsumankwaahene* of the King of the Asante Kingdom of Ghana, Otumfo Osei Tutu II. The *Nsumankwaahene* is the Chief Priest of all the traditional priests of the Asante Kingdom. He made these observations in my interview for this thesis on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Kumasi.

*Nkwagyee* can be at the physical level and at the spiritual level as well. For instance, if somebody draws the attention of a person to something which could lead to a danger or if somebody helps another person to be relieved of a problem, for instance to defray a debt, the one who rendered the assistance becomes an *agyenkwa*. This is because of the offer which averted a possible disgrace of the one who was indebted. If someone in a crisis or life threatening situation is directed to a source where he/she could be rescued from the situation, both the one who directed the person and the direct source of the assistance are the *agyenkwa* of the one who received the help.

At the community level, *nkwagyee* becomes necessary whenever the life of the community as a whole is seen to have come under threat. This usually comes about when a member commits a taboo, thereby attracting a calamity upon the community as a form of punishment from the deities. In that case, the community may go for a remedy to the situation, thus seeking salvation (or *nkwagyee*) from the deities. Nana Agyei Akyeamfour<sup>163</sup> recounts a story which took place in the 1980s in a community near Kumasi. According to him, the inhabitants of the community were terrorized by a chimpanzee for some time. Efforts by members of the community and that of the military to kill the animal proved futile. For more than three months, not even the combined efforts of the military and wild life experts could bring the animal under control. After the elders of the town consulted the deities, it was made known to them that the community had committed a taboo against a river in the community. After the necessary rituals had been performed, a palm wine tapper, who was not even a hunter, could kill the animal. In this case, there was a life threatening condition which defied the ability of the community to address. Such a situation calls for the assistance of an 'external source' capable of arresting the situation. This is *nkwagyee* for the community in question. This became possible through the combined effort of the deity which prescribed the solution and the human agent (the palm wine tapper) who killed the animal.

---

<sup>163</sup> Nana Agyei Akyeamfour is the Chief linguist of the King of the Asante Kingdom, Asantehene Otumfoo Osei Tutu II. He gave this in my interview for this thesis on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2012.



## **2.8 Overcoming the hindrances**

It has been established that traditionally it is the desire of everyone to enjoy “abundant life” in the form of long life with strength and vitality, wealth, good social status, etc. However the fulfillment of this desire depends on the relationship between a person and the world of the spirit around him/her. The belief is that acceptable life is rewarded, and unacceptable life according to the norms of the society is punished. In order to experience abundant life in the midst of these possible hindrances, agents of the traditional religion of the Akans undertake some religious activities to either prevent any life threatening incident, or reverse a misfortune which has already happened as a way of ‘staying the execution’ of the deities. Traditionally, the Akans use both ‘preventive’ and ‘curative’ measures to overcome the hindrances that may prevent a person from enjoying abundant life. This is what may be considered as conscious actions towards *nkwagyeε* (or salvation). It can be for a person, a family or a community, as the case may be.

### **2.8.1 Preventive steps**

#### **2.8.1.1 Pleasing the deities**

The Akans believe that having “abundant life” results from the interaction of a person and the spirit world. Good life is rewarded by the deities with “abundance”. In the same way, the deities punish people with various forms of misfortunes, and even curses. Thus, punishment from the deities can be prevented as a person keeps to what is acceptable to the deities. This includes what may be described as general rules and regulations such as venerating the ancestors, keeping the rules concerning special days, not having intimacy in the bush, etc. One has to keep the rules and regulations he/she received from the deity with whom he/she has made a covenant. Disregarding any of the regulations attracts a punishment from the deities. This can be in the form of a misfortune. The contamination also exposes a person to other malevolent spirits which has the power to destroy people.

According to Nana Asabebre II, one can protect oneself from the attacks of *abusuyefoɔ/abayifoɔ* (or witches) if one is committed to the deity with whom he or she

has made a covenant.<sup>164</sup> When one commits himself or herself to a strong deity (or *obi di aduro*),<sup>165</sup> one is required to be strictly obedient to the demands of the deity as a requirement for protection against any possible affliction from evil spirits. There is the fear that someone is seeking to destroy the ideal life a person is supposed to live. People therefore seek the protection from a deity against the destructive intentions of their detractors. Different deities (usually *abosom*) have different moral codes for their adherents to comply with. Nana Asabre II mentions adultery, evil thoughts against someone, abortion, backbiting, covetousness, as some of the things he has to avoid to ensure a stronger protection from the deity with which he has a covenant. It is believed that living a life which is acceptable to the ancestors causes a person to get their support, thereby strengthening the *sunsum* (or the 'soul') of that person. Such a condition is thought to makes it difficult for a person to be "bewitched" or come under the influence of malevolent spirits since he or she enjoys the approval of the deities, including the ancestors. Strictly keeping the regulations given by a deity therefore prevents a person from suffering hindrances in his or her bid to experience "abundant life." In this case, the person becomes his/her own *agyenkwa* (or savior) for taking steps that ensure that he/she experiences life in abundance.

### 2.8.1.2 *Abisa* (or Consultation/divination)

Another way by which a person can prevent a misfortune is to consult a deity before undertaking a venture. This practice is called *abisa* (or consultation). This is a traditional religious act through which people inquire from the deities about the prospects of any significant step they want to undertake. For instance before embarking on *akwantuo*<sup>166</sup> (or journey) people consult the deities to seek directions on whether the intended adventure will yield the desired effects or not. It is expected of the deities to be able to predict if there are "dangers" ahead of a planned project or

---

<sup>164</sup> Nana Asabere II gave this information in an interview with him for this work on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Kumasi.

<sup>165</sup> This is the expression used for those who enter into a covenant of adherence with a deity. When such a covenant is established, the deity will instruct the adherent on what he/she is allowed to and what is not allowed.

<sup>166</sup> "*Akwantuo*" is the Asante word for 'journey'. However, as used here, the word means more than an ordinary journey from one town or village in Ghana to another for just a business and return. It mainly refers to a journey which may take a relatively long time, which one embarks on for a livelihood. Much as this can be within the home country, it usually refers to a journey abroad for greener pastures as well. It can also refer to marriage. The entire life span of a person is considered as a journey. Decisions are taken with a lot of care and consultations, including the deities, for directions.

if it will lead to success. Sometimes it is predicted that there are possible misfortunes ahead. In such case, the deities prescribe a ritual to be done to avert the danger ahead, thus removing all possible hindrances ahead of a person. This is usually done secretly by an individual. At the family and community levels, the deities are able to predict a looming calamity. This is usually brought to the attention of the *Abusua Panyin* (or the head of the family) or the chief of the community, as the case may be, during moments of worship such as *Akwasidae*.<sup>167</sup> According to Nana Asabere II it is mandatory for the chief of the community, for instance, to offer drinks to the deities. After bringing various petitions before the deities, they are expected to communicate pending misfortunes to the community through a linguist to the chief, and also prescribe ways of averting the misfortunes.<sup>168</sup> It is a preventive act which secures the *nkwa* (life) of a person, a family or a community.

### 2.8.1.3 *Nsaguo/apayee* (or libation)

It is believed in the traditional religion of the Akans that *nsaguo* (or pouring of libation) is directed at *Nyame* through the deities. It is the form of prayer (or *mpae*) to *Nyame* through the intermediary deities. *Nsaguo* provides the means through which people bring their petition and thanksgiving to *Nyame*. I learnt from my interaction with chiefs, and traditional priests and priestesses during my field research that *nsaguo* can be done at the individual, family or community level depending on what occasioned it and who are involved in it. Before one undertakes any remarkable step in life, or before one undertakes any significant venture in life, such as learning a trade, or getting married, the blessings of the deities are sought. As Nana Kwaku Dua<sup>169</sup> indicates, “when libation is poured to the blackened stools on behalf of a person, he/she receive their blessings.”<sup>170</sup> *Nyame Otwereampon Kwame* is the first

<sup>167</sup> The Akans have nine cycles in a year. Each of the cycles has forty days, which closes on a Sunday (*Kwasiada* in Akan). This day is one of the days which are considered to be holy days. It is therefore observed as a holiday called *Akwasidae*. It is a day set aside for the performance of rituals which is believed to bring the “community” of the Akans together. In the understanding of the Akans, the community consists of the ancestors, the living, and the generations yet to be born. See Kyeremateng, 96.

<sup>168</sup> Nana Asabere II made these observations in an interview with him on 19th October, 2010 in Kumasi.

<sup>169</sup> Nana Kwaku Dua is the traditional priest of the Akwasi Mmee and his son Obosom Asare Kofi of Offinso Amoawi.

<sup>170</sup> Nana Kwaku Dua made these observations in an interview with him on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 in Offinso Amoawi.

person mentioned in every libation prayer. He is followed by *Asase Yaa* (or the earth), and then *nananom nsamanfoɔ* (or the ancestors). The drink is poured to the ground as their names are mentioned. This precedes every libation prayer before any petition is presented to *Nyame*. Here is an example of a libation prayer for a young person seeking to marry:

*Afei na mo nana yi aduru ne mpanyinfie so  
a ɔrebekɔ aware.  
Mo ntaa n'akyi akyigyinapa.  
Momma ne mmadwewa nnɔɔso  
na n'ase nnɔre te sɛ borɔdeɛ ase.  
Onipa bɔne a ɔtaa awadeɛ  
no akyiri,  
sɛ mo nana yi rekɔ awadeɛ yi  
ɔmpɛ no yie  
na ɔbesi n'awoo ho kwan,  
anaase ɔde asodie bi bɛba  
abɛto wɔn awadeɛ yi ntam no  
momma ne nkɔnkɔmmɔɔsoɔ mmɔ ne so.<sup>171</sup>*

This can be literally translated as follows:

Your grandchild has reached full age.  
We plead with you to support him/her  
and make him/her very fertile  
so that he/she will have many descendants.  
If there is anyone with evil wishes  
for this marriage,  
and will seek to prevent him/her  
from bearing children,  
or plunge him/her into any marital problems,  
we plead with you to return  
his/her evil wishes back to him/her.

---

<sup>171</sup> This example of *nsaguo* or prayer of libation was provided by Nana Afia Kyereh during my field research for this work.

It is worth noting what the deities are being requested to prevent, and what they are being asked to provide for people in the context of marriage. This gives indication of what ‘abundant life’ means for the people in terms of marriage. The experience of “abundance” in the life of a person is attributed to the support (or *akyiginapa*) he/she enjoys from the deities.<sup>172</sup> The prayer suggests that for a marriage to be an ideal one, the couple should be fertile so that they can have offspring and descendants. It should be devoid of challenges which can threaten the survival of the marriage. The prayer also solicits the deities to protect the marriage from the influence of *onipa bone ni a etaa awadeε no akyi* (or any ‘evil person’ behind the marriage). As indicated earlier, there is a belief among the Akans that there are enemies (or hindrances) which seek to deprive people of the desired ‘abundant life’. In this prayer, the assumption is that there are those who may not have the best interest of the couple or either of them at heart. This may be out of envy or jealousy. Such a person is an ‘enemy’ to the marriage and therefore the deities are supposed to prevent the marriage from their evil wishes and influences. Typical of all libation prayers, evil wishers and evil people are the last to be mentioned as in the example above. The deities are requested to deal with them by causing them to experience their own evil wishes against the person. This is not considered to be morally wrong, neither is it considered a curse. For the Akans, *εε papa nnyε hwee a, bone nso nnyε whee*. This means if a good gesture of a person to somebody is returned with a bad one the first person deserves the right to retaliate. In the same way, if there are people who would want to see the destruction of another person, then this person should be dealt with by the deities without any mercy. The belief is that after such prayers are said, the person receives protection from the deities against any possible predicament through the activities of malevolent spirits that could deprive the person of abundant life.

---

<sup>172</sup> *Akyiginapa* is an Akan word which can be translated as ‘support’, ‘assistance’, ‘help’ etc. ‘*Akyi*’ literally means “back.” ‘*Gyina*’ is a verb which means “stand.” It also means stop. ‘*Pa*’ is an adverb which can be translated in this case as “firmly” or “very well.” As used in this prayer, ‘*akyiginapa*’ implies the understanding of the people that without the strong support of the deities, the “good life” which is desired will be hindered by enemies of the person and evil wishers.

#### 2.8.1.4. Seeking Protection From A Deity

As a precautionary measure against the activities of *onipa tanfoε* (or human enemies) and *abusuyefoε* (or those who inflict evil upon others) and *abyifoε* (or witches) who are believed to be ‘destroyers of life’, a person may make a covenant with a deity in order to be protected from the activities of ‘evil wishers’ who may be seeking to deprive an individual the desired “abundant life.” This is also a form of *nkwagyeε* (or salvation) since it is a way of securing the life of the person.

To do this, a person may ‘*di aduro*’. This can be literally translated as ‘eat medicine’. It is the expression used to describe someone who has entered into a covenant with *εbosom* (or deity) to be his adherent. It is the expression used for ‘idol worshippers’. The *εbosom* is expected to protect the adherent from any activities of malevolent spirits as long as he/she keeps his/her side of the covenant. According to a respondent in my interviews he is an adherent of a deity. Also he is aware that there are a lot of “witches” in his family who may want to destroy his life. That is why he has made a covenant with a deity (or *di aduro*). According to him, he intends to keep his side of the covenant because he knows that if he should fail in doing that, he will be exposed to the destruction of his enemies who may seek to destroy his life.

Others consult spiritualists to receive medicine (or *gye aduro*) to protect themselves against possible evil activities against aspects of their life. This is usually offered in the form of charms, amulets, and talismans. These are called ‘*Asuman*’, and they may be obtained from traditional priests, or from a mallam. They are believed to have spiritual powers which can ward off malevolent or evil spirits. According to Quarcoopome,

“a pregnant woman fortifies herself against witches which might harm her and the unborn baby with talismans which she wears around her waist, or amulets on her wrist or hang on the doorpost.”<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>173</sup> T.N.O. Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion* (Ibadan: African University Press, 1987), 154.

The Akans believe that people with 'spiritual eye' can foresee the future prospects of an unborn baby. Therefore if it is not protected, someone can change the destiny of the child. It is also possible for a disease to be projected against the unborn baby. For all these reasons, a pregnant woman may go for *aduro* to protect herself and the unborn child.

The *Asuman* are also believed to be capable of helping people to be successful in their endeavors in life. Some collect medicine for success in their marriage, or success in their trading activities. Hunters also use *aduro* or medicine to protect themselves against the *sasa* of the animals they kill. This is called '*sasaduro*'<sup>174</sup>. According to Cecilia Arthur, this can be talismans or amulet worn on the waist or on the wrist. This is a protective measure against attacks from evil animals in the forest. Others also go for *asuman* to boost their farming activities. It is believed that *aduro* can help to produce good yield and also protect the farmer against others who may be jealous of him/her.

## 2.8.2 Curative measures

In the situation where a misfortune is looming because a taboo has already been committed, steps can be taken to "stay" the execution of the deities. Misfortunes are perceived as a punishment from the deities for one offence or the other. As Mbiti puts it, "misfortunes may be interpreted as indicating that the sufferer has broken some moral or ritual conduct against God [or *Nyame*], the spirits, the elders or other members of the society."<sup>175</sup> When the necessary steps are taken to appease the deities, the misfortunes can be avoided. Mbiti has noted there is a contradiction between the understanding of *Nyame* and the deities as the source of misfortune in the life of an individual, a family or a community and the belief that magic, sorcery, and witchcraft can also be responsible for afflictions.<sup>176</sup> Meyerowitz has however

---

<sup>174</sup> This is composed of two words, *sasa* and *aduro*. As indicated earlier, *sasa* is believed to be "the protective principle which wrecks vengeance on anybody who does an abnormal harm to another person." See Peter Kwasi Sarpong, *Peoples Differ: An approach to Inculturation in Evangelization* (Accra: Sub – Saharan Publishers, 2002), 91. The Akan believe that it is not only human beings who possess this "protective principle" which brings vengeance on its 'offenders'. It is believed that animals also have *sasa*, with that of big and dangerous animals being more dangerous than smaller and less dangerous ones. This explains why hunters need special *aduro* (or medicine) against the possible vengeance from the *sasa* of the animals they kill in their hunting activities.

<sup>175</sup> Mbiti refers to this as 'village logic'. See Mbiti, *African Religion & Philosophy*, 210.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

suggested that whatever happens to a person is contingent upon the *nkrabea* (or destiny) of the person.<sup>177</sup> Her argument is based on the Akan saying that “‘*Onyame nkrabea nni kwatibea*’ – ‘What *Nyame* has destined cannot be evaded; there is no evading fate.’ Meyerowitz concludes that *nkrabea* (or destiny) can be identified with the free choice of a person, and that there is no contradiction between the belief that *Nyame* is the one who determines how the life of a person will unfold.

Looking at it from the Akan perspective, I will agree with Mbiti in his acknowledgement of the contradiction. On the one hand, the Akans believe that how life unfolds is completely dependent on *Nyame*. This is expressed in the saying: ‘*ade nyinaa ne Nyame*’, which can be translated as ‘*Nyame* is the sole determinant of how life turns out’. *Nyame* is believed to be the one who determines when a person should die. This is illustrated by the saying: ‘*Sɛ Onyame nkum wo a wo nwu*’, which can be translated as ‘You will not die until *Nyame* kills you’. On the other hand, there is also the belief that witchcraft and other malevolent spirits can bring misfortunes such as barrenness, drunkenness, poverty, accidents, etc with the ultimate aim of ‘destroying’ the life of a person. This questions the notion of *Nyame* as the source of all misfortunes.<sup>178</sup>

In my opinion, whether a misfortune is brought about because this is the *nkrabea* (or the destiny) of a person or it is caused by malevolent spirits, it can be consistent with the belief that *Nyame* has the ultimate control of what happens in the life of a person. For instance, if a person dies young, the Akans will consider it as a ‘pre – mature’ death which is not a feature of “abundant life.” If that is seen as the *nkrabea* of the person, it is supposed to be the manner of death the person agreed with *Nyame* before his/her birth. This belief is also emphasized by the saying “*obi rekra ne Nyame no na obi nni ho*”, which can be translated as ‘when a person was bidding farewell to *Nyame* (before his/her birth) no other person was there.’ In other words, the *nkrabea* (or destiny) of one person cannot be known to another person. If such a misfortune is also attributed to the influence of witchcraft and the other malevolent spirits, the explanation could be that *Nyame* and the deities might have used (or allowed) those

<sup>177</sup> Eva L.R. Meyerowitz, *The Sacred State of the Akan*, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1951), 87.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 211.



malevolent spirits to bring the misfortune in the life of the person as a form of punishment for one misdeed or the other. An evil act is believed to be the main cause of vulnerability to the evil influence of malevolent spirits. As Sarpong puts it, “[i]f you destroy your own life with sinful acts and activities, then you become vulnerable to witches, you destroy your spiritual powers of resistance.”<sup>179</sup> From the argument of Sarpong, it can be observed that a person whose life is acceptable or not “sinful” should be resistant to the powers of destruction. But the Akans also say that ‘*Onipa papa nkyere*’; which can be translated as ‘good people do not live long’. This is said in reference of the ‘early’ death of a person who is kind and helpful to the society. Thus not every misfortune is attributed to moral deficit. I therefore suggest that among the Akans, *Nyame* has the ultimate authority over how the life of a person unfolds, and that not every instance of a misfortune is attributed to the evil deeds of a person, even though there is the conception that a morally upright life is rewarded with blessings from the deities, while immorality attracts the punishment of the deities. A misfortune may also occur in a community not necessarily because of the moral laxity of a member of the community or an individual but through ritual uncleanness which might be occasioned by the death of an occupant of a stool, or the physiological changes in a woman.

### 2.8.2.1 Performance of Rituals (*mmusuyi*)<sup>180</sup>

Whatever the situation that might have brought about the *mmusuo* (or evil/misfortune), rituals are performed to remove the effect on the individual, family or the community, as the case may be, thereby securing the *nkwa* (or life) of the individual, family, or a community. In this sense, the rituals are the means of saving the life from danger or death. This can also be said to be an act of *nkwagyee* (or salvation). The rituals are used to *gye* (or rescue), in this context, the *nkwa* (or life) of the party concerned. As indicated earlier, the rituals are not fixed. The type of the ritual depends on the directions given by the deity involved in the act of *mmusuyi*.

---

<sup>179</sup> Sarpong, op. cit., 102.

<sup>180</sup> *Mmusuyi* is an Akan word which consists of two other words: *mmusuo* (or the occurrence of evil or misfortune). Depending on how it is used, *mmusuo* might also refer to the act of evil or committing a taboo.

For instance, I learnt from my field work that if a chief dies, his stool is ‘defiled’ therefore it has to be purified through a ritual called ‘*kradwareε*’.<sup>181</sup> The word consists of two Akan words; *Okra*<sup>182</sup> which may be translated as ‘soul’, ( even though it carries a deeper understanding than the English word ‘soul’ as Sarpong points out)<sup>183</sup>, and *dware* which connotes washing, cleansing or purifying. In this context, therefore, *kradwareε* may be translated as ‘soul cleansing’. Among the Akans, the office of a chief or a queen mother is believed to be represented by a stool. In other words, every chief or a queen mother occupies a “black stool.” The stool is a symbol of the soul of the community. Symbolising the soul of the community; the stool has a religious significance for the people since it connects the community to the ancestors through the occupant who is also the visible symbol of the soul of the community.<sup>184</sup> Being the *kra* of the community, the stool gives every community its uniqueness. Since death is considered as a source of defilement, the death of an occupant of a stool is believed to render the stool ritually unclean and therefore calls for its purification. A ritual is carried out to cleanse the stool (or the *kra* of the community) of any possible misfortune that could result from the ritual uncleanness. *Asubo*, which is the word used for baptism in Christianity also refers to this ritual. There may also be the need for the *kra* (or soul) of an individual to be cleansed. This ritual is called *ahodware*, which can be translated as ‘washing oneself’. This can be done by the individual concerned, hence the reflexive form of the verb. According to Nana Amponsah<sup>185</sup>, this ritual becomes necessary when a person is exonerated from a disgraceful or dreadful situation. For instance if a person is acquitted and discharged from a case which could have led to imprisonment of the person; or when a person is

<sup>181</sup> I got this information from Nana Asabere II, during an interview conducted in October, 2010 in Kumasi.

<sup>182</sup> According to Sarpong, the Akan perception of a human being is as follows: He/she must consist of *mogya* (or blood), *sunsum* (that which makes one person different from the other, that which shapes the character of a person), *Okra*, which originates from God and makes the human being unique and distinct from other creatures which also have *mogya* and *sunsum*. He observes that the *okra* is “the principle of luck of which makes one happy or sad.” The others are *honhom* which is the breath of life from *Nyame*, without which a person is dead. He calls it “the principle of life in the human being”. He identifies the fifth component as *sasa* which he describes as “the protective principle which wrecks vengeance on anybody who does an abnormal harm to another person like stealing from a blind person or killing somebody.” The last one Sarpong identifies is the *ntorɔ* which is “the patrilineal principle which gives characters like nobility, respectability, courage, etc to the individual.” (See Sarpong, op.cit. 90, 91).

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Eva L. Meyerowitz, *The Sacred State of the Akan*, 85.

<sup>185</sup> Nana Amponsah is the Obaapnin of Pampaso. She provided this information in my interview with her on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2010 in Kumasi. Nana Amponsah asked that some of her responses should not be made public. That is why the interview with her is not part of the appendix.

healed of a disease which nearly took his/her life, or if someone is rescued from a fatal accident.

The Akans believe that such situations destabilize the wholeness of the person. Under such circumstances, the Akans will say: *ne kra adwane* 'his or her soul has left him/her or *w'abo saman*, meaning "he or she has been made into a ghost." The two expressions show the significance of the *kra* (or soul) for the life of a person. The circumstances which call for the *kradware* ritual border on life and death of a person. For instance to be disgraced in public for a crime committed or even through malice is detrimental to "abundant life" since being respected in the society is very crucial among other things. To be seriously sick is also a life threatening incident which everyone prays against. When the *kra* which connects the person to *Nyame* and makes the person a unique being leaves him/her, he/she ceases to be *onipa kann* (or a 'real' human being), which is an attribute of abundant life. For all these reasons, there is the need to 'bring back the *kra*'. Sarpong observes that the *kra* runs away "when somebody is overcome by excessive fright."<sup>186</sup> The following account of Nana Amponsah captures the circumstances which call for the purification of the *kra* (or soul) of a person and how it is done. She observes that

"the person pairs all the nails early in the morning, and gets well shaved (if a male), and then takes a shower. After that the person dresses in all-white apparel. Mashed Yam (or *bayerɛto*) is prepared with any amount of eggs the person decides. Some palm oil is put on a portion of the mashed yam (making it reddish), while the rest remain white. The person then enjoys the meal as a means of purifying his/her soul. It is also a means of pacifying his soul. A person can also use a white cock to purify the *kra*. In that case the cock is flashed round the person. As the cock is being flashed around the person, words like the following will be chanted: *okra...* (followed by the *kradin* or the name of the person according the day of his/her birth) *kosɛ oo kosɛ. Mma asem sei ɛnto wo bio*. This literally means "My *kra* (or soul)... (followed by the name of the person based on the day he or she was born), sorry for going through such ordeal. I pray you do not suffer this anymore". The cock is then killed and used to prepare a meal for the person."<sup>187</sup>

---

<sup>186</sup> Sarpong, op cit., 91.

<sup>187</sup> Nana Amponsah, op.cit.

When this ritual is performed the Akans say that *ne kra aba ne ho* which means “his or her *kra* (or soul) has come back to him/her. In other words, the person has been restored to a condition of wholeness, where his/her *kra* “can play fully its role as a guide, life giver, and promoter of good fortune.”<sup>188</sup> The *asubo* on behalf of a community is done differently from the personal one which involves only the individual seeking to pacify his/her soul. Below is a description of a ritual to purify the stools on the death of its occupant:

“Depending on the deity, who prescribes the ritual, sheep, dog, dove, tortoise, guinea fowl, etc may be used for the purification ritual. The animal is sacrificed and prayer (or libation) is said and the blood of the animal is used to purify the stools of any impurity that might have entered the palace. *Adwera*<sup>189</sup> is then used to sprinkle a mixture of *hyire*<sup>190</sup> (or white clay) in various parts of the community to signify the cleansing of the community of all ritual uncleanness. When a woman in her menses, either knowingly or unknowingly enters a chief’s palace, *asubo* is performed to purify the palace. When the chief of a community realizes that the community is defiled, he leads the performance of *asubo* to purify that community. In this case, *hyire* (or white clay) is mixed with water and used to sprinkle parts of the community. However this largely differs from community to community. Depending on the community a cow, a sheep, a goat, a cock, a guinea fowl, etc<sup>191</sup> and eggs, etc may be used for the *asubo*. The *asubo* of a community may be done at different parts, depending on which community. While the ritual may be performed in any open space in some communities, other communities have specific places where such rituals can be performed. In some communities, it is performed in the cemetery.”<sup>192</sup>

<sup>188</sup> Abamfo Ofori Atiemo, *Mmusuyi* and Deliverance: A Study of Conflict and Consensus in the Encounter Between African Traditional Religion and Christianity. A Thesis presented to the University of Ghana. (Unpublished) 1995, 27.

<sup>189</sup> *Adwera* is a kind of herb used in sprinkling water and other solutions during religious ceremonies of purification. The name of this leaf also carries the element of purging or purifying. To *dwira* in Akan among others meanings, signifies purifying or cleansing, or purging. (See Christaller, *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Languages*, 106). Its use in the ritual is therefore significant for purging the party involved from any ‘contamination’ which forms the basis for the occurrence of a misfortune.

<sup>190</sup> *Hyire* is white clay which is traditionally used by the Akans for various reasons. According to Christaller, people use it to make marks on themselves as a sign of being acquitted of an accusation. A woman can also put some *hyire* on her face to signify that her former husband has set her free to marry again. Until today, white powder is put on people who win their cases in court by their sympathizers as a sign of celebration of their victory. Its usage signifies the traditional understanding of ‘being restored to life’ or being rescued from a situation which threatened the ‘abundant life’ of the party involved.

<sup>191</sup> *Ɛto* can be made from plantain, cocoyam or yam. Usually both ripened and green plantains are mashed together after cooking. It is the food which is usually used for rituals that involve food.

<sup>192</sup> This account was given during an interview with Nana Asabere II on 19th October, 2010 in Kumasi

The purification rituals as described in the examples above are different from rituals which are performed with the view to appeasing the deities for offences committed. In that case, the offender is punished. Since the offence carries a religious significance, the punishment also involves a ritual. This serves to remove any possible *mmusuo* (or evil) that might have been occasioned by the offender. Later offenders of the same act of evil receive higher punishment than earlier offenders. The elders of the family of the offender, and the chief and elders of the town all play a part in effecting the punishment as well as the attendant rituals when an evil act is committed. The chief who presides over the case may issue instructions as to what could be done to prevent evil consequences from coming upon the person. Items normally used in the purification include *adwera* (or hyssop), *hyire* (or white clay), *somme*, and sheep. The sheep is slaughtered and a prayer is said that *Onyankopon* (or God) should not allow that evil thing to happen again. After the prayer, the blood of the sheep is sprinkled on the land to purify it and the community, including the people. A mixture of the leaves of *somme* and the white clay is also sprinkled in the town, using the *adwera* leaves. The *somme* leaves are able to send away *sasabonne* (or bad *sasa*). In other words, the leaves are believed to contain some spiritual powers. The white nature of the *hyire* signifies that one has been cleansed of filth. The whole town is swept, and the filth dumped at the outskirts of the town. The cleaning of the community is a sign of ridding the community of any possible ‘impurities’.<sup>193</sup>

### 2.8.2.2 Reversing curses (or *duabo dane*)

Since curses are sources of hindrance to the experience of ‘abundant life’, steps are taken to reverse them in order to stop their effects on an individual, a family or a community. The mode of reversal of the curse depends on how the curse came into existence. For instance, if an elderly person pronounces a curse and its effects are observed, the victim can go to apologize and once the apology is accepted, the curse is reversed. The apology is normally done through a well respected person in the community. When that is done, the elderly person usually forgives wholeheartedly. This results in the reversal of the curse. However the elderly person who was offended has to be pacified with, say seven or twelve eggs. He or she then decides

---

<sup>193</sup> This information was given to me by Nana Kwaku Dua during an interview for this work in October 2010 in Offinso.

how many of the eggs he will take. When the elderly person decides to forgive, the curse is automatically annulled. If it is at the family or community level, the deities are able to prescribe the ritual that has to be performed to remove a misfortune. In the following account, Okomfo Yaa Bea<sup>194</sup> relates how a family was cursed and how the curse was revoked. She observes:

“The river behind the deity I serve revealed to me that there is a particular family in this town (Agona Asaman) which has been cursed by the deity because some of the members of the family in the past came to do fishing from the river and, in the process, took away one of his children, in the form of a fish. The curse imposed on the family was that, from that time on, every child born in the family had some unusual growths around their mouth. It was after the required rituals (*mmusuyi*) were performed that the cycle was broken.”<sup>195</sup>

Through the ritual, the incident which was a source of stigma for the family was removed. This is *nkwagyee* for the family, since this was a source of ridicule for the family which was taken away through the direct intervention of the deity. In other words, if a deity was invoked to bring the curse into effect, the curse, it can only be reversed through the directions offered by the deity. In the life of an individual, people consult a deity when they are suspicious, to find out what might be the cause of the symptoms associated with curses which might be happening in the life of the person. From the traditional understanding, a curse in the life of a person exhibits itself in various ways, all of which are considered to be ‘outside the normal’. According to Nana Asabere II, such a person behaves in a way which is not acceptable in the society.<sup>196</sup> He/she is generally unsuccessful in whatever he/she decides to do. This may cause him/her to be a drunkard, lazy, not able to marry, poor, etc. Such a person has no respect in his/her family and the society as a whole. He/she is not ‘valued’ in his/her family. This kind of lifestyle might result from an offence against somebody who pronounced the curse, or because of an offence against a deity. In a community, a curse may express itself in frequent deaths of its inhabitants, especially through *atɔfowuo*<sup>197</sup> or death which is considered ‘unusual’.

<sup>194</sup> Okomfo Yaa Bea is the traditional Priestess of the Kwabena Sugye Shrine at Agona Asaman in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

<sup>195</sup> Okomfo Yaa Bea gave this account in my interview with her on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 at Agona Asamang.

<sup>196</sup> Nana Asabere II made this contribution in an interview with him on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2010 in Kumasi.

<sup>197</sup> According to Cecilia Arthur, *atɔfowuo* describes the situation where somebody dies without falling sick. In such a situation, the person is said to have died an ‘unnatural’ death. Examples include, death through suicide,

When these things are happening to an individual, a family or a community, a deity may be consulted to find out the cause of the occurrence. When the cause is detected, the deity would prescribe the ritual to be performed to reverse the *duabo* (curse) and its effect on the person.

### 2.8.2.3 *Nsaguo* (or libation)

As noted earlier, *nsaguo* is a form of 'prayer' in the traditional religion. It offers a platform for humanity to interact with the world of the spirits. Just as it is a means of inquiring about the cause of misfortunes in the life of people, it provides a means for people to present their needs to *Nyame* through the ancestors. This includes seeking their assistance to overcome an undesirable circumstance in the life of an individual, a family or a community. Thus *nsaguo* also provides the means for reversing the effects of an offence which is committed already. It forms part of the means of pacifying the offended deities who would, otherwise, bring their punishment on the offending party. It is not only applied for preventive purposes, but also for curative purposes. According to Nana Agyei Akyeamfour, it is a regular feature of *nsaguo* (or libation) for the one praying to seek the welfare of the individual, the family or a community, depending on the jurisdiction of the one praying. According to him, when a chief is pouring libation, either as part of a religious ceremony, or as a routine prayer, he prays for the needs of the people, so that they would have the 'blessings' of the deities to enable them enjoy abundant life. Nana Akyeamfour observes that there are families who register several deaths within a short period of time; or there may be young and energetic people who are unable to work. Some families may also have pretty adult women who do not get married. Thus they are deprived of enjoying abundant life. The libation prayer of the chief covers all these segments of the society as a way of seeking the assistance of the deities to 'remove' whatever could be a hindrance in their way, so that they will also experience 'fullness of life'. This reaffirms the interconnectedness of life in the here and now and the world of the Spirits in the perspective of the Akan. This understanding is also expressed in the role *nsaguo*

---

drowning, fire, murder, man slaughter, death of a pregnant woman, death resulting from a falling tree, or a collapsing building, etc. cf. Cecilia Arthur, "Akanfoo Amammere ho Adesua 1: A textbook on Akan Culture": (Unpublished). 45. Such deaths are considered a taboo and the Akans pray that it does not happen to them.

plays in the stages of the life of a person, i.e. at birth, during marriage, and during burial. Thus *nsaguo* has an unending function in the process of *nkwagyee* (or salvation) from the Akan perspective.

## **2.9 Salvation and life after death**

### **2.9.1 Understanding of death**

It is believed among the Akans that death marks the transition between life in the physical world and life in the world of the spirit. Death is perceived to be inevitable, as expressed in the saying, *ɔbra twa owuo*, [life will surely lead to death.] It is also perceived to be a ‘change of state’ of a member of the family into the realm of the ‘unseen’ members of the family. In other words, the dead remain a part of the family but in a different (unseen) world. It is believed that what happens to the family in this world is partly determined by the members of the family in the unseen world. Thus, both the dead and the living have a role to play in ensuring that individuals and the society as a whole experience “abundant life”, while the living ‘honor’ the dead by giving them fitting burial, and also sacrificing for them. The mutual ‘interdependence’ of the dead and the living has been captured by Opoku as follows:

“[I]t is the responsibility of the living to perform funeral rites of the dead properly and to give them a fitting burial, and thereafter to offer them sacrifices, food, and drink which constitutes acts of remembrance and reverence. The dead protect, direct, intervene and guide their families.”<sup>198</sup>

In other words, death is seen as an extension of the family “relationship into infinity.”<sup>199</sup> In that sense, death is only a physical departure from life on earth. Death does not mark the end of the entire interaction of a person in the affairs of the life of the living. There are indications in the practices of the Akans with respect to death which suggest that death is sometimes attributed to the work of malevolent spirits like witchcraft, or as a punishment from the ancestors and the other deities for the disobedience of the deceased. This is especially the case when the death is considered as *atofowuo* (or unnatural death).

---

<sup>198</sup> Opoku, 133-134.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 133.



The suspicion is not excluded in the case where the death is considered a natural one, which is when a person dies at an old age and dies under ‘normal’ circumstances.<sup>200</sup> This is expressed in how a person is treated just before he or she passes away. Since death is considered as a transitional, it is the custom of the Akans to ensure that the dying person receives some drops of water before his/her last breath. This is supposed to energize the dying person for the journey ahead. The following is said as the drops of water are being given to the person:

*“Me asomasi na meregu w’anom nsu.”<sup>201</sup>*  
*Sε owu a woreewu yi*  
*Eye wo nkrabea a mehyira no kosεkosε*  
*Sε nso onipa bonefoɔ bi anaa obi*  
*na ɔde biribi aye wo a,*  
*εneε woko a, mma adaduanan nto no”<sup>202</sup>*

This can be translated as

I am the one putting drops of water  
into your mouth.  
If your death is in line with your destiny,  
then it has my blessings.  
On the other hand, if it is the result of  
the wicked act of somebody,  
then as you depart, don’t let him/her continue  
to live in the next forty days

---

<sup>200</sup> The death of a person is considered ‘natural’ if he/she dies at a ‘good old age’. Such a death is also perceived as a “witness of good conduct” cf. K.Nkansah Kyeramateng, *The Akans of Ghana: Their Custom, history, and institutions*, (Accra: Sebewie, 2004) 75.

<sup>201</sup> Death is believed to be a journey from this world into the other world. It is believed among the Akans that on the journey of death, one has to climb a mountain in order to cross to the “other world.” It is therefore customary to give a dying person some water to drink. It is believed that the water will quench the thirst of the dying person as he or she climbs the mountain to the other side.

<sup>202</sup> Cecilia Arthur, “Akanfoɔ Ammammeε ho Adesua 1”, 46.

This act emphasizes the belief that there is a reason behind whatever happens in the life of a person, including death. As Kyeremateng observes, the Akan, “have the tendency to always seek an explanation, why a person dies at the time he does”<sup>203</sup>. This is also indicative of other perceptions about death. Death is seen as cruel and inconsiderate. Death is perceived as a strong enemy of humanity, which has no mercy on any one. As a result, even though it is understood as a means of an infinite family relationship, nobody wishes for it. This explains why people would always want to know the cause of the death of a relative, even though it is a firm belief among the Akans that death is inevitable, or it is a natural course of life. In spite of the belief among the Akans that *Nyame* has the ultimate responsibility about life and death, the act above also demonstrates the belief among the Akans that human enemies can also orchestrate the death of people. This is usually attributed to envy and hatred. In line with this acknowledgment among the Akans, any death which believed to have been caused by any other means apart from what is believed to have been caused by *Nyame* is perceived to be ‘unnatural’, as against ‘natural’ death which is believed to have been caused by *Nyame*. This has been described by Mbiti as a “paradox” which makes death both “natural and unnatural.”<sup>204</sup> It becomes possible for people to be harmed by means of other spiritual forces destructive to life when the individual involved loses his or spiritual protection by indulging in acts which might displease the ancestors. In that case, the individual becomes vulnerable to malevolent spirits. It is for this reason that high moral standards are expected of individuals, so that their *sunsum* or spirit will be strong enough to repel the activities of spiritual forces of negation. Sarpong indicates has therefore indicated that

“[i]n all African societies, the best way of protecting oneself against evil forces, whether they are sorcerers or the devil, is living a good life. A person with irreproachable life develops a strong sunsum and a strong sunsum is the bane of all evil spirits.”<sup>205</sup>

---

<sup>203</sup> K.Nkansa Kyeremateng, *The Akans of Ghana: Their Custom, History, and Institutions*, 75.

<sup>204</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 155.

<sup>205</sup> Sarpong, *People Differ*, 102.

### 2.9.2 Understanding of life after death

As noted above, death is the point of exit of a person from this life (or the physical world) into the world of the spirits. At death, the physical component of the human person (or the body) is kept in the 'womb' of Asase Yaa or (mother earth). The part which connects a person to *Nyame*, the *kra* (or soul) departs to *Nyame*, where it will be judged. The *sunsum* (or the spirit) turns into *saman* (or a ghost) and, if the person qualifies as an ancestor, the *saman* will join the ancestors at *asamando* (or the other world). If the person does not qualify to be an ancestor, his/her *saman* wanders in the physical world as a 'wild ghost' or *saman twentwen*. As an ancestor, the dead person remains a part of the family, even though not in a physical sense. He/she assumes a stronger and a higher position as an intermediary between *Nyame* and those in the physical world. As an ancestor, the dead is supposed to provide the needed guidance, protection and assistance to his/her family, thus fulfilling their part of the mutual responsibility between the dead and the living.

There is also the belief that the life a person will lead in the spirit world is a reflection of how the person lived in the physical world. If the person was a chief, for instance, it is believed that he will continue to be a chief in the other world. According to Nkansah Kyeremateng, it was the custom of the Akan (though not practiced any longer) for a chief to be buried with a servant, and his favorite wife.<sup>206</sup> The understanding is that as a chief he would need his wife and a servant in *asamando*. In the same way, it is believed that if a person lives an acceptable life in this world, it shall be well with him/her in the life after death, and vice versa. Mbiti also attests to this view when he observes,

"For the majority of African people, the hereafter is only a continuation of life more or less as it is in the human form. This means that personalities are retained, social and political statuses are maintained, sex distinction is continued, human activities are reproduced in the hereafter, the wealth or poverty of the individual remains unchanged, and in many ways, the hereafter is a carbon copy of the present life."<sup>207</sup>

<sup>206</sup> K.Nkansah-Kyeremateng, *Akanfoɔ Ammamere*, (Accra: Sebewie, 2001), 35.

<sup>207</sup> Mbiti op.cit., 161.

What Mbiti considers as the view of the majority of Africans with regards to life after death was confirmed by Nana Agyei Akyeamfour as the belief of the Akans. According to him, it is the traditional belief of the Akans that life continues after death. He uses his personal experience to express his view in the following account:

“One of my mother’s close friends died after some short ailment. She died in the evening so the body was prepared that night to be buried the next morning. She lived in a two-room apartment while she was alive. Only one of the entrances to the two rooms had a door. The other entrance had only a mat covering it. While she was alive, this woman used to visit my mother, who lived under relatively better conditions than her. She once remarked: *Ei Akosua wo deɛ wo tiri ye. Wo ara hwɛ baabi a wo tɛɛ.* [Akosua, you must be thanking your stars for living under such a good condition.] Early the next morning, the dead person rose again. This brought fear upon the people around so they began to run away. The woman urged them not to run away because she had come back to life. She then started crying, and narrated to them that she was travelling somewhere and got to a point where she could not see anybody. The place was so quiet but she later met a woman and she asked her for some directions to where she was going. The dead woman then asked her about the house of her mother who was already dead. She saw that her dead mother was living in a two room apartment with poor conditions just as the one they inhabited while they were alive. Her dead mother was surprised to see her there since she was too young to be there and she asked her to return. Her mother who died earlier on told her that she should bear in mind, however, that when her right time was due for her to join the dead, she would surely inhabit the poor apartment she came to see in her period of being in the other world. The woman then cried a lot after coming back to life because she believed that she would live under similar conditions as her living conditions in the life here.”<sup>208</sup>

This suggests that the living conditions of a person now will be replicated in the conditions of the person as an ancestor. There seem not to be any coherent evidence for a case of a belief in judgment after death, even though it has been suggested by some scholars. For instance, according to Opoku, God is believed to mete out judgment after death. He supports this view with the Yuroba of Nigeria who have a saying which suggests that human beings will have to give an account of all that they have done on earth to God (or *Olodumare*).<sup>209</sup> He uses the Akan saying

---

<sup>208</sup> Nana Agyei Akyeamfour gave this account in an interview with him on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2010 in Kumasi

<sup>209</sup> Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, 139.

*daakye Onyame bebisa wo aɛm*, [God will inquire something of you in the future].<sup>210</sup>

There is the belief that it is the *kra* (or soul) which goes back to Nyame when a person dies. Not much is said about what happens to the soul afterwards. It is the *sunsum* (or spirit) that turns into *saman* after death that is believed to either become an ancestor (if the person lived an acceptable life) or it becomes *saman twɛntwɛn* (or a wandering ghost) since the *saman* was denied entry into the fold of the ancestors. It is here that I see a form of 'judgment' among the Akans. People are encouraged to comply with socially acceptable norms with sayings like: *woyɛ papa a woyɛ fa*, which can be translated as 'it is in your own interest to do what is right'; and *wo yɛ papa a ɛda w'anim*, which means, 'if you do what is right/good, it shall be to your own benefit in the future'. In the light of these sayings and the discussion so far about the relationship between moral uprightness and the realization of 'abundant life', it can be said that the motivation for the pursuance of moral uprightness has more to do with pleasing Nyame and the ancestors in order to receive their 'blessings' in the life here and now. However it has also been argued that the Akans believe that the life here and now will be replicated in the life hereafter. It can therefore be concluded that the issue of 'judgment' consist in whether one wins the approval of Nyame and the ancestors, which leads to their blessings, or one is punished by them because they disapproved of their life. Such disapproval translates into any form of suffering, such as bad health, poverty, or even 'unnatural' death. This argument is strengthened by the understanding of the Akans that moral uprightness is a means to achieve the desired 'abundant life' in this life, which will eventually be reflected in the life of the person in the life hereafter. The saying *Onyame bɛbisa wo daakye* can therefore be interpreted in the context of an admonition for people to endeavor to do what is 'good' or put up good character. After all, the pursuit of what is socially acceptable is not only motivated by its benefits for a person in the future (or *daakye*) alone. It is also to win the approval of Nyame, the ancestors and the other deities in this life.

The belief that the life of a person in this life will be replicated in the life hereafter could be used to explain the belief in the differences in the status of ancestors in the life hereafter. As Mbiti observes:

---

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

“They have only retained the hierarchical position which they held while they were human beings.” <sup>211</sup>

### 2.9.3 Salvation and life after death

It has been established that for the Akans, salvation (or *nkwagye*) refers to any action which seeks to prevent or remove possible life threatening incidents, or anything that can deprive a person, family or a community of ‘abundant life’. Thus every act of *nkwagye* enhances the life of the person, a family or a community concerned in this life. It has also been noted that the ‘spirit life’ of a person is a replica of the ‘human life’ of the person. Because of the relationship existing between the human life and the spirit life, salvation, or *nkwagye* (in all its expressions as discussed above) which enhances the achievement of ‘abundant life’ in this life, ultimately affects the spirit life as well. A person, a family or a community which experiences *nkwagye* from an otherwise dangerous situation, which could have hindered the desired abundant life, is more likely to live in abundance, a life which will be replicated in the life after death. On the other hand, if a person, a family or community ends up in a difficult situation in which they could neither get a ‘savior’ (or *agyenkwa*), nor help themselves, there is the tendency that ‘abundant life’ would elude them, thus depriving them of a dignified status as an ancestor in the life after death. It can therefore be said that *nkwagye* (or salvation) among the Akans is not for any specific situation, neither can it be predicted. However, whenever *nkwagye* takes place, it enhances the realization of ‘abundant life’ which can affect the physical life of a person in the here and now, and in the ‘spirit life’ of a person in the life hereafter.

From the discussion above, it can be said that *nkwagye* (or salvation) is central to the traditional religion of the Akans. Life is expected to be a ‘pleasant and comfortable’ journey. However, this is achievable only with the support and assistance of *Nyame* through the intermediary deities. This is because of the belief in the reality of malevolent spirits as well as human enemies, whose aim is to ‘destroy’ the life of people, and thus, depriving them of the desired “abundant life” which expresses itself in long life, good health, fertility, prosperity, etc. It is therefore

---

<sup>211</sup> Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 163.

expedient that people adhere to the moral codes of the society in order to ensure the backing of the benevolent spirits, who affirm life. The interrelationship between religion and life in the traditional African worldview of the Akans can be said to be the background which informs the beliefs and practices on salvation in contemporary Pentecostalism in Ghana. The understanding of the salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana will be described in the next chapter.





## Chapter Three

### 3 Understanding of salvation among Pentecostals

#### 3.1 The Meaning of salvation

Salvation (or *nkwagyeɛ*) is understood among Pentecostals as accepting Jesus Christ as one's Lord and personal savior. This is believed to lead to a dramatic transformation in both the material and spiritual aspects of the life of the Christian. There is also the belief that the Christian becomes a 'spiritual Israelite' who shares the covenant blessings of Abraham. According to Saah, it is in becoming a Christian that a person gains access to the promises of God. He maintains that salvation culminates in the "fullness of life" Jesus promised in John 10:10. It is not limited to being redeemed from "the kingdom of darkness" and being "translated" into the kingdom of God in the spiritual sense only, but it also leads to material well being.<sup>212</sup> In other words, the "life in fullness" is to be experienced in the here and now, as well as in the life hereafter. It is the new identity of the Christian which comes with empowerment for moral uprightness and for conquest in the endeavors of the believer. Without the empowerment which one receives upon becoming a Christian, "fullness of life" through salvation will remain an illusion. In expressing this, Abboa Offei observes that "life in fullness" "is not just breath but some additions ... which gives a believer the ability to fight the battles of life ... the ability to move fast and accomplish whatever one has to accomplish before one dies."<sup>213</sup>

The observation of Offei above associates "battles" with life (or *nkwa*). Another presupposition of the observation is that salvation 'equips' the believer to be "an overcomer" in the "battles" of the Christian. The observation also implies a "task" set for the believer to accomplish. Therefore the "rate" at which these are accomplished is equally important. In other words, it is not just the ability to "fight" the "battles" and be "an overcomer" that is of importance, but the rate at which one is able to accomplish these is equally expedient. The notion of having a task to accomplish

<sup>212</sup> Saah shared these views in an interview conducted with him on 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Accra.

<sup>213</sup> Catechist Abboa Offei expressed these views in my interview with him on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Akropong Akwapem.

emphasizes the understanding in Pentecostalism that God has a purpose for each believer. The implication here is that the purpose of God is limited to Christians alone. This view suggests that for the “unbeliever”, God has no purpose, or that until one becomes a Christian, the life of that person is without “purpose”, in relation to God. This opinion questions the sovereignty of God, as it limits the “rulership” of God to Christians only.

The change in identity expected of the Christian is supposed to be expressed in terms of a change in behavior and character in accordance with 2 Corinthians 5:17. This view has been stressed by Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong. In his words:

“When we receive Jesus Christ, we are not human beings trying to obey God’s word. When one receives Jesus Christ one is born again. 2 Corinthians 5:17 implies that the person becomes a new specie, one that has just arrived, born of the nature of God. The old nature of sin has been put off in Christ and God has recreated the human spirit with his life and nature.”<sup>214</sup>

This view expresses the firm belief that the Christian gains a new ability to put up a new and better behavior in his or her everyday life since he/she has been empowered to overcome sin which is believed to provide a platform for evil spiritual attacks on a person. The emphasis placed on the transformation that results from conversion has also been highlighted by Asamoah-Gyadu who observes that: “The ethical rigor of Charismatics... helps believers to deal with the moral relativism and permissiveness of modern society. Testimonies abound of how the religious experience of salvation has led to cessation from drunkenness, lies, cheating, quarrelsomeness, gossip, bribery, fornication and marital infidelity.”<sup>215</sup> However, salvation is also expected to lead to blessings and prosperity in physical terms since the Christian becomes “a seed of Abraham.” Secondly, being a Christian gives a person victory over the influences of evil spiritual forces such as principalities, powers of darkness, and wicked spirits in heavenly places, etc which are described in Ephesians 6. This and other related passages from the New Testament, (including the encounters of Jesus Christ with demon possessed and demon afflicted people),

---

<sup>214</sup>. This observation was made during an interview with Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong on 26th October, 2010 in Accra.

<sup>215</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 138-139.

strengthens the traditional belief that there are evil spiritual forces which engage the Christian in a “spiritual warfare.” In the same measure, the driving out of evil (and unclean) spirits from people by Jesus Christ and the healing and miracle stories in the New Testament inspire hope and faith among Pentecostals that the Christian is assured of victory over the powers of darkness. In other words, the life of the Christian should be “victorious”. Because of the belief in “spiritual warfare” and the victory of the Christian, what may be described as “power language” features much in their discourse on salvation. The word “dominion” for instance is increasingly becoming associated with Pentecostals, not only in their preaching, but also in naming their property.<sup>216</sup> The word “power” is also commonly used by Pentecostals, especially in advertising their programs. For instance we see advertisements for “power packed” all night prayer meetings, “power packed” fasting and prayer revival programs, etc. Much as the usage of such words may have the function to make a program attractive to people, there is an emphasis on the power of the Christian which is believed to be the result of salvation. Thus salvation is believed to be a condition which makes a person victorious over situations and forces that hinder a person from experiencing “life in fullness” or life as God intended it for a person in the here and now, as the Christian also prepares to meet the Lord in the Parousia.

### **3.1.1 Salvation and the Exodus**

It can be said that among Pentecostals in Ghana, salvation should necessarily lead to a change in the existential conditions of the Christian. The transformation or change becomes visible not only to the individual, but to others as well. In espousing this belief, Pentecostals refer extensively to the New Testament (as has been discussed earlier in this work). However, the Old Testament as a whole and the Exodus in particular plays a significant role in their discourse. It can be observed that aspects of the Old Testament which emphasize divine intervention in the affairs of people (or the Israelites or other nations) to effect an extraordinary result are used for references in expressing their beliefs and practices with regards to salvation. Mention

---

<sup>216</sup> Mensah Otobil has preached a series of sermons on having dominion as a Christian based on the creation story in Genesis, and the command to Adam to have dominion over the earth and other creatures. The bookshop of the *Action Chapel International* headquarters in Accra is called “Dominion Bookshop”, and the University of the church is also christened “Dominion University College.” David Oyedepo’s printing press is “Dominion Press”, and the University of his Church is also “Dominion University.”

can be made of Abraham. Because Pentecostals in Ghana believe that becoming a Christian allows a person to be a “spiritual Israelite”, they believe also that the Christian gains access to the blessings of Abraham. This is how Adelego relates salvation to Abraham:

“In Galatians 3:13-14, it says clearly in verse 13 that Jesus became a curse on the cross that we may no longer be cursed. And verse 14, it says He did that [in order] that the blessing of Abraham may be ours. One of the reasons Jesus died is to make us sons and daughters of Abraham so that we can have the privilege to enjoy everything God made available through Abraham. So Abraham is still very relevant. If you read Isaiah 51:1-3, it says look onto your father, Abraham, look onto your mother Sarah. It says for I called him alone and I blessed him. And verse three says, in the same way I did, I will bless Zion. I will turn her waste places to Eden. So the program God had for Abraham is still what He has for every one of us ... Abraham is still extremely relevant today.”<sup>217</sup>

For Pastor Adelego, being a Christian makes a person a child of Abraham, who has access to the blessings of Abraham as well. This is a possible allusion to the view of Paul in Gal. 3:28. Here the emphasis is not on material consequences to be derived from the being a Christian, as it is on the moral and spiritual consequences of becoming a Christian. Thus the emphasis on material blessing using Abraham as a basis is not supported by the text. Pastor Gracer Bondzie also relates salvation to the faith and obedience exhibited by Abraham when God called him. In his words,

“God called Abraham from the heathen world and gave him a promise that if you hear my voice and obey me, I will take you to a promised land when he did not even know where he was going, the Bible says he believed in that element of absolute reliance on what God has said and believed that what He has said He will accomplish and this is explicit in the calling of Abraham, and that is what defines, in my view, the salvation of every individual on earth.”<sup>218</sup>

Here also we see some emphasis on the calling of Abraham which involved a command and a promise of blessings. The promises of God to Abraham involved a prophecy concerning bondage of his seeds and subsequent deliverance his

---

<sup>217</sup> Pastor John Adelego made this observation on my interview with him on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in Accra.

<sup>218</sup> Bondzie provided this information in an interview on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2012 in Accra.

descendants would receive from the hand of God in Egypt. The association of salvation with Abraham among Pentecostals, in my opinion, informs their understanding of the Exodus as a “type” of salvation. The promise to Abraham involved a blessing as well as a forecast of captivity which would be followed by liberation. Thus it can be observed that Abraham becomes the point of reference to the Pentecostals in their discourse on “material” blessings the believer is supposed to receive from God. The episode of the Exodus is therefore seen as a “type” of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana.<sup>219</sup> On how Pentecostals relate the Exodus to salvation, Rev. Nana Banyin Arhin of the *Word Miracle Church International* observes:

“The Exodus can be taken as a shadow or a type of the salvation Christ brought to the world. The Israelites were working for their ‘task masters’ against their wish and they wanted to be in a land they could call their own. So God, through Moses, rescued them from that land and brought them into Canaan. In the same way, when we look at salvation, we were born sinners but Christ came to die so that as many as will believe in him, he gives them power to become children of God. This leads to a translation from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.”<sup>220</sup>

Similar language is used by Rev John Abu Baidoo of the *International Central Gospel Church (ICGC)*. He remarks that:

“[T]he Israelites were in bondage and they were delivered from their ‘task masters’, the Egyptians. So in a way, we can relate it to humanity having sinned, being in bondage of their task master (here being Satan), and God sending Jesus Christ down to this earth to die to take us out of that domain.”<sup>221</sup>

For Pastor John Adelego, the Exodus and salvation share similarities. He observes that the Exodus is “a graphical illustration of salvation” and a “physical rendition of salvation”. According to him, a significant similarity of the Exodus and salvation is the

<sup>219</sup> The view of the Exodus as a type of salvation has been shared by other Pentecostals I interviewed. These include Bondzie, of the Action Chapel International, Pastor Enoch Gharthey of the Winners Chapel International, Bishop Joseph Nyarko Antwi, the International Prayer Director of the Action Chapel International, and Rev. Michael Ankomah of the *Word Miracle Church International*.

<sup>220</sup> Rev. Nana Banyin Arhin is a Pastor of the *Word Miracle Church International*. I had this information from him in my interview for this work on 1st June, 2012 in Accra.

<sup>221</sup> Rev. John Abu Baidoo is the head Pastor of the *ICGC Trinity Temple, Kumasi*. The observation was made in an interview with him on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in Kumasi.

use of blood.<sup>222</sup> Rev. Mrs. Rita Korankye Ankra of the *Royal House Chapel International* also draws a parallel between the Passover and salvation. She shares her belief that what happened on the Passover night was salvation from the Old Testament perspective. In her words, “[a] lamb was killed and its blood was smeared on their (Israelites) doorposts. The Bible talks about Jesus Christ being the lamb and the shedding of his blood gives us salvation. We can therefore relate salvation in Jesus Christ to that of the night of Passover.”<sup>223</sup> Pastor Ransford Obeng of the *Calvary Charismatic Church* relates the Exodus with salvation by emphasizing the role of blood in both the Exodus and salvation.<sup>224</sup> Since the Exodus is seen as a type or shadow of the salvation through Jesus Christ, there is an expectation of a dramatic change of circumstances in the life of a person once he or she becomes a Christian. This can be related to the belief that the Exodus is a shadow of salvation the Christian experiences today. This falls in line with the understanding that salvation necessarily results in a change of the state of the Christian, not only in terms of his/her spiritual condition, but also in the social and economic status of the person. Bishop James Saah has suggested that in the Exodus, the Israelites experienced a sudden transformation, not only in their state of bondage but also in their social and economic conditions. In his words,

“If you assume that Egypt represents the world and God took them out of Egypt, and was taking them to a land flowing with milk and honey, even if it was a physical thing, then God was taking them to a promised land, a better land where God was going to give them the Ten Commandments which would rule and govern them. So when we talk about salvation in the Old Testament, the Israelites were taken out of Egypt, which represents the world, into a better place where God and his law would work for them. On the Exodus and abundant life, in Exodus 10: 11, the Bible says God told Moses that when they shall leave, they shall not leave empty handed. After 430 years of slavery and bondage, these were gold-laden and diamond-pocketing slaves. Even though they were slaves, they were rich slaves so they left with some level of abundance, after all in

---

<sup>222</sup> Pastor John Adelego made these comments in my interview for this work on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012.

<sup>223</sup> Rev. Mrs. Rita Korankye Ankra is the Director of Social Services, and the President of the Women’s Ministry of the Royal House Chapel. She also heads the Counseling and Marriage Department of the Church. She made these contributions in my interview with her on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2012.

<sup>224</sup> Pastor Ransford Obeng is the founder and General Overseer of the Calvary Charismatic Church (CCC). He made these comments in my interview with him on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in Kumasi.

Genesis 34:35 that is what they used to build the temple. They did not leave broke, they left with some wealth.”<sup>225</sup>

It can be inferred from the views expressed by the above mentioned Pentecostals that salvation is perceived as liberation from captivity into a state of freedom and welfare. It is understood as being freed from slavery. The liberation being emphasized here is both at spiritual and physical levels. Spiritually, it is understood as being “set free” from the demonic powers of sin.<sup>226</sup> Salvation is also understood as a means of emerging as winner in the battles of life that the Christian gets entangled with. As Catechist Abboa Offei indicated, it is believed that through salvation, the Christian is empowered to overcome the challenges of life. One can also deduce from the relationship Bishop James Saah draws between the Exodus and salvation that since the Israelites left Egypt with some prosperity, the Christian should also experience some prosperity in physical terms. These collaborate with the view of Catechist Abboa Offei when he suggests that his understanding of the “fullness of life” which Jesus promised is in terms of the Old Testament. The blessings God promised Abraham were in physical/material terms. To some extent, Pentecostals in Ghana share in this understanding of blessing being experienced in the day-to-day life of a person. This perception is also in line with the understanding of “being blessed” in the traditional understanding of most Ghanaian cultures, at least among the Akans (as has been discussed in the previous chapter). With this background, it becomes plausible for Pentecostals to relate salvation to the Exodus, especially in their discourse on salvation as an existential experience in the here and now. Salvation is therefore regarded both as a present day experience as well as an experience in the future.

### **3.2 Salvation as a present day experience**

Salvation as a whole is perceived to have both spiritual and physical dimensions. In the same way, the Christian expects salvation to be experienced in the here and now at both the spiritual and physical levels. In line with the traditional worldview,

---

<sup>225</sup> This was disclosed in my interview with Bishop James Saah for this work on 30th June, 2012.

<sup>226</sup> Sin is considered an enemy among Pentecostals. This view runs through the interviews I conducted with Pentecostals during my field research and it is also preached in their messages. This is because it is believed that sin opens the door for the devil to exploit the Christian of his/her blessings of God.

Pentecostals believe that what one experiences in the physical life has spiritual roots as well.

### 3.2.1 Spiritual Empowerment

Spiritually, the Christian receives forgiveness of sins which enables him or her to experience the benefits of a 'freed' person. This is a precondition of having access to the "things" of God. The observation of Frimpong above stresses the newness of life expected from the Christian, especially in terms of his or her behavior or morality. Such changes are expected from the Christian as evidence that one is saved. There is the consciousness that one has been "freed" from the inability to live a morally upright life. The song below which is commonly sung among Pentecostals in Ghana reiterates this point:

Once I was a sinner  
saved by grace. (2x)  
My sins are washed far away  
Jesus has taken my burdens far away.  
Once I was a sinner  
Saved by grace. (2x)

"Grace" is interpreted as "unmerited favor". Therefore the acknowledgement of being saved by grace is also to admit that the new identity of the Christian is something conferred on him/her without any personal merit. It is a spiritual act of God. The song also illustrates the connection drawn between sins and burdens. The one who accepts Jesus Christ as his/her "Lord and personal savior" is supposed to live a life free from sin since Jesus has taken the burden of sins away from him/her. It is the new state of the one who becomes saved by accepting Jesus Christ as "Lord and personal savior" that Frimpong describes as "new specie". The Christian (or the "new specie") is empowered to live a life which pleases God, as against the sinful life before one became a Christian. Furthermore the new status of the Christian makes him/her a child of God. In other words, he/she is now at peace with God. This state of being qualifies a person to experience the blessings of God after the blessings of Abraham, in the here and now. This results from the fact that being a Christian is



understood to be a source of empowerment to emerge victorious over the challenges of life, which could be any form of hindrance to the Christian, thereby preventing the Christian from accomplishing his/her destiny in life. Pentecostals in Ghana believe that God has a plan for the life of every individual. This is referred to as the destiny (or *nkrabea/hyɛbea*) of the person. Some are of the view that each individual, whether the person is a Christian or not, has a destiny to fulfill in life. This can, however, be accomplished only when one gets saved. This is the view held by Pastor Gracer Bondzie<sup>227</sup>, Pastor John Adelego<sup>228</sup>, and Pastor Enoch Ghartey.<sup>229</sup> It is the responsibility of the Christian to find out what the purpose of God for their life (or their destiny) is, and fulfill it.

According to Ghartey, failure to identify the destiny of a person is the main reason some people may not fulfill their destiny. He relates this to Hosea 4:6 “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge....” In his words, “[t]here is no cheap destiny. Everyone’s destiny is a high calling. So what determines the extent of the manifestation of a [person]’s destiny is the [person]’s knowledge of the destiny.”<sup>230</sup> In contrast to the above views, Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong differentiates between what he calls “natural destiny” and “spiritual destiny”. The “natural destiny” which refers to what a person inherits by virtue of the circumstances surrounding his/her birth such as the geographical area, the color of his/parents, etc. The “spiritual destiny” is what he refers to as one’s destiny in Christ. He posits that “there is a destiny in Christ for every believer. However until you get to know Jesus Christ, your true spiritual destiny will not start.”<sup>231</sup> The Christian is supposed to know his/her destiny in Christ and work towards achieving it. In the view of Bishop James Saah, “destiny” is used figuratively among Pentecostals to refer to a situation which could be described as God’s ideal purpose for a person. According to him, when Charismatics refer to destiny, they are “talking about a certain place of glory we have not arrived at yet. For me as an extreme Charismatic preacher, when we talk about

<sup>227</sup> Pastor Gracer Bondzie is a Pastor of the Action Chapel International. He also doubles as the registrar of the Dominion University College, a University of the Church. He made this contribution in my interview for this work.

<sup>228</sup> Pastor John Adelego is the Head Pastor of the Winners Chapel International. His observation was made when he granted me an interview for this work.

<sup>229</sup> Pastor Enoch Ghartey shared his view on this in my interview with him in June, 2012.

<sup>230</sup> These thoughts were shared by Pastor Adelego during my interviews with him on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in Accra.

<sup>231</sup> Bishop Frimpong made these observations in my interview with him in June 2012 in Accra.

destiny, we are talking about a certain future state where your lot will be better than where you are now.”<sup>232</sup> This can be related to the understanding of Pentecostals. John Adelego agrees with James Saah that the Christian can experience the promises of God in the here and now but he goes on further to suggest that the blessings of God are partly in “the spirit” and that is why one has to be a Christian before he/she can receive those blessings. According to him,

“every one thing God has promised us, they are all spiritual substance. It is given to us as spiritual substance. You will have to be in the spirit to be able to have it. And when you have it, you receive it in the spirit and then it translates into your physical life.”<sup>233</sup>

By this observation, Adelego implies that even though salvation is a “spiritual” experience, it must be expressed in the physical life of the believer. In other words, the spiritual state the Christian assumes becomes a precondition for an individual to appropriate the blessings of God as he or she satisfies the conditions of the promises of God. This view finds expression in his example of Adelego that if someone pays his or her tithes according to Malachi 3, it will translate into open “divine ideas” from God. From his argument, it can be said that salvation becomes a means to the realization of “life in abundance” in the sense of physical and material well being. This corresponds with the understanding of salvation (or *nkwagye*) from the traditional worldview. Much as salvation from the Christian perspective may translate into physical and material wellbeing of a person, the well being of the individual in the here and now cannot be said to be the main object of salvation. It can however be noted that the association of salvation with physical and material well being of the believer in the here and now is very much emphasized in Pentecostalism in Ghana, as it can be inferred from the discussion. This belief can also be linked to the emphasis among Pentecostals in Ghana that the Christian becomes a spiritual descendant of Abraham, and therefore a “partaker” of his blessings. The blessings of Abraham can be said to have been expressed in physical terms as well. Therefore, the Christian is also expected to experience the blessings of God in the here and now. It can be observed that the expectation of salvation as a means to physical and

---

<sup>232</sup> These views were expressed by Bishop James Saah in my interview with him on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2012. This can be related to the understanding of Pentecostals on the ‘new state’ of the one who becomes a Christian.

<sup>233</sup> Pastor John Adelego made these comments in my interview with him on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012.

material wellbeing rather corresponds to the understanding of the traditional worldview on salvation. Thus, the traditional worldview might rather be the influencing factor for the association of salvation with Abraham and his 'material' blessings by some Pentecostals.

Thus, in the here and now, the Christian is to experience "fullness of life", which involves anything that is perceived to have the tendency to make life more comfortable and as one wish it to be. In other words "fullness of life" is subjective, depending on every individual. For instance, for a young female university graduate, her immediate "promised land" may be to get a good job, get a good spouse, give birth to children (both males and females) etc. For others, it may be to secure a visa to travel to Europe or USA, or get deliverance from a "generational curse", etc. Nonetheless, there is a general understanding of what it means to be "blessed" in the Ghanaian Pentecostal context. This is expressed as a desire for long life with good health, financial sufficiency and independence, good marriage, childbirth, conquest over evil spirits, (especially witchcraft) etc. The provisions of God to the Christian also include protection against anything that threatens the survival and the physical and spiritual enhancement of the life of the Christian. This is what Abboa Offei refers to as "additions" which a Christian gets to enable him/her to become a "champion", or "ruler" of the existential circumstances in which the Christian may be found. The need for spiritual protection against forces which are believed to be at "war" is given much attention in the discourse of Pentecostals on salvation because of the firm belief in the reality of a spiritual warfare in which the Christian is engaged. The aim of the "forces of darkness" or demons is to deprive the Christian of reaching his/her "Promised Land", or the ideal purpose of God for the person.<sup>234</sup> Thus the blessing is believed to be expressed in the spiritual, social and economic aspects of the life of the Christian.

---

<sup>234</sup> The subject on the belief in evil forces which seek to destroy the Christian and how Pentecostals in Ghana deal with them will be discussed later in this chapter.

### 3.2.2 Physical/material

The extent to which the Christian experiences the blessings of God in the here and now depends on a number of factors including how informed one is, concerning the promises of God for him/her, and how one applies himself/herself to these promises. According to Rev. Michael Ankomah of the *Word Miracle Church International*,

“[t]he physical effect of salvation on a person depends on how the person applies the results of salvation. For example, as a person reads the Bible, his whole worldview changes and that affect him physically as well. Financially, depending on how one looks at it, if the person believes in the principle of sowing and reaping and applies it, his finances also improve”.<sup>235</sup>

The effect of salvation on the Christian is linked to the consciousness of such promises and application of principles which can lead to the realization of the promises in the life of the Christian. This results in physical manifestations of the power of God at work in the life of the Christian. In the words of Bishop Hansel Frimpong, in the physical sense, salvation

“gives the opportunity to live well, and to enjoy the good things of life. When the power of the enemy is broken, sickness loses its power, death is broken. A man can live as he desires. We can live as God wants us to live and enjoy on earth here.”<sup>236</sup>

The change in the living circumstances of the Christian is seen as an evidence of the salvation of the person. It is demonstration of the power of God in the life of the Christian – power that renders the devil and all other life destroying agents paralyzed. This is the situation which is supposed to give way to prosperity, welfare, wellbeing, healing, deliverance, etc.<sup>237</sup> Pentecostals are therefore noted for “giving testimonies”

---

<sup>235</sup> Rev. Michael Ankomah is a Pastor of the Word Miracle Church International. His observation was made in my interview for this work.

<sup>236</sup> My interview with Bishop Agyei Frimpong on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in Accra.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

as an integral part of their liturgy. This is to emphasize the truth of the “word of God” and also to encourage others who may be praying for one thing or the other. The testimony below was shared by Pastor Gracer Bondzie and it sums up the expectation of a new experience of life which Pentecostals expect from salvation:

“[F]rom my personal experience, things I used to do, the struggles, the challenges, the pain, the effort that I will have to put in to do something in the past, I believe that it is not the same. I believe that once I am willing to acquire a project and I go on my knees and pray for God’s direction, absolutely depending upon His directions and instructions, I believe God leads me through it and the results are always amazing. For instance, I sit here as the registrar of the Dominion University College even though I am an ordained minister of Christian Action Faith Ministry International. This university was actually perceived or envisioned as far back in 1998. There have been certain university renowned professors who had been on this project but could not achieve it. I can see about three different people well qualified as far as academia is concerned, who have been on this project but could not succeed. They had to abandon it somewhere along the line. In 2008, I was given the challenge. I have not worked in academia before. The highest I have gone is a secondary school teacher and then a seminary teacher. But I was given this challenge and I accepted it because I believe that it is not my strength but that God can make a difference. I went to God, prayed about it and I believed that God will guide me. Without understanding, there were many times even people in this establishment, men of God, in their own words, when they saw me moving around carrying papers and moving here and there, they were laughing at me because they knew that it will not amount to anything because the professionals could not do it. But I have always told myself that it is not I but I kept on believing God till 2010 when I got affiliation with Cape Coast University and then last year we got the accreditation and I say that this is the handy work of God. People cannot understand how it happened. I have had some of the professionals who had been on the project before coming around to find out how it happened and I tell them it is God. They are now even willing to come on board to help me. This is how I see things now, I believe in the past; probably those people, some of whom were obviously not Christians, were just picked because they are professionals but they believe that they knew how it could be done but for some reasons it could not be done. God has made a statement that it is not the person who wills but it is God that shows mercy. I believe that when one is saved and has that kind of understanding, things can be easier than before.”<sup>238</sup>

---

<sup>238</sup> Rev. Gracer Bondzie shared this testimony in my interview with him on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2012 in Accra.

In the testimony, Pastor Bondzie suggests that he does not struggle as he used to struggle before he became a Christian. His acceptance of the “challenge” to start the University, even though well qualified people had not been able to make it, was also based on his trust in the Lord and not on his competence as such. For him a possible cause of the failure of his predecessors to establish the University could be due to the fact that they were not Christians. In another testimony, Pastor Bondzie talks about how he considers his life as more advanced than his colleagues who are still teaching at his former place of work as a Chemistry teacher at the Secondary School. Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong also gives an account of how his becoming a Christian led him to be ‘outstanding’ among his siblings who encountered similar challenges in life, just like their father. Here is his account:

“My father was working at a very big place. And they called him to the village for farming. He cultivated a big cocoa farm but he died without leaving us any inheritance. Actually he died without making any much impact, financially. But where he was previously working, he could have made it. My elder brother had also worked with a reputable company for about 20 years. Just before he was about to be honored in the job, he just quit the job, just like my father. So he also lost every entitlement. A year later, his colleagues in the job received a huge package for their long service. Another brother of mine was also working with a company here. He had amassed wealth through the job. An issue cropped up in the job so he fought with his boss and he also quit the job. He finally lost everything and became a palm wine tapper. There are other such instances among my own siblings. So when I saw the trend and got born again, I started preaching the Gospel to them and also prayed for them. The first brother got another good job and his fortunes came back. The next brother was also called back to his former work place. He is now very wealthy. One of them is now a Pastor. The darkness was turned over.”<sup>239</sup>

This account also brings out some aspects of the understanding of Pentecostals on how salvation is to be experienced in the here and now. At this point, I would like to bring some of these to the fore. In the first place, Agyei Frimpong talks about his father being called from his lucrative job to the village for farming. According to his account, “they” called his father. The decision of his father to go to the village was not without some external influences. This could have been through the influence of some key family members of the father. It can be deduced from Agyei Frimpong’s

---

<sup>239</sup> Bishop Agyei Frimpong gave this account in my interview with him on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Accra.

account that in his view, his father would have been well off, had he remained in his original job. The farming did not turn out to be a fruitful venture. In the worldview of the Ghanaian, nothing happens without a cause. In this instance, a very likely question people would ask about the decision of the father would be: why did he leave his lucrative job in the first place? A possible speculation from a Pentecostal Ghanaian worldview could be that he was manipulated by evil forces (or witchcraft) from his family to quit his job and return to the village so that he could be deprived of his “bright” future. In the words of Agyei Frimpong, the father “died without making any impact.” The situation of his elder brother is also a similar one. The emphasis Frimpong places on when he left his lucrative job is also worth noting – “just before he was about to be honored” in the job. His quitting the job deprived him both of the promotion and the package he would have benefitted for his long service, had he stayed in the job one more year. Again the question would be why he left the job at the time he did. For the Ghanaian, “something” might have pushed him out of the fortune ahead of him. The brother who fought with his boss at the work place and quit his good job would not be seen in any different light. The question would be what caused him to fight his boss to quit a job through which he had amassed wealth, only to end up as a palm wine tapper? Why could he not control his anger? All the three scenarios could be attributed to evil spiritual manipulation of the people in order to deny them of a prosperous life. In fact from the point of view of Agyei Frimpong, the restoration of the fortunes of his siblings is attributable to their being “born again” or becoming Christians. This confirms the view that for Pentecostals in Ghana, the key to experiencing the promised “fullness of life” is becoming “saved”. This is what ushers a person into the blessings of Abraham.

In their testimonies, Pentecostals usually give information on how they have gained respect in their families as a result of their becoming Christians. Others also talk about success in their businesses, marriages, good health, etc as opposed to other members of their family and colleagues who are not Christians, as in the testimony of Bondzie and Frimpong above.

The physical transformation the Christian experiences is explained as a recovery of what was lost to the devil who is seen here as “the thief” and an “enemy of progress”, who comes to steal, to kill and to destroy (John 10:10). Accepting Jesus Christ as

one's savior therefore can be said to be an antidote to the "destruction" the devil and his agents inflict on human beings in the here and now. This destruction manifests itself in the present life in different forms of evil and misfortunes which restrict or prevent a person from enjoying life in fullness or abundant life. The testimony accounts of. Bondzie and Frimpong above illustrate this belief. Through salvation, one appropriates the victorious power in Jesus Christ over the "powers of darkness" which limit the ability of the Christian to progress in life. Victory in the blood of Jesus Christ over the devil is stressed as a basis for the transformation of the life of the believer. This finds expression in the command "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and your life will never be the same."<sup>240</sup> This emphasizes the expectation of a change in the circumstances of the Christian, compared to the state of the person before he or she became a Christian. Salvation in this sense is understood as "liberation" from spiritual oppression by the devil and other evil agents. This state in the life of the Christian is believed to be his or her "Egypt" in the relationship Pentecostals draw between the Exodus and salvation. The one who has not been saved is believed to be under slavery to the "taskmaster" who is the devil and his agents. Such a person is vulnerable to the manipulation and the destructive plans of the devil through various agents. It takes "a special act of God"<sup>241</sup> to set a person free from the grips of the devil, who is seen in the Exodus as Pharaoh. The Christian who is delivered from his/her Egypt is set to enter his/her promised land which is supposed to be flowing with milk and honey. Therefore in the here and now, the Christian is supposed to move towards enjoying the good of the land which finds expression in good health, dying at a good old age, prosperity, success in every venture one undertakes, respect in society, etc. From the foregoing, one may deduce that among Pentecostals, salvation is understood, among other meanings, as a precondition to experiencing material well being in the here and now.

---

<sup>240</sup> In his weekly television program, "Miracle Time," Bishop Charles Agyin Asare uses this phrase as part of his words of invitation to his listeners and viewers on the national television station, GTV.

<sup>241</sup> As indicated earlier, Mensa Otabil refers to the Passover as "a special act of God" which led to the eventual liberation of the Israelites from the hands of the Egyptians. He made these remarks in relation to the potency of the wine used in a communion service as a symbol of the blood of Jesus which also commemorate the Passover. This was expressed in his sermon titled "Celebrating the Passover" recorded on a DVD.



### 3.3 Salvation as a future experience

Unlike the Promised Land of the Israelites which was basically a physical destination, Pentecostals in Ghana also look forward to a final promised land which will be realized after the Parousia. This explains why salvation is understood as both “positional and progressive.” The Christian is saved but he/she is expected to “work out” the salvation. This makes salvation progressive. It is an ongoing process until the Christian dies or Christ appears the second time to take the church to himself.

Pentecostals also “have another world in view”. They believe that the ultimate for the Christian is to be with the Lord one day in heaven. The return of Jesus Christ will mark the end of human suffering as well as the ultimate realization of the purpose of God for humanity – sharing eternal fellowship with Jesus Christ and worshipping God with heavenly hosts. Even though the exact time for this event is unknown, it is regarded as ever imminent. Some Pentecostals relate Matthew 24 to some current events around the world and in their immediate localities and draw the conclusion that Christ could return any time soon. On their expectation, Omenyo remarks that

“[t]he imminent expectation of Jesus tends to predominate the Charismatic renewal at its initial stage but it declines when the movement grows older. Then it comes to the fore again during times of strife and war, evil, immorality and acute socio economic pressures. Charismatics see these as the ‘signs of the times’ which precede the second coming of Christ.”<sup>242</sup>

The belief in the second coming of Jesus Christ for the church is a source of motivation for Pentecostals to live a morally upright life in order to avoid going to hell. As discussed earlier, the Pentecostals believe that the ability to live in righteousness which is required for entry into heaven is received only through salvation. There is emphasis on receiving Jesus Christ as “Lord and personal savior” before one lives right with God. They believe that good deeds alone cannot lead to having an eternal abode with God in heaven, the ultimate Promised Land. This will mark the end of every human suffering, pain, the fear of death, etc. Thus, the ‘ultimate salvation’ is

---

<sup>242</sup> Cephas N. Omenyo, *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism*, 244.

perceived to be experienced in the life hereafter. What the Christian experiences in the here and now in material or physical terms may be described as a 'foretaste' of what is to be experienced at the coming of Jesus Christ. Even though Pentecostals believe in this and are looking forward to it, they want to experience all the promises of "fullness of life" in the here and now before the ultimate abode with God in the Parousia. As indicated above, the emphasis on experiencing salvation in physical and material well being in the here and now by Pentecostals in Ghana is informed by the traditional understanding that salvation (*nkwagyee*) should lead to "abundance in life" which is expressed in good health, peace, prosperity, respect, etc, as noted in Chapter two.

### 3.4 Hindrances/enemies of salvation

The realization of the "fullness of life", whether in the here and now or in the life hereafter, is saddled with hindrances which have the tendency to deny the Christian the opportunity to reach the Promised Land. In relation to the Exodus, these are compared to Pharaoh who resisted the Israelites from leaving Egypt. They also include the Red Sea, the Jordan River, as well as the nations which fought the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land. Just as these hindrances were cleared before the Israelites could enter the Promised Land, Pentecostals believe that there are hindrances to be conquered before the Christian can reach his/her Promised Land in the here and now and in the life hereafter. The hindrances are also described as "enemies" among Pentecostals.<sup>243</sup> These enemies are described both in spiritual and physical categories and they are believed to hinder the Christian in both the spiritual and the material aspects of salvation. This section will be used to explore these hindrances and how they operate in the life of the Christian in his/her quest to reach his/her promised land.

---

<sup>243</sup> The "enemy" as used here is understood in the traditional sense. It refers to anything or being or a situation which prevents a person from experiencing fullness or abundant life. It does not always have to come from an external source. A person can be his or her own enemy. Depending on the extent of the inhibition inflicted by the enemy, an enemy may be referred to as *otanfo* (which can be translated as enemy) or *obusuyefo* (or the one who causes abomination) or *obonsam* (which is translated the devil).

### 3.4.1 Spiritual obstacles

#### 3.4.1.1 Sin

Sin is considered as one of the impediments to the realization of the fullness of life. On one level, sin prevents the believer from experiencing the desired fellowship with Christ which brings about the blessings God has promised Christians. The basic sin for Pentecostals is refusal to accept Jesus Christ as “Lord and personal savior.” That is the first step in the journey of seeking a closer relationship with God, who has promised “fullness of life” to all who believe. As Frimpong puts it “if somebody does not receive Christ, then he cannot enjoy this blessed life.”<sup>244</sup> Once a person becomes a Christian, he/she is supposed to stay away from sin through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This will ensure that the Christian enjoys the blessings of God. When the Christian commits a sin, he or she becomes exposed to the attacks of Satan. This is because the one who sins will either not be able to pray effectively, or his prayer becomes ineffective. According to Bishop James Saah, God does not hear the prayers of sinners,<sup>245</sup> and that “one cannot bypass one’s conscience in prayer.”<sup>246</sup> Living a sinful life is believed to give an advantage to the devil to exploit the believer since the Christian who indulges in sin cannot pray effectively. In the words of Bishop James Saah “sin can [...] become a platform for the enemy (Satan) to get to you and undermine the fullness that God promises.”<sup>247</sup> In other words, the Christian who keeps himself or herself away from sin becomes insulated from attacks of the devil, and therefore enjoys the “fullness of life”. On the other hand, if a Christian indulges in sin he or he becomes weak spiritually, thereby giving an upper hand to the devil to exploit him or her. This is because the sinful behavior can be a “doorway” for demonic attacks. In effect, life in fullness becomes an illusion to such a person. A person living in sin is regarded as ‘not being in good standing with God.’ Such a person is regarded as being impure, a situation which is believed to lead to a state of spiritual vulnerability. The impure person is believed to be dwelling outside the

<sup>244</sup> This view was expressed in an interview with Agyei Frimpong on 26th October, 2010 in Accra.

<sup>245</sup> Saah explains his use of “sinners” to refer, not only to those who have not accepted Christ, but also to “backsliders” and believers who have not repented of some sins in their lives.

<sup>246</sup> Interview with Saah on 25th October 2010 in Accra.

<sup>247</sup> Interview with Saah on 25th October 2010 in Accra.

confines of the blessings and provisions of God. This understanding is similar to the view of the traditional worldview on sin and vulnerability as the following remarks by Opuni Frimpong suggests:

“If I commit an abomination (or *akyiwadee*, that what society abhors and the ancestors abhor), I will not attract their blessings. In that case I cannot live in fullness. [...] I may be innocent in my family but if the family is cursed, or some members of the family are committing sinful acts, the effect of their act can hinder, delay and frustrate my attaining the fullness of life. [...] If you listen to our proverbs, one will know that from the African Traditional Religion, there are a lot of forces which impedes the attainment of the fullness of life. These includes *abayie* (or witches), *abonsamfo* (or evil spirits), *nipatanfo* (or human enemies), etc.”<sup>248</sup>

The notion that sin leads to the displeasure of the deities and also renders a person vulnerable in the traditional worldview is emphasized among Pentecostals in their discourse about the effects of sin on the Christian. According to Agyei Frimpong, the one who commits sin can easily be plagued by the devil. The importance Pentecostals attach to sin as a hindrance to receiving the best from God is also expressed by Mensah Otabil when he observed that, the most important battle of life is the battle against sin and Satan’s control of our life.<sup>249</sup> It must be pointed out here that the emphasis is on what may be described as “habitual sins”. “Habitual” and sex related sins are perceived to be backed by spiritual forces. This is because of their belief that the devil or an agent of the devil can project a sinful behavior on a person with a view to disgracing him/her, or depriving him/her of a possible achievement ahead of him or her. With this understanding, dealing with sins is emphasized during deliverance. Discussing the concept of “demonic doorways”, Atiemo observes that “[s]exual sins are especially held to be a major cause of demonic oppression of many people.”<sup>250</sup> He mentions fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, masturbation, bestiality, pornography and other sex related behaviors. Others include harboring bitterness, unwillingness to forgive and jealousy as some of the sins which

---

<sup>248</sup> Rev. Dr. Kwabena Opuni Frimpong is the Chairperson of the Asante Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. Not only is he known to be one of the leading ministers of the church with Pentecostal persuasions, but also he has been speaking at revival programs of various church and para-church groups in different parts of Ghana. He made these observations in my interview with him on 24th December, 2010 in Kumasi.

<sup>249</sup> Mensa Otabil made this comment in his sermon titled “The Spirit of the Overcomer.” Recorded on a DVD.

<sup>250</sup> Atiemo, *Mmusuyi*, 99.

are believed to give access to demons to destroy people. During a prayer session in 'Jericho Hour'<sup>251</sup> the leader gave the following encouragement to the congregation when he was talking about how sin can be used by external spiritual forces to hinder a Christian from reaching his/her promised land: "We are going to pray against any principalities who have decided for us that by certain sins and habits we cannot move forward or succeed; today we're going to pray against them." This was followed by the prayer below:

"In the name of Jesus, by choice, I make a deliberate choice  
Any principle made by the principalities to rule my life  
And to set limitations for me  
And to set parameters for me,  
From today, let their principles be broken  
That which they have set against me  
To ruin my life, my marriage, my business,  
My finances, may they be broken."<sup>252</sup>

The suggestion here is that the devil may cause someone to be involved in sin as a way of setting "limitation,, on him/her and also to "ruin" his/her life. James Saah also argues from 1 Chronicles 21 that it was Satan who incited David to number the Israelites contrary to the commands of God so that David would incur the wrath of God. Therefore the devil still uses sin to get the Christian out of the favor of God.

This is not to suggest that Pentecostals deny that the Christian does not sin. The fact that Pentecostals encourage their members to confess their sins during services is indicative of their conviction that the Christian may fall into one sin or the other. In the words of Bondzie, "[t]here are certain things Christians cannot claim and the day I will see any pastor who will say he is sinless, I will praise God for his life."<sup>253</sup> When one is convicted of his/or her sins, he/she is to confess it and turn away from it. Such a life

---

<sup>251</sup> This is a prayer meeting which takes place on Thursdays between 9am and 12noon at the Action Chapel International Prayer Cathedral in Accra. I made these observations in my visit on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010.

<sup>252</sup> This was observed in my visit to Jericho Hour on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2010.

<sup>253</sup> He made these comments in an interview in 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2012 in Accra.

is what guarantees the Christian a realization of the fullness of life. This view supports the thoughts of the friends of Job who suggested that Job was suffering for his hidden sins. For them, God would not allow a righteous person to suffer. It turned out that the suffering of Job was a test from God. This notion undermines the call of Jesus for the Christian to carry his or her cross daily and follow him.

#### 3.4.1.2 Curses

One hindrance to the experience of “fullness of life” in the life of a Christian is a curse. A curse is explained among Pentecostals as a limitation placed on the life of a person with a spiritual backing. According to Charles Ayarkwa of the *Grace Deliverance Team*, “a curse is a spiritual decree or law issued against an individual in order to prevent him/her or forbid him/her from doing what he/she could have naturally done.”<sup>254</sup> The limitation which is brought upon a person through a curse leads to failure, disappointment, incurable diseases, poverty, barrenness, habitual sins, irresponsible lifestyle, etc. As Frimpong has noted, “a curse is an empowerment for failure.”<sup>255</sup> It is a pronouncement made against a person with the hope that the person will be affected negatively. A curse may be made against a person, a family or a community as a whole depending on the nature of the curse, it may affect the person alone or his or her entire family, or even generations yet to be born.

Pentecostals in Ghana believe that a negative pronouncement against a person can have a negative repercussion on his or her life. Derrick Prince whose teachings continue to influence Pentecostals in Ghana has suggested that whether such pronouncement is audible or silent, the impact will be the same.<sup>256</sup> A person may attract a curse to himself/herself by making negative pronouncements about himself or herself. For this reason, Pentecostals in Ghana emphasize the power of words. Frimpong indicated to me in my interview with him that if someone wants to die the next morning, the easiest way is to keep on repeating ‘I will die the next morning’ several times and it will surely happen. In the same way, if a person makes negative

---

<sup>254</sup> Ayarkwa made this suggestion in my interview with him on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Akropong.

<sup>255</sup> Interview with Frimpong on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Accra.

<sup>256</sup> Reference to Derrick Prince, Tape No 6011, Curses and Cure in Atiemo, *Mmusuyi and Deliverance*, 99.

confessions about his or her marriage, finance, health, or any other situation of his or her life, it will happen to the person. According to Rev. Agyei Kwabi, somebody may say ‘as for me I will not marry ...’ and demons around can pick what has been said and use it against the person by making the statement a reality. He also maintains that a person may be cursed by his or her parents because of a bad treatment the person might have received from the parents. A person may also be cursed by a godly person because of an offence.<sup>257</sup> Or a person may be cursed from an external cause. This can happen when a person offends someone. If out of grief the offended person invokes a curse on the offender, it happens to the person. According to Abboa Offei,<sup>258</sup> some people hire other powers to release curses on people. Another source of curse upon a person is through theft of a personal or family property. Someone may pronounce a curse on another person out of envy and hatred.

Apart from curses resulting from the action or pronouncements of a person, Pentecostals believe that one may come under a curse by virtue of his/her family background. This might have resulted from an evil covenant or an evil deed which was committed by other people, especially close family members (whether they are dead or alive). It is believed that in such an instance, the curse will affect members of the family, including the Christians until steps are taken to reverse the trend. Thus becoming a Christian does not automatically render a person free from such curses. Curses may manifest in abject poverty, chronic diseases such as epilepsy, madness, impotence, lack of respect, unusual death, bad marriages, barrenness, acute drunkenness, a particular bad habit or behavior, etc.<sup>259</sup> A curse in a family may also express itself in these circumstances as well. When these things happen among members of a particular family in a systematic manner, it is concluded as a curse on the family. In such situations, the misfortunes run through the family for generations. In the following account, Rev. Agyei Kwabi shares his experience of a family which suffered from a curse through an evil covenant contracted by their ancestors. According to him,

---

<sup>257</sup> Rev. Agyei Kwabi is a minister of the Mampong congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. He shared this opinion in my interview for this thesis conducted on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

<sup>258</sup> Catechist Abboa Offei made these observations in my interview with him on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Akropong.

<sup>259</sup> Rev Agyei Kwabi made these observations in an interview I conducted for this work on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Mampong.

“members of this family now wallow in abject poverty as a result of a covenant the forefathers were believed to have made with some deities so that women in the family could bear children, as child birth was a challenge in the family. It came to light through prayers that in the past, an elder from the family made a covenant with a deity, exchanging the wealth of the family for child bearing. After the necessary rituals were performed, the covenant was sealed. That accounted for their current state of abject poverty, although now there are children in the family.”<sup>260</sup>

The effects of the curse of the ancestors upon the current generation can be on an entire community as well.<sup>261</sup> Curses are a source of hindrance to the realization of the anticipated “fullness or abundant life” because of the various degrees of negative effects it can have on the life of a person, a family or a community as a whole. It is also believed that a property may be cursed because it might have been acquired through the wrong means. If the property was acquired by someone who worships idols, the property is seen as a curse since idol worship is considered a detestable thing among Pentecostals. In such a situation, anyone who benefits from that property suffers from the curse as well because, according to Agyei Kwabi, the devil does not forget that a curse has been pronounced on that property. In that sense it can be said that a curse can be transferred.<sup>262</sup>

### 3.4.1.3 Evil Spirits

Another hindrance to the realization of “fullness of life” is believed to be “spiritual programs/covenants.” One might have made a covenant with a spiritual power before one became a Christian. Such a covenant might have been done consciously or

---

<sup>260</sup> Rev. Agyei Kwabi made these observations in my interview with him on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2010.

<sup>261</sup> In an interview with Ayarkwa, a member of the *Grace Deliverance Team of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in Akropong-Akwapem* on 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010, he refers to one of the villages in Ghana, where it is believed that some people were buried alive in the olden days. This was supposed to be a punishment for an offence they had committed and also for ritual purposes. History has it that when they were dying from their suffering, they pronounced all sorts of curses against the community. According to Mr. Ayarkwa, he has met a number of people in different parts of Ghana who hail from this community. All of them are not doing well in life in spite of all their efforts. Through their prayers with different indigenous people from the village it was established that the indigenes are suffering from the curse upon the community.

<sup>262</sup> Rev. Agyei Kwabi shared these thoughts during teachings on “curses” which preceded a prayer meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2010 in Asante Mampong.



unconsciously. It can block the believer from experiencing “fullness of life.”<sup>263</sup> Pentecostals also believe that a believer may be hindered from experiencing fullness of life as a result of evil programs projected against him or her by somebody else usually through the instrumentality of an evil spiritual power such as witchcraft (or *bayie*), magic, sorcery, etc. This may be motivated by envy or the desire to destroy the Christian or to get rid of him/her in order to secure his/her place at the workplace. According to Abboa Offei, such a spiritual program may be the result of a curse in one’s family (either in the extended or the nuclear). The testimony of Agyei Frimpong cited earlier can be said to be a spiritual program which was projected against his father and his siblings to inflict them with abject poverty. It can also be a spiritual program such as “*juju*”<sup>264</sup> that has been projected against the soul of a person to alter the course of the life of the person in a direction which can be said to be detrimental to the experience of “abundant life” for the person. All these bring one form of hardship or another to a person, thus impeding the person’s experience of “fullness of life.”

Apart from these “forces of darkness” or evil spirits, which may be projected against a person, Pentecostals believe that the devil also attacks Christians directly in an attempt to deny them of “fullness of life” or their “promised land.” In this way, the entire Christian life is perceived as “spiritual warfare.” Ephesians 6 is often used to stress the belief in the reality of a “spiritual warfare” for the Christian. The aim of the devil and his demons is to ‘steal’, ‘kill’ and ‘destroy’. The attack of the devil may

---

<sup>263</sup> This refers to consulting people who use powers other than the power of Jesus the Christ. This includes traditional priests, Mallams, occultic powers, etc. Pentecostals believe that such consultations lead to an establishment of covenants with evil spirits, which continue to inflict one form of evil or another on a person, even when the person becomes a Christian.

<sup>264</sup> “Juju” refers to a spiritual power which is used to influence the life of people negatively. Individuals use it to fight the progress of others. In the West, it is usually confused with Voodoo. Cf. G. Lademann-Priemer, “... the reality is not heaven but a living hell...”: Voodoo and Juju – Heilungskult, Schwarzmagie, Menschenhandel und Prostitution” in Werner Kahl, Gabriele Lademann-Priemer (Hg.), *Studien zu interkultureller Theologie an der Missionsakademie* (SITMA), 1. (Hamburg: Missionshilfe, 2013), 95ff. The belief in the ability of those with evil intention about others to alter the course of their life is strong in the Ghanaian society. This is irrespective of the educational background or the social status of people. It is even believed to work at the political level. A case in point is when a member of the then government of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) is reported to have attributed the ‘failure’ of the government to the efforts of a member of a different political party, the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to make the government unpopular so threat they lose the next general elections for the NPP to be elected into government. One Japheth Baidoo of the Western Regional Branch of the NDC is reported to have questioned: “Do you people know the reason why Bamba recently went to Mali? Simple! Just to consult powerful spiritualists in that country to continue tying the minds and brains of our ministers of state and other dynamic and outspoken people in the NDC.” See the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2002 edition of the “New Statesman” newspaper, posted on <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=229087>, accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2012.

manifest itself as any life threatening condition, such as disgraceful diseases such as epilepsy, madness, impotence, barrenness, poverty, premature death, disgrace, loss of loved ones, etc. These are thought to be orchestrated by the devil and his agents to serve as obstacles in the life of the Christian. According to Obeng, the aim of the attacks of the devil is to inflict pain on the believer and also to discourage him/her to live a Christian life. He relates such attacks to how Pharaoh and the Egyptians pursued the Israelites in the Exodus with the view to sending them back into slavery in Egypt.<sup>265</sup> These demonic hosts are perceived as rebellious holders of authority, whose purpose is to distract or stand in the way of the Christian.<sup>266</sup>

### **3.4.2 Non-spiritual**

#### **3.4.2.1 Ignorance**

The hindrances to the realization of “fullness of life” or reaching one’s ‘Promised Land’ is not understood by Pentecostals in only spiritual terms. There is the belief that physical factors can also impede the Christian in his/her quest to experience the covenant blessings of God. It must be noted, however, that what is being referred to as ‘physical factors’ are also believed to be influenced by spiritual powers. Ignorance is held among Pentecostals in Ghana as a significant hindrance to the Promised Land. The popular reference in this regard is Hosea 4:6, where lack of knowledge is perceived as a source of destruction. For Pentecostals, the Christian has to be knowledgeable of his or her “covenant rights” as a child of God, before he or she can “fight” for what is due him or her. There is also the belief that the Christian will have to depend on this knowledge to exercise the authority he or she wields to claim what the devil has stolen from him or her. According to Frimpong, people fail in their Christian life because of their ignorance of what who they are in Christ. He maintains that it takes a Christian who has developed himself or herself well in the word of God to enjoy the complete promises of God for the Christian. This is because such a Christian knows the ways and the will of God, which keeps the Christian within the range of the blessings of God. He submits that:

---

<sup>265</sup> Rev. Ransford Obeng made this point in my interview with him in the on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in Kumasi.

<sup>266</sup> I owe this thought to Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong.

“God has provided blessings for us in all the contexts—health, strength, satisfaction, etc, and if we walk outside of it, then we move out of the jurisdiction where God’s goodness prevail ... and we could easily be afflicted by the enemy also. And so I believe that the most important thing is for people to really align themselves with God’s word.”<sup>267</sup>

Touching on ignorance as a hindrance for the Christian, Enoch Ghartey suggests that:

“Salvation will only affect your material life by knowledge and understanding. Psalm 82:5 says they walked in darkness because they know not, neither do they understand. So lack of knowledge of many Christians is the reason why they still live as if nothing has happened inside of them. Jesus said I give unto you the keys of the kingdom. There are keys to everything we need on earth. There are keys to financial prosperity and divine health. There is a provision for everything on earth for a believer so we need to discover these things that God has put in the Bible. That is why they are called covenant. They are our inheritance; God’ will for us, we need knowledge; we need to know what to do to enjoy everything God has promised for us.”<sup>268</sup>

In other words, a good understanding of the covenant rights of the Christian and the ‘right application’ of those rights according to the word of God are crucial for the realization of the fullness of life.

#### **3.4.2.2 Laziness**

Laziness is also seen as a hindrance to the realization of “fullness of life.” The promises of God for the Christian are seen as a property handed down to a person. It is up to the individual to take steps to possess the inheritance. Rev. John Abu Baidoo notes

“[t]he basic or major hindrance is a person who is not ready to move on to get whatever has been promised. So if the person is not willing to do what God wants

---

<sup>267</sup> This information was received from Frimpong in an interview with him on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Accra.

<sup>268</sup> Pastor Enoch Ghartey made these observations in interview with him on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Accra.

him or her to do in order to realize these things, then that is a major hindrance to the realization of whatever has been promised.”<sup>269</sup>

The reference to the willingness of the Christian to do what God requires is in relation to both being obedient to God as well as taking steps to work hard to see the actualization of the “fullness of life.” As James Saah observes, “one has to work hard to be blessed. One may be praying but prayer alone does not deliver the result one may be expecting.”<sup>270</sup> The belief that laziness is a hindrance to “fullness of life” is also shared by Opuni Frimpong.<sup>271</sup> Even though ignorance and laziness may be seen as non spiritual hindrances to the realization of “fullness of life”, they are sometimes treated by Pentecostals as a spiritual issue. In consonance with the worldview of the Ghanaian, anything which brings a negative consequence on somebody is believed to have been “engineered” from the spirit world. This perception shapes the views of Pentecostals in their dealing with failures in life as well. In the light of this, laziness as a hindrance to the realization of fullness of life can be attributed to a spiritual influence seeking to destroy the life of the person.

It can thus be said that the traditional worldview of the Akans plays a significant role in informing and shaping the belief among Pentecostals in Ghana that there are forces, both spiritual and non spiritual, which seek to deprive the believer of experiencing the “abundant life” promised by Jesus. Therefore believers are urged to seek ways of ‘overcoming’ these hindrances.<sup>272</sup> This underscores the understanding among Pentecostals, just as in the traditional religion of the existence of evil spiritual and non spiritual forces which aim at posing hindrances in the life of the believer.

---

<sup>269</sup> Rev John Abu Baidoo is the Pastor in Charge of the *Trinity Temple* of the *International Central Gospel Church* (ICGC). He made this observation in my interview for this work on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Kumasi.

<sup>270</sup> This observation was made during interview with Saah on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 in Accra.

<sup>271</sup> He gave this information in my interview with him on 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2010 in Kumasi.

<sup>272</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu reports of Rev. Fr. Duah-Agyemang, who “advises Christians who go through ‘inexplicable problems’ not to console themselves with the idea that ‘it is a cross’ they are bearing or liken their difficulties to ‘Paul’s thorn in the flesh’.” See Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 169.

### **3.5 Overcoming the hindrances**

The consciousness of Pentecostals of the reality of the hindrances does not leave Pentecostals in Ghana in a state of desperation. On the contrary, it becomes a great motivation for them to intensify their commitment to God, who is seen as the ultimate power above all else. This part of the work will focus on how Pentecostals address the hindrances mentioned above. Since most of the challenges are considered to be directly or indirectly spiritual, Pentecostals pay attention to preparing their members “spiritually” to ensure their victory over any obstacle.

#### **3.5.1 Spiritual Development**

##### **3.5.1.1 The Word of God**

As Mensah Otabil indicates, sin is among the most important battles of the Christian.<sup>273</sup> This is a view held by Pentecostals in general. Because of the connection Pentecostals draw between how sin makes the Christian vulnerable to attacks of the devil, they also emphasize on how the Christian is empowered by the Holy Spirit to live a righteous life. Obedience to the word of God is believed to be a prerequisite to experiencing the promises of God for the Christian in the here and now. Their emphasis on the Christian being a “new specie” or a “supernatural being” or “a child of God” is also backed by their emphasis on the need for the Christian to study the word of God on a daily basis in order to be equipped and ‘spiritually developed’. This is because the word of God is believed to “immunize” humanity to sin. The Bible is taken to be the word of God, and it is believed to be a source of empowerment for the Christian. The word of God is believed to have the ability to keep the Christian away from sin.. The importance of the Word of God to Pentecostals finds expression in the fact that they encourage believers to read the Bible daily. This has led to the production of “Bible Reading Guides „by Pentecostal Churches in Ghana. These include “Rhapsody of Realities” produced by the *Christ Embassy*. The *ICGC* also produces their own daily Bible reading “The Living Word” for their members. Pentecostals also make use of technology in making their

---

<sup>273</sup> This is captured in Otabil’s sermon, titled: “The spirit of the overcomer” recorded on DVD.

sermons easily accessible to believers. These include the use of television and radio broadcast in the Ghanaian airwaves. Mensah Otabil's *ICGC* has an internet radio, "*The Living Word Radio*" which plays the various sermons preached by Mensah Otabil and other guest preachers to his church. They also encourage their members to buy recorded versions of their sermons so that they could be listening to them to boost their spiritual nourishment. This is meant to equip the Christian to be strong in their faith, thereby shielding them from "perishing" for "lack of knowledge", a phrase usually used by the Pentecostals.

Social media like "facebook" is also used as a platform to propagate the word of God to their members and others interested in their messages.<sup>274</sup> In the understanding of Pentecostals, the word of God is supposed to "re-program" the Christian to enable him or her to walk in the ways of God. The emphasis on the need to study the word of God and to obey it is influenced by the connections Pentecostals make between obedience and the realization of abundant life which finds expression in success, health and wealth. Duncan-Williams observes that "the Word of God is a tree of life that produces riches, honor, promotion and joy." He continues to suggest that meditating on the word of God enables the Christian to "envision goals whether they are physical, spiritual or financial."<sup>275</sup> Dr. Lawrence Tetteh also links the desired success to obedience to the word of God.<sup>276</sup> He observes that "[w]hen we abide in the Lord in obedience to His word, we can confidently say that we trust in the name of the Lord and all the benefits of that covenant relationship."<sup>277</sup> The word of God is therefore stressed very much in the discourse of Pentecostals as an essential tool in securing the "rightful place" or reaching their 'Promised Land.'

---

<sup>274</sup> Mention can be made of leading Pentecostal figures in Ghana like Mensah Otabil, Nicholas Duncan-Williams, and Sam Korankye Ankrah. They post weekly messages on their facebook walls on various subjects of motivation and teachings on some subjects. This can be said to be part of their efforts to empower the believer to be well "positioned" for the experience of "abundant life".

<sup>275</sup> Nicholas Duncan – Williams, "Destined to make an impact." Unpublished, 32.

<sup>276</sup> Dr. Lawrence Tetteh is that founder of the World Miracle Outreach.

<sup>277</sup> Lawrence Tetteh, *Count your Blessings*, (London: LT Media Ministries, 2002), 18.

### 3.5.1.2 Prayer

As part of the spiritual development, Pentecostals stress on prayers and fasting as a significant spiritual exercise meant to strengthen the Christian and also to empower him/her to overcome the challenges and hindrances the devil may project into the way of the Christian as he/she seeks to reach his/her 'Promised Land.' Much as members are encouraged to pray individually on their own, cooperate prayer is also a prime characteristic of Pentecostals in Ghana. Pentecostals believe that the new nature a person assumes upon becoming a Christian also includes an "authority" to make him or her candidate for success and an "overcomer". According to Williams, "[t]he believer has the power of attorney to use the name of Jesus to bring the devices of the enemy to a halt."<sup>278</sup> This state of authority assumed by the believer is supposed to be translated into "life in fullness" but this is activated through prayer. Prayer is believed to create the environment for the believer to exercise his or her authority over any hindrances, whether spiritual or non spiritual. The Christian is thus supposed to pray "in faith", and "with authority". According to Asare, "prayer is what moves the hand of God. ... There are blessings reserved for you which can only be taken by applying pressure. Those who have done much for God and with God have learnt how to make this demand for victory."<sup>279</sup> In other words, Prayer should be embarked on with the aim of establishing the authority of the believer over any situation that might be obstructing the Christian and preventing him/her from achieving the best God has for him/her. Prayer is believed to be the "lifeline of the believer and ... a vital key for walking in victory."<sup>280</sup> With this background, it is a common feature of Pentecostals in Ghana to organize "special" prayer meetings for their members on weekly, monthly, and annual basis.<sup>281</sup> A very popular example of

---

<sup>278</sup> Archbishop Nicholas Duncan – Williams, "Binding the strong man." Unpublished, 50.

<sup>279</sup> Dr. Charles Agyin – Asare, *Power in prayer: Taking the blessings of God by force*. (Lagos. Assiamah Enterprises 2005), back cover page.

<sup>280</sup> Duncan – Williams, "Enforcing prophetic decrees." Unpublished, back cover page.

<sup>281</sup> One characteristic of Pentecostals in Ghana is their prayer programs. Prayer programs are organized, at least, once in a week to create the environment for members and visitors to pray for their blessings. These prayer meetings are also boosted with intermittent 7 days, 21 days, and 40 days fasting programs. Prayer vigils are also held regularly by Pentecostals, especially to offset the activities of "demonic powers" that are believed to operate during the night. Annual "prayer summits" are also organized by different congregations to give members the opportunity to pray their wishes into existence. The "destiny Summit" of the *ICGC* is an example of such annual programs.

such programs is the “Jericho Hour” organized by the *Action Chapel International* on Thursdays, between 9am and 12noon. These programs also serve as a platform of “learning” how to pray “effectively”, “strategically” and “with authority” As a result, during prayer meetings, Pentecostals lead their congregation in how to pray by making “declarations.”<sup>282</sup> These declarations are not only supposed to direct the believers on how to pray, but they are believed to be an avenue for the believer to assert his or her authority over the devil and any circumstance of limitation the life of the Christian. Such declarations are made based on the belief in the “power of the tongue”<sup>283</sup> to bless or to curse. Such prayers are written in manuscripts and tapes for believers to read and play as a way of securing their promised land. Examples include “Enforcing prophetic decrees” by Duncan-Williams of the *ACI* and “Prophetic declarations” by Mensah Otabil of the *ICGC*, “Dangerous prayers” by Mike Ofoegbu, “Pray your way to breakthroughs” by Olukoya, etc. These contain prayers dealing with specific challenges. Here are some examples from Duncan-Williams: On “declarations for breaking financial drought”, he states:

“By the authority given to me by the risen Lord, I rebuke the devourer that has walked through my land of prosperity and I command the immediate recovery of my stolen goods by the superior blood of Jesus. ... In the name of Jesus Christ, I speak from the throne room perspective and command permanent closure to all forms of vain labor, financial desecration and setbacks, and by the warrant of the blood of Jesus I command the arrest of disembodied spirits assigned to rob me of my treasures and fortunes, ... by the lightening and by the thunder of God, I recover all my stolen goods from satanic banks and treasure houses. ... I break all mediums and powers employed through the activities of witchcraft, to hold me bound and under financial

---

<sup>282</sup> On these declarations, Mensah Otabil observes that “[m]aking bold Scriptural declaration is an important part of the Christian walk”. He defines a declaration as “a statement, an announcement, affirmation or testimony”. For him “whenever you make scriptural declarations, you activate your victory in Christ.” See the preface of Mensah Otabil’s, “Prophetic Declarations: 2005 – 2011.” Unpublished.

<sup>283</sup> It has been pointed out that *Pentecostals* believe that words have power to bring blessings or curses upon a person. Praying by making declarations is believed to create the desired result for the believer. It is believed that the Christian has the nature of God in him/her. Therefore if God could create with words, the words of the Christian can also create a new “world” for himself/herself. Eastwood Anaba observes that, “Your tongue controls your life. Your tongue determines your scope of dominion. Your world is in your mouth. Your tongue is the hammer that shapes your world. God spoke the universe into existence. As His child you can also do the same.” Cf Eastwood Anaba, *Changing Your World With Your Tongue* (Tamale: Desert Leaf, 2012), 7. The belief in the power of words is usually based on Proverbs 18:21.



subjugation, and I command an end to spells and bewitchments designed to siphon my resources and I declare that all satanic sieges over my finances are broken.”<sup>284</sup>

The language used in the prayer above typifies the understanding of Pentecostals in their prayers which is supposed to lead to a “recovery” of what might have been lost to the enemy. The idea of the Christian being involved with evil spiritual forces is also evident. The prayer is also illustrative of consciousness that the believer wields authority “in the name of Jesus Christ and by the blood of Jesus Christ”. It also brings to the fore the belief in the potency of prayer to ‘secure’ the Christian from adverse spiritual forces. Here is another example of such prayers of declaration about how to experience the “supernatural”, authored by Mensah Otobil:

“Jehovah Most High is my strength and my salvation; He has blessed me with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places through Christ, His Spirit upon me causes me to walk in divine authority. In the name of Jesus, I come into full agreement with God’s prophetic Word for my life and declare this year as my year of the SUPERNATURAL. In this year, the Spirit of God will move mightily upon me and impart spiritual gifts to me. I’m redeemed from every curse and blessed beyond measure. I overcome the enemy by the blood of Jesus and the word of my testimony. The Lord crowns my year with awesome works. ... My days on earth are like the days of the heavens above. .... I believe it... I receive it ... and I have it... right now, in Jesus’ name, Amen.”<sup>285</sup>

Through such prayers Pentecostals seek to establish their “rightful position in the face of any life – threatening situations, whether spiritual or non spiritual in order to experience the promised “fullness of life.” Just as curses are believed to be effected through pronouncements, Christians are urged to use prayer (sometimes with fasting) to revoke curses from their lives, whether it was personally invoked or inherited. Here are examples of some prayer of renunciation of curses and projection of evil against a person:

“All spiritual evil arrows that have been fired into my life that is troubling me, I reject you and I command you to depart in Jesus’ name. ... Lord, whenever my name is being mentioned for evil, wherever my enemies are thinking of evil, let the Thunder

---

<sup>284</sup> Nicholas Duncan – Williams. “Enforcing Prophetic Decrees.” Unpublished, 36-38.

<sup>285</sup> Mensah Otobil “Prophetic Declarations.” 42-48.

Fire of God strike them and let them flee in seven ways in the name of Jesus. ... Let the arrows of the oppressors go back to the oppressors in the name of Jesus. ... I repent of consumption and swallowing demonic materials and portions of medicine men by myself and my ancestors. ... Forgive me and my ancestors O Lord of every form of idol worship and every past agreement with any ungodly covenant set up by Satan and his demons over our lives in the name of Jesus. ... I release myself from any unconscious ancestral bondage in the name of Jesus.”<sup>286</sup>

The prayer above affirms the belief among Pentecostals that the deeds of ancestors can have adverse repercussions on future generations and how the elements of nature can be employed in the fashion of the Exodus to avert the situation believed to have been caused by the devil and his agents. It is important to “discern” the “right” way to pray, if the believer expects to experience the desired result after prayer. Before his “declaration for breaking curses” Duncan Williams posits that

“Sometimes words may have been spoken ignorantly or willfully but the effect in your life may be the same. I encourage you to utilize these declarations I have prepared for you because I believe God has given me the formula for your breakthrough and blessing.”<sup>287</sup>

It is therefore important that the believer receives *akwankyerɛ*<sup>288</sup> (or spiritual directions) from a more spiritually matured Christian (usually a prophet or a “powerful man/woman of God”) to enable the Christian pray aright. Documentation of prayer declarations are therefore an important resource for effective prayer, since they are supposed to have been put together by “seasoned men/women of God”.

---

<sup>286</sup> D.K. Olukoya. *Pray your way to breakthroughs* Lagos:Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, 1996, 66,153.

<sup>287</sup> Duncan–Williams, *Enforcing Prophetic Decrees*, 7.

<sup>288</sup> *Akwankyerɛ* is an Akan word which means “giving directions”. It can refer to helping somebody to locate a place. It can also refer to giving counsel to somebody. This word has been adopted among some Pentecostals in Ghana as an integral part of the search for the solutions to the existential issues confronting the people. Some Pentecostals have separate days where believers consult their leaders to find solutions to their problems.

### **3.5.2 Deliverance and salvation**

#### **3.5.2.1 Meaning of deliverance**

As part of the belief in the power of prayer to take the believer to his/her promised land, Pentecostals resort to “deliverance” as a type of prayer. Asamoah-Gyadu has defined healing and deliverance as follows:

“The deployment of divine resources, that is, power and authority in the Name or the Blood of Jesus – perceived in pneumatological terms as the intervention of the Holy Spirit – to provide release for demon-possessed, demon-oppressed, broken, 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, they may enjoy God’s fullness of life understood to be available in Christ.”<sup>289</sup>

For the purpose of this study, “deliverance” will be used to refer to prayers aimed at “setting” a person, a family or a community “free” from any life threatening condition, whether spiritual or non spiritual so that the believer could enjoy “abundant life” which is a right of the believer.<sup>290</sup> As noted by Asamoah-Gyadu in his observation above, it is believed that the “power” that makes this a reality is invoked by praying in the Name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Although it is usually done by people who are believed to be specially gifted (also called “deliverance ministers”) for that as a ministry, Pentecostals encourage individuals to do occasional personal deliverance. In this situation the declaration prayers which have been documented are very much used. This kind of prayer is considered by Pentecostals as a “warfare prayer” aimed at attacking the devil and his agents in an attempt to rectify any misfortune or attacks being unleashed on an individual, a family, or a community. The main “weapons” used in such warfare prayers include the word of God, the name of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, the power of praise, praying in tongues, etc. Pentecostals believe that deliverance is a form of a

---

<sup>289</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 165.

<sup>290</sup> For a more detailed discussion on deliverance among Christian groups of Pentecostal persuasion in Ghana, see Bamfo Ofori Atiemo “Mmusuyi and Deliverance: A Study of Conflict and Consensus in the Encounter between African Traditional Religion and Christianity” (1995). (An unpublished Master’s Thesis, Legon).

“spiritual warfare” between the devil (i.e. Satan, demons, principalities, and powers) and the believer. The Christian is supposed to enter the warfare with a “winning” mentality, trusting that Jesus has already won the victory. The Christian is therefore supposed to exercise the authority Christ has given to the believer to “tread on snakes and scorpions, and to overcome all the powers of the enemy...” (Luke 10:19). The Christian embarks on this warfare by putting on “the whole armor of God” (Ephesians 6:10-18). This guarantees a sure victory for the believer in that “warfare.” Prayer, backed with fasting, is very much emphasized among Pentecostals as a crucial weapon. Fasting is believed to provide the means for the Christian to send “spiritual missiles” into the enemy’s territory, thereby overcoming his power, and appropriating the victory of Christ. The liturgy of deliverance services reveals the dependence of Pentecostals on the power of the Holy Spirit and the victory of Jesus Christ in the exercise. The prayers as well the songs during such services attest to this fact. The Holy Spirit is usually invited to “come and take control” of the service. The Holy Spirit is expected to “take control” both in terms of giving directions for the service, as well as sending power to overcome the devil. The following are some of the songs popularly sung during deliverance services:

Holy Holy Holy Ghost,  
Come and take control (2x)  
We need you every day,  
We need you everything time  
Holy Holy Holy Ghost,  
Come and take control.

Still on the Holy Spirit, here is another song:

Send your power,  
the Holy Ghost power  
send your power again,  
the Holy Ghost power.

To express assurance of victory, and also inspire hope, songs which remind the believer of the victory of Christ over Satan, and for that matter, all that is opposed to God's very best for the believer, are usually sung repeatedly. An example is:

*Woadi nkoguo*  
*Obonsam, woadi nkoguo*  
*Woadi nkoguo ampa (2x)*  
*Omma ne ho so a,*  
*Yesu abre no ase.*  
*Otu yen so sa a,*  
*Yesu mogya nka n'anim,*  
*Woadi nkoguo ampa ara.*

This literally means:

You have lost the battle,  
Satan, you have lost the battle,  
You have, indeed, lost the battle (2x)  
If he rises up (against me),  
Jesus subdues him,  
If he battles against me  
May the blood of Jesus rebuke him,  
You have, indeed, lost the battle.

The "language of warfare" used in describing the spiritual battle in which the Christian is engaged is sometimes much related to physical warfare. Illustrating the effectiveness of prayer with fasting in overcoming the devil in spiritual warfare, Emmanuel Martey makes the following remarks:

"To be able—in prayer—to penetrate the spirit world to exercise authority which Christ has given believers over Satan, we must learn to prevail in fasting and prayer. In order to fight a war successfully, you do always remain in your territory; you also (or, at least, your weapons) have to enter the enemy's territory where the battle is taking place. For instance during the Gulf War in 1991, the Allied Forces led by the United States of America had to enter Iraqi territory in order to defeat Saddam Hussein. On the other hand, Iraq also fired missiles into the enemy's camp

in Saudi Arabia killing many American soldiers. In the spiritual realm, it is fasting and prayer which takes us (and our weapons) to the enemy's camp to destroy strongholds."<sup>291</sup>

The battle against Satan and his agents is thus fought drawing on the power God gives to the Christian. This power is sharpened through fasting and prayer, since prayer supported with fasting is believed to yield greater dividends.

According to Pastor Samuel Sarpong Frempong, the Christian can experience God's blessing in the here and now only after having been taken through deliverance. He maintains that

"[i]n accepting Jesus, your life after death is automatically assured. But in terms of the blessings that you have to receive from God to make life meaningful, these demons possess and oppress us, and for that matter destroy what God had put into this life to make us happy and peaceful."<sup>292</sup>

In other words, Satan and his demons ensure that the believer does not enjoy the promised "abundant life." Deliverance therefore provides a platform for the believer to battle his or her spiritual enemies who create hindrances to his or her "Promised Land." Until the Christian becomes conscious of this truth and begins to take steps to "claim" what really belongs to him, he will remain hindered from experiencing God's blessings. Atiemo has grouped the conditions which necessitates deliverance as follows: Sexual behaviors like fornication, adultery, masturbation, and all forms of socially unacceptable sexual behaviors; drunkenness, drug addiction, being prone to anger, etc. Other areas for which people seek deliverance include accidents, chronic diseases such as epilepsy, madness, untimely/premature deaths, unstable marriages, suicidal tendencies, miscarriages, disappointment, etc.<sup>293</sup> The incidence of one or more of these conditions in the life of an individual or a family, in ways that are difficult to explain, raises suspicion of demonic activity which has to be tackled.

---

<sup>291</sup> Emmanuel Martey, "The importance fasting for the deliverance ministry" .in Emmanuel Martey and Emmanuel Asante (eds.), *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* (1997), Vol. VII, Number 1&2, 48.

<sup>292</sup> Samuel Sarpong Frempong, "Who needs deliverance." (Unpublished), 75.

<sup>293</sup> Atiemo, *Mmusuyi*, 94.

### 3.5.2.2 The need for deliverance

Atiemo has argued that the

“main belief which forms the basis of ‘deliverance’ is that human beings can come under the influence of Satan and his demons or evil spirits. Such an influence may be the cause of bad habits, suffering, sickness, and failure in life. Deliverance is aimed at helping [people] under such influences to break free.”<sup>294</sup>

Much as it can be said that on the basis of Atiemo’s argument, Pentecostals generally believe in deliverance, there is no consensus on whether every Christian has to be taken through deliverance or not. There are those who argue that because everybody has a “past” which is essentially demonic, one has to go through deliverance even after being saved.<sup>295</sup> Relating deliverance to the Exodus, Abraham Chibgundu notes that deliverance is “cutting the link between the past and the present so that you can move to the next level of your life. It is removing the Egyptian seed that has followed us from Egypt so that we can enter Canaan and enjoy the milk and honey in the land.”<sup>296</sup> This view presupposes that since every Christian has a past, there should be a break in order for the new life as a Christian to flourish and lead to the desired life in fullness. Others are also of the view that whether a Christian will need deliverance or not depends on the nature of the lifestyle of the person before he/she became a Christian. For instance if the person was personally involved in idol related practices then he/she must be delivered.<sup>297</sup> For Frimpong, it is the responsibility of the individual to decide, based on his or her faith, whether he or she needs to be delivered or not. For him, the blood of Jesus Christ is potent enough to set the believer free entirely, once a person becomes a Christian. In these views,

---

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Rev. Ankamah of the *Word Miracle Church International* indicated to me how difficult it is for him to think that as an African, he is automatically free from all the associations to idol worship. He believes that the Christian must be delivered.

<sup>296</sup> Bishop Dr. Abraham Chigbundu, *Altar versus Altars: Deliverance by Sacrifice*, (Benin City: Freedom Publications, 2007), 44.

<sup>297</sup> An example of adherents of this view is Pastor Ransford Obeng of C.C.C. He expressed this view in an interview for this work.

there is emphasis on the need to ensure that the believer is really “free” from anything that has the tendency to hold him/her behind.

### 3.5.3 Giving and offerings

Christian giving is also perceived by Pentecostals as a sure way to receive freedom from financial challenges. Believers are encouraged to pay a tenth (or tithe) of all their incomes in order to receive from God, who will in turn “open the floodgates of heaven” and pour down his blessings upon Christians. This has been described by Asamoah-Gyadu as “transactional giving.”<sup>298</sup> Malachi 3 and Luke 6:38 are often used to support this view. Pentecostal believers in Ghana also associate giving to sacrificing on the altar. Just as Abraham got Isaac back and even receiving more, Pentecostals give as a way of “sacrificing on the altar” of God, expecting supernatural wealth in the near future. In my observation at Sam Korankye Ankrah’s *Royal House Chapel*, I saw people voluntarily moving forward to present money on the altar in the Chapel at different times during the service. After presenting the money, they kneel or bow in prayer, apparently presenting their prayer to God. This is outside the regular offering time. I observed similar activities at the *ACI* where members put money in envelopes provided by the church and placed them on the altar, even when the sermon was being preached. Apart from what individuals do on their own, giving was associated with answered prayers in all the prayer meetings I observed. Giving or making sacrifice is believed to be an effective means of attracting the presence of God to listen to the prayers of believers. Abraham Chigbundu observes that “[i]f you want your enemies or the attackers of your destiny to eat their own flesh and drink their own blood, then you must be ready to attract God’s presence with your sacrifice.”<sup>299</sup>

### 3.5.4 Personal effort

Pentecostals urge their members to strive for excellence to strategically position themselves for “wealth transfer” from “unbelievers” to believers which is anticipated in

---

<sup>298</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah – Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretations from an African Context* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 80.

<sup>299</sup> Bishop (Dr.) Abraham Chigbundu, *Altar versus Altars*, 44-45.



these days which Pentecostals describe as “the last days”. It does not come as a surprise that Pentecostals are now establishing their own private universities in Ghana as a sign of their interest in building the human resource of people. Mention can be made of the Central University College, the Pentecost University, and the Dominion University College. According to Asamoah-Gyadu, some Pentecostal Churches now award scholarships to needy but brilliant students to enable them pursue higher education. He mentions the *ICGC* and the *Royal House Chapel* as examples.<sup>300</sup> As Saah has indicated, laziness is also perceived as a hindrance. As a result, Asamoah-Gyadu suggests that Pentecostals use the Bible to inspire their members to “apply certain principles of success” to ensure a better life. Asamoah-Gyadu quotes a portion of Mensah Otabil’s sermon based on Jesus’ parable on the talents as follows:

“Do you sometimes look at your circumstances and fold your arms because of how helpless and hopeless you feel? I challenge you to start from where you are now and make a bold transition to the place where God would have you to be. There is a place beyond where you are now. There is a place available for you to grow into. There is opportunity and grace available to shift you from where life has deposited you to where God is calling you to be. It is time to change, shift into top gear and move on.”<sup>301</sup>

The Christian is supposed to work hard too as part of his/her contribution towards the achievement of fullness of life. Just as the Israelites had to make efforts before they ate on the wilderness, and just as they were involved physically in the conquest of the promised land, the Christian has to contribute his or her quota in ensuring the realization of the “fullness of life.” Thus, there is the need for both human effort and divine intervention.

Salvation among Pentecostals is therefore understood to be a spiritual event in the life of a person which leads to a dramatic change in both the spiritual and physical aspects of the life of the person. As Larbi has observed, the understanding of

<sup>300</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah – Gyadu, “African Reformation; ‘Your Life Shall Never be the Same’: Mission, Development and Contemporary Pentecostalism in Sub – Saharan Africa. In *Encounter Beyond Routine: Cultural roots, Cultural Transition, Understanding of Faith and Cooperation in Development –Intercultural Consultation, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2010*.(Hamburg, EMW, 2011), 29.

<sup>301</sup> Mensah Otabil, *The Value of the Dot: Turning your Liabilities into Assets*, (Accra: Combert Impressions, 2005), 17 quoted in J. Kwabena Asamoah–Gyadu, “African Reformation”, 27.

salvation among Pentecostals go “beyond being born again.”<sup>302</sup> As Pentecostals look forward to an abode with the Lord, they also expect salvation to be evident in their existential experience in the here and now.

From the above discussion, it can be observed that the quest to experience salvation in the here and now is emphasized in the discourse on salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana. In other words, the understanding of salvation is not only limited to “salvation of the soul.” Rather, it is expected to be expressed in the material wellbeing of the believer. The “package” of salvation therefore includes good health, long life, prosperity, fertility, etc. There is also the belief in the reality of spiritual and non spiritual forces which seek to deny the believer the experience of “abundant life.” Pentecostals in Ghana therefore stress on a theology that seeks to “equip” the believer to be an “over comer” in his or her Christian life. This is believed to be an antidote to the activities of malevolent spirits which seek to hinder the believer from “abundant life.” Allan Anderson’s observation about Pentecostals in Africa thus, fits the Ghanaian context as well. According to him,

“healing and protection from evil are among the most prominent features of the Pentecostal gospel in Africa and are probably the most important part of Pentecostal evangelism and church recruitment. The problems of disease and evil affect the whole community in Africa, and are not simply relegated to individual pastoral care.”<sup>303</sup>

The emphasis on the need for the believer to be “equipped” in order to “overcome” the “spiritual forces” which seek to hinder the experience of “abundant life” is in harmony with the belief in the traditional African worldview as pointed out by Sarpong that there is the need to keep the required moral code as a way of preventive measure against evil forces which may seek to ‘destroy’ people’s life.

---

<sup>302</sup> E. Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*, (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal Studies, 2001), 407.

<sup>303</sup> Allan Anderson, “The Pentecostal Gospel, Religion and Culture in African Perspective.” Paper read at the History of Religion seminar, University of Oxford, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2000. [http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aanderson/Publications/pentecostal\\_gospel.htm](http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aanderson/Publications/pentecostal_gospel.htm). Assessed on 14th July, 2012.

## Chapter Four

### 4 Traditional worldview and Pentecostalism

From the discussions in chapter 2 and chapter 3, there is evidence to suggest that there is some continuity in the understanding of salvation within African Traditional Religion (ATR) and in Pentecostalism in Ghana. The understanding of salvation that African Christians inherited from the missionaries was 'inadequate' in addressing the salvation needs of the African. With the translation of the Bible into the vernacular, Africans could identify 'another salvation message' which could be appropriated in their own understanding of salvation from an African worldview. In comparing the understanding of salvation among African Christians to the salvation message preached by the missionaries, Henry J. Mugabe observes that

"Salvation was equated with 'soul winning' rather than with the salvation of the whole person. As the missionaries and their African proteges preached about a Jesus who only saved souls, other Africans begun to wonder where the salvation of their whole life was going to come from. As they read the Bible themselves, African found the corporate and holistic dimensions of salvation to be prevalent in scripture rather than the rescuing of souls."<sup>304</sup>

In other words, Africans expect a Christian message of salvation that corresponds with their beliefs and practices on salvation from their traditional worldview. The ability of Pentecostalism to situate itself within the traditional worldview in the practice of Christianity has been acknowledged as a contributory factor to the rapid growth of the phenomenon in Ghana. This has been pointed out by Kingsley Larbi, who has drawn attention to the fact that Pentecostalism in Ghana has flourished on the back of the concepts of salvation in the primal religions in Ghana, using the Akans as a point of reference. In his words: "Pentecostalism has found a fertile ground in the all pervasive primal religious tradition, especially in its cosmology and its concepts of

---

<sup>304</sup> Henry J. Mugabe, "Salvation from an African Perspective" in *Indian Journal of Theology*, 34. [Source: [http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ijt/36-1\\_031.pdf](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ijt/36-1_031.pdf)]. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2014.

salvation.”<sup>305</sup> The contribution of the use of the African primal religious background of Pentecostals in their discourse on salvation has also been emphasized by Allan Anderson. He gives indication of the parallels between African concepts of ‘power’ and biblical ones as preached by Pentecostals. According to him, the “Biblical message of the power of the Spirit finds familiar ground among African people and is possibly one of the reasons for the rapid growth of Pentecostal churches.”<sup>306</sup> The veracity of the assertions by the two scholars can be substantiated by the similarities in the two religious groups in their understanding on salvation.

From the chapters above, it can be inferred that the worldview of ATR forms a basis for some of the beliefs and practices of Pentecostalism in Ghana. Mention can be made of their emphasis on good health, prosperity, good marriage, long life, success, etc, as characteristics of a life which can be said to be a good one. Such life is considered as one affirmed and blessed by God. In other words, salvation should be experienced in concrete material terms as well, apart from the hope of “being with the Lord” after this life. This idea of salvation resonates well with the traditional African worldview. Abraham Akrong has therefore observed about Pentecostals that

“[t]he underlying assumption of their soteriology is derived from the logic of the African traditional philosophy of religion in which the goal of religion is to bring about healing and protection from evil, emotional satisfaction, opportunity for spiritual experiences and prosperity here and now.”<sup>307</sup>

Challenges and misfortunes in life are usually attributed to the work of evil spiritual forces, especially as manifestation of witchcraft. The need to fight against these evil spiritual forces in order to experience “abundant life” is an important part of the gospel message in Pentecostalism. Some significant features of Pentecostalism in Ghana include the quest to overcome hindrances to their progress, and also to find answers to difficult situations, discourse about the Devil, demons, witchcraft and

<sup>305</sup> Emmanuel K. Larbi “*The Nature of Continuity and Discontinuity of Ghanaian Pentecostal Concept of Salvation in African Cosmology*”,<sup>1</sup> [www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj10/larbi.html](http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj10/larbi.html), accessed on 6th January, 2014.

<sup>306</sup> Allan Anderson, “Pentecostal Gospel, Religion and Culture in African Perspective” in Owe Boersma (ed.) *Encounter beyond routine: Cultural roots, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in development. International Consultation, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 17<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2010*, (Hamburg: EMW, 2011), 67.

<sup>307</sup> Abraham Akrong, “Neo-Witchcraft Mentality in Popular Christianity”, in *Research Review New Series* 16.1 (2000), 8.

other evil spirits as well as “spiritual warfare”. According to Akrong, this has resulted in a revival of witchcraft mentality (what he calls “neo-witchcraft mentality”) among Christians in Ghana. For him this mentality, which can be traced to the traditional African worldview, is adopted as a means of explaining away evil conditions which are difficult to comprehend. He remarks that this mentality is

“an ideological construct that provides an interpretive scheme or an existential hermeneutic for making sense out of life, providing meaning especially to those aspects of life that are perceived as inimical to human existence or dangerous to human well being.”<sup>308</sup>

In the worldview of ATR, nothing happens by chance. A spiritual cause might be assigned to everything that happens to a person, especially if it is evil. This background makes it easy to ascribe spiritual causes to the occurrence of evil. However, this view which forms part of the discourse of salvation on Ghanaian Pentecostalism questions the sovereignty of God in the affairs of life. In other words, Pentecostals in Ghana attribute every “undesirable” condition in the life of the believer to evil spiritual powers. This position is inconsistent with the ATR and the Old Testament. It has been argued in chapter two of this work that in the traditional worldview of the Akans, *Nyame* or the Supreme Being is believed to be the one who has the ultimate control over the affairs of life. He controls both death and life, good and evil. It shall also be pointed out later in this work that Yhwh controls the angel of destruction during the Passover. In other words, both the traditional worldview of the Akans and the Old Testament attribute good and evil to God.

Related to the understanding of Pentecostals that any undesirable condition in the life of the believer is caused by evil spiritual forces is their reliance on divinity for existential needs. Therefore there is much emphasis on prayer within Pentecostalism in Ghana. Prayer is perceived as a “weapon” which is capable of offsetting any possible evil plot against a person. It is also used as a metaphysical ‘object’ which can bring desired situations and things into existence, and also dispels unwanted life situations. This understanding is expressed in some of the songs sung during Church services, especially during prayer meetings. Here are some examples:

---

<sup>308</sup> Ibid, 1.

*Mpaebɔ yɛ Onyame aduro*

*Mpaebɔ yɛ Onyame aduro*

*Adeda mfikyi*

*Yesu ama m'aba fie.*

This can be translated as:

Prayer is the medicine of God

Prayer is the medicine of God

An outcast like me

Jesus has caused me to come home.

Another song sung among Pentecostals is:

Prayer is the key

Prayer is the key

Prayer is the master key.

These two songs give an idea of the perception of Pentecostalism in Ghana on prayer. As explained earlier, *aduro* or medicine in ATR among the Akans does not just refer to medicine for the treatment of physical ailments only. In fact, it refers to any substance received from a medicine man or the traditional priest to be applied to achieve desired results, including talisman, charms, amulets, etc. This can be said to be a transposition of a religious idea from the traditional African worldview into Christianity. In other words, prayer is expected to provide what the traditional religion could have provided, and even more since it is “the master key” which is capable of opening all “closed doors”. Through prayer, it is expected that the conditions of people are transformed for the better since the power behind any evil phenomenon in the life of the person is overcome. It must be pointed out that in Pentecostalism in Ghana, Prayer is also perceived not only as a key to unlocking spiritual problems, but also challenges which border on the social, economic, and political situations in the country. This finds expression in the numerous prayer campaigns mostly organized by leaders in the Pentecostal fraternity during general national elections in the country. A recent example of such use of prayer is when Duncan-Williams led his congregation to pray against the fall of the economic value of the Ghanaian Cedi. During a church service on Sunday, 2nd February, 2014, Duncan-Williams asked his congregation to pray the following, after asking them to hold up notes of the Cedi.

“I hold up the Cedi with prayer, and I command the Cedi to recover and I declare the Cedi will not fall any further. I command the Cedi to climb. I command the resurrection of the Cedi. In the name of Jesus I command a miracle for the economy. In the name of Jesus, Satan, take your hands off the economy. Satan, take your hands off the Central Bank and the Finance Minister. We release innovations for the President and the governor of the Bank of Ghana in the name of Jesus Christ the son of the living God. We command new ideas, breakthroughs and a miracle for the economy. Let the Cedi rise. Amen.”<sup>309</sup>

This prayer reaffirms the observation of Währisch–Oblau that “[i]t is striking how even very small and marginalized Charismatic groups perceive themselves as extremely powerful in the spiritual realm and thereby expect to effect positive changes on the social and material level.”<sup>310</sup> It also points to the perception that the seen world is highly influenced by the unseen world. The authority of the Christian to effect changes in the circumstances of life through prayer is also brought to bear in the prayer. Thus, the Christian is able to “command” and “declare” situations into existence. The Christian is also believed to be empowered as to “take off” the hand of Satan from whatever “control” he may have. The worsening economy of the country is here attributed to activities of Satan against key figures of government namely the President, the Governor of the Bank of Ghana, and the Finance Minister. Once they are freed from any ‘manipulations’ from Satan, they can have the required ideas and innovations for economic recovery. The expectation was that by miraculous means, through the name of Jesus Christ, the economy would “resurrect”. It must be pointed out, however, that the stance of this leading figure in Pentecostalism in Ghana has received a lot of criticisms, especially from politicians belonging to the minority parties in parliament. One such reaction is a comment from a leading member of the main opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), that “no command in Jesus name can save the Cedi from tumbling further” during his contribution on the subject on a radio program.<sup>311</sup> Similar reactions have come from some spokespersons of government as well. However, it is a kind of prayer which is very much in line with the practice in

<sup>309</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76Le1oTSCZk>, accessed on 06.02.14.

<sup>310</sup> Claudia Währisch-Oblau, “Spiritual warfare – the royal road to liberation and development in Africa and Europe? A comparative reflection on worldviews and hermeneutics” in *Encounter beyond routine...*, 16.

<sup>311</sup> See <http://elections.peacefonline.com/pages/politics/201402/188725.php>, accessed on 06.02.14.

ATR where any crisis situation is perceived to be spiritually caused, and therefore steps are taken to appease the deities in order to restore normalcy. Such conditions include draught, famine, epidemics, etc. as indicated in chapter two above. This is because in ATR, it is believed that every difficult situation in life is caused by metaphysical forces, hence the saying: *Sɛ wotwe ahoma firi soro na amma fam a na biribi kota mu*. This means that when one tries to pull down a string and it refuses to come down, it means something might be holding it up there. This is reinforced by Williamson when he indicates that:

“A man’s trading venture may succeed as the right forces him, or be unsuccessful because someone is ‘spoiling’ his work by using charms against him. It is impossible to turn in any direction and say of any matter that the gods and spirit-ancestors, or witches and bad *suman* have no part in it.”<sup>312</sup>

This understanding could be an underlying factor to how in Pentecostalism in Ghana, prayer plays so much role in every sphere as an appeal to ‘divine authority’ to ensure the experience of the desired circumstances. This is not to suggest that Pentecostals do not believe in modern science and technology. Rather, it depicts their perception of the involvement of God in the affairs of human. In the light of this, prayer plays a significant role in the liturgy of Pentecostals in Ghana, just as libation is poured to *Onyame*, through the intermediary deities, for his intervention in almost every affair concerning the people in ATR.

Another practice in ATR among the Akans in relation to life and *nkwagyɛ* is the performance of rituals, most of which are meant to deal with the spiritual causes of evil in order to ensure the stability of the natural order. In ATR, different rituals are performed for different situations. However, the ritual to be performed by an individual or a community is usually determined by consulting the deities through the spiritual leaders. Examples of such rituals include *asubɔ* as indicated in chapter two of this work. The blood of animals plays a significant role in such rituals, even though not all

---

<sup>312</sup> S.G.Williamson, *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith-A Comparative Study of the Impact of Two Religions* (Accra: University Press, 1965), 96-97.



rituals involve blood.<sup>313</sup> This is especially so with rituals which has to do with only an individual.

Some of the practices in Pentecostalism, especially during deliverance, can be said to be ritualistic in nature. I agree with Atiemo in his observation that

“[i]n deliverance, Charismatic Christians invoke the language of imagery, myth, and symbols expressed in the appropriate ritual context to deal with [...] problems which are not easy to penetrate by rational and scientific methods.”<sup>314</sup>

An example of such symbols used among Pentecostals in Ghana is placing the two hands on one's own head. This symbolizes a state of helplessness among the Akans of Ghana. It is also a sign of sorrow resulting from a difficult situation in which a person finds himself or herself. In one of my observations at 'Jericho Hour', the leader of the prayer meeting asked the congregation to make this sign, before praying for their personal needs. In this way, the members of the congregation show their helplessness and humility before God who is believed to be the all mighty one, above all powers which may be responsible for whatever undesirable situation in which they find themselves.

Another ritual among Pentecostals in Ghana is their understanding of “anointing” people. This is usually done during deliverance and healing services as prescribed by James 5:14-15. However, the use of the anointing oil goes beyond the context of praying for the sick. The anointing oil is thought to be transformed into a spiritually powerful object which can be applied in faith to achieve whatever end the believer may have. It is used both for purificatory reasons (as a new property such as a building or a car is anointed before it is used), and also as fortification against attacks from evil spiritual forces.

Individual believers also put the anointing oil to various uses, as they feel convinced to do. Lawrence Asante shares the testimony of a woman who had menstrual

---

<sup>313</sup> According to Nana Asabere II, depending on the offence committed and the deity prescribing the ritual to be performed, one may be asked to go to the river side to fetch water without looking back as one sets off from the house till one brings the water back from the riverside. This information was provided by Nana Asabere II in an interview with him on 22nd October, 2010 in Kumasi.

<sup>314</sup> Abamfo O. Atiemo, 115.

problems. She heard Bishop Charles Agyin Asare of *Perez Dom Chapel* preaching about the anointing and so she had her handkerchief anointed. According to the account, when the woman put the anointed handkerchief in her underwear, she started menstruation that very night. Hearing her testimony, another woman in a similar condition also had her handkerchief anointed and also put it in her underwear and she was also healed.<sup>315</sup> There is no indication in the account to suggest that the Bishop gave those specific directives to the women. However, their testimonies suggest that they had faith in the ability of the anointing oil to restore their health. Thus, for them, the anointing oil has 'medicinal value' in itself.

The importance of anointing among Pentecostals also finds expression in their anointing services. According to Asamoah-Gyadu, these are

"special worship services during which olive oil is applied to various parts of the body or even sometimes taken orally, in order to bring healing, reverse misfortunes, or empower people for successful living, as the situation requires."<sup>316</sup>

This use of the anointing oil stems from the belief in its potency to remove unwanted situations and replace them with desirable ones. It is applied with the hope of receiving positive spiritual results. In the words of Bishop David Oyedepo,

"The anointing oil is the power of God in your hand, in the person of the Holy Spirit. It is the power of God in a tangible form [...]. It is what it takes to be absolutely free from all satanic afflictions, as it destroys all discomforts of life."<sup>317</sup>

This statement throws light on the function of the anointing oil in the quest for the experience of "life in abundance". Oyedepo virtually equates the anointing oil to the person of the Holy Spirit. In a sense, he sees the anointing oil to be a conduit through which the Christian can access spiritual power to overcome forces of evil. Some of the uses of the anointing oil and the general perception of the oil in Pentecostalism

---

<sup>315</sup> Lawrence Asante, "The Phenomenon of Anointing in the Mainline and Charismatic Churches: A Case Study of the Catholic Church and Some Charismatic Churches in Ghana" (Unpublished Thesis for a Masters Degree, 2001), 100.

<sup>316</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 128.

<sup>317</sup> David O. Oyedepo, *Signs and Wonders Today: A Catalogue of the Amazing Acts of God Among Men*, (Ota: Dominion Publishing House, 2006), 97-98.

are quite difficult to establish in the Bible. For instance, one may wonder why the anointing oil should be taken orally as it is being practiced in some Pentecostal traditions as indicated above. Or how is the anointing oil supposed to destroy all discomforts of life as Oyedepo suggests? For Asamoah-Gyadu, the perception of the anointing in Pentecostalism is informed by their African worldview. He observes that

“[i]n keeping with the worldview informing Pentecostal anointing services, such services frequently conclude with participants waving white handkerchiefs – a sign of victory in African religious color symbolism – and singing choruses of victory over the devil, witches, demons, and difficult circumstances, a victory that is to be realized through the process of anointing.”<sup>318</sup>

The use of the “blood” of Jesus in Pentecostal Churches is another aspect of practices which border on rituals. The blood of Jesus is considered a ‘powerful weapon’ of the believer with which he or she overcomes the devil and any challenges in their life. In Pentecostalism in Ghana, discourse about the blood of Jesus stresses its power to heal, to protect, and to overcome Satan and all his demons and any challenges in life. The blood of Jesus is also believed to cleanse the Christian. Duncan-Williams observes that the blood of Jesus is “efficacious”, “redeeming”, “sanctifying”, “cleansing”, “justifying”, “prevailing”, “overcoming”, and “triumphant.”<sup>319</sup> His description of the blood of Jesus emphasizes the capability of the blood to get a person restored through forgiveness of sins and being cleansed. The blood is also presented as a reliable weapon which will surely lead to victory. In a direct reference to the Passover, Duncan-Williams suggests that the blood of Jesus Christ should be deployed just as blood was deployed to effect the release of the Israelites from Egypt. According to Oyedepo, when a person wakes up in the morning he or she should say “I cover myself with the blood of Jesus” that statement could render one a “no trespass” territory to Satan.<sup>320</sup> He observes “[w]hen you have the blood cover, you are secured from the torture, afflictions and horrors of Satan. The blood is a devastating weapon against Satan; he hasn’t got an answer to it and never will.”<sup>321</sup>

---

<sup>318</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, op.cit. 128.

<sup>319</sup> Nicholas Duncan-Williams, “Deploying the Blood” (Accra: Dominion Publications, 2012), cover page.

<sup>320</sup> Oyedepo, Op. Cit. 119.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

Referring to Ex 29:16, 20-21, and the Passover, Oyedepo asserts that “[j]ust as it happens when we sprinkle people, when we sprinkle things (cars, houses, furniture, businesses, pictures, other possessions, etc) evil passes over them.”<sup>322</sup> This is another allusion to the Passover in particular and the Exodus motif as a whole. Thus their use of the blood of Jesus can be said to be undergirded by the Exodus motif. Oyedepo further relates the blood of Jesus to the Passover blood in his articulation of the potency of the Holy Communion to bring healing and fortification to the Christian. He notes:

“Everything was done to bring Israel out of Egypt, yet Pharaoh would not let go, until God introduced the blood weapon...The blood of lambs brought them out of Egypt, and none of the diseases of Egypt could follow them. So also, after an encounter with the blood of Jesus in the miracle meal, none of the diseases ravaging the world will ever be able to follow you.”<sup>323</sup>

The wine taken in the Holy Communion is thus believed to have the potency to fortify the believer against any spiritual and physical misfortunes that could happen to a person. This understanding can also be traced to ATR where believers are sometimes given concoctions to take as a protective device against any negative spiritual attacks, especially from human enemies.

The idea of “sprinkling” and “deploying” the blood also echoes the purification rituals in ATR. As described in chapter two, blood plays a significant role in the rituals, all of which can be said to be associated with life (or *nkwa*). Rituals which are aimed at reversing an already existing life threatening condition, as well as those meant to prevent the occurrence of such conditions involve blood of an animal. However, the animal to be used in performing the ritual depends on the deity in question. Thus in ATR the blood of animals are sprinkled as a means of cleansing and protecting individuals and the entire community against any possible punishment from the deities. It is also used as a means of appealing to the deities to prevent pending catastrophic conditions which might happen to an individual, a family, or an entire community.

---

<sup>322</sup> Oyedepo, op.cit., 138.

<sup>323</sup> Oyedepo, op. cit., 71.

In the above discussion, an attempt has been made to establish that Pentecostalism in Ghana has utilized the traditional African worldview to propagate the salvation message, by using relevant similar motifs from ATR and Exodus which are sometimes conflated by some Pentecostals. To a very significant extent, this has enhanced the practice of Christianity in Ghana without having to leave the African worldview behind. The phenomenon has also helped in reducing the tendency of some Christians in Ghana which has been described by Sarpong in his observation that:

“whether we like it or not, many Christians have one foot in that [ATR] religion and one in Christianity. In times of crisis, the best Christians have no qualms falling on their magico-religious practices for solutions to their problems.”<sup>324</sup>

A careful examination of the Christian landscape in Ghana will paint a different picture from this view of Sarpong. With the upsurge of Pentecostalism which, according to Akrong has “the logic of the African traditional philosophy of religion in which the goal of religion is to bring about healing and protection from evil, emotional satisfaction, opportunity for spiritual experience and prosperity here and now as its underlying assumption”<sup>325</sup>, a space is created within Christianity where the religious expectations of the Ghanaian can be possibly met in Church. It can thus be observed that it is through the lenses of an ATR encyclopedia that Ghanaian Pentecostals perceive, communicate and manipulate world and Bible. In spite of the similarities between the two religious groups and the fact that the traditional African worldview continues to provide a fertile ground for the propagation of the salvation message of Pentecostalism, ATR continues to be condemned by Pentecostals as “demonic.” For instance, in Pentecostalism there is emphasis on the need for a person to be delivered from his or her “ancestral past.” Furthermore, some traditional cultural practices such as female nobility rites (or *bragoro*), traditional festivals etc, are all considered to be avenues for demonic infestation of a person and therefore calls for deliverance. However, some beliefs and practices of ATR persist in Pentecostalism, especially during “deliverance sessions.” On this paradox, Birgit Meyer observes,

<sup>324</sup> Peter K. Sarpong, *Dear Nana*, 22.

<sup>325</sup> Abraham Akrong, “Neo-Witchcraft Mentality in Popular Christianity”, 8.

“During deliverance sessions, people (re-)enact their possession by non-Christian powers, thereby integrating these entities into Christian worship, albeit in a subordinate sense... the experience of divinity in Ghanaian Spiritual and Pentecostal churches echoes traditional ways of contacting the gods through trance states.”<sup>326</sup>

Meyer’s conclusion is based on the traditional worldview of the Ewe in Ghana. However, this assertion can be said to be true of the practices of Pentecostals in comparison with ATR among the Akans. It must be pointed out that what Meyer refers to as a “traditional way of contacting the gods” in the context of deliverance is likely to be disputed by Pentecostals. The two instances may be classified as religious experiences. However, in the context of deliverance, it is believed that the “demon-possessed person” is being “freed” from the evil powers that might have been a source of hindrance to the believer. The “manifestation” of that Spirit is therefore not a way of “contacting the gods” but rather, a demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit who is believed to be the source of empowerment the “sets” the believer free.

This “demonization” of the traditional worldview, which can be said to be the preparatory springboard for the practice and propagation of the message of salvation in Pentecostalism, probably informs the emphasis of Pentecostals on similar motifs in the Exodus and the ATR in their discourse on salvation. It has been pointed out earlier that blood plays a significant role in the beliefs and practices on life (*nkwa*) and salvation (*nkwayee*). In the same way, the “blood” of Jesus is very much emphasized in the discourse on salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana.<sup>327</sup> This led to the need for parallels in the Bible. As it has been established above, the Passover and the Exodus motif as a whole is “attractive” to Pentecostals in Ghana, as a module of salvation. This is because the Israelites are believed to have experienced their liberation or salvation physically, as they left Egypt, the place of their bondage into the Promised Land. This shares more similarities with the New Testament understanding of salvation which emphasizes more on what may be described as

---

<sup>326</sup> For a detailed discussion of how the traditional religion in Ghana is demonized and at the same time influences the beliefs and practices of Pentecostals, see Birgit Meyer, *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity Among the Ewe in Ghana*, (London: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 171ff.

<sup>327</sup> The discourse on the blood of Jesus by Pentecostals in Ghana will be studied further, later in the work.

“spiritual.” Thus even though ATR is condemned and demonized in Pentecostalism, the understanding of salvation in ATR continues to be the background from which the discourse on salvation among Pentecostals takes place. Because they have demonized ATR, the similar motifs in the Exodus as a whole and the Passover in particular are alluded to, as way of “legitimizing” their beliefs and practices on salvation, which is rooted in the traditional worldview. Thus the ATR can be seen as a preparatory background for the reading of the Old Testament in Pentecostalism in Ghana.

In the light of this, how is the Passover read among Pentecostals in Ghana? What role does the Exodus motif play in the discourse of salvation in Pentecostalism in Ghana? How is the Exodus motif appropriated in Pentecostalism in Ghana today? These and other relevant issues will be investigated in the next chapters of the work, based on Exodus 12.





## Chapter Five

### 5.0 The Content of Ex 12

#### 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, an attempt has been made to establish the fact that salvation and issues related to it play a significant role in Pentecostalism in Ghana. The discourse of Pentecostals on the subject of salvation can also be said to be informed considerably by the traditional worldview of the Ghanaian, which perceives life to be more than just being alive. Rather, life is supposed to be peaceful, harmonious, prosperous, healthy, and without pain and suffering. Life devoid of these and other good attributes cannot be considered as a 'desirable' and a 'blessed' one.

With this background, the understanding of salvation in Pentecostalism is not limited to the "soul" which will be with the Lord in the Parousia. Rather, salvation is supposed to usher a person into a position where he/she can experience life in an 'ideal' sense in the here and now. In their discourse on salvation, it has been argued that Pentecostals predominantly refer to the New Testament.<sup>328</sup> That notwithstanding, the Old Testament in general and the Exodus motif in particular *also* play a significant role in shaping the beliefs and practices of salvation in Pentecostalism in Ghana, either directly or indirectly. It has been discussed earlier in this work that aspects of the Exodus of the Israelites continue to shape the beliefs and practices of in Pentecostalism in Ghana. This could partly be attributed to some similarities the traditional African religion among the Akans shares with Pentecostals in their understanding of salvation which is expected to be experienced in physical terms. In the light of this understanding, the Passover which is perceived as the "single act of God" which led to the release of the Israelites from their bondage in the land of Egypt is given much prominence in the discourse of salvation among Pentecostals. The blood ritual associated with the Passover could be a reason for its attractiveness to

---

<sup>328</sup> Werner Kahl has drawn attention to the widespread suggestion that the Old Testament was more attractive to Africans because of the similarities in the Old Testament and some cultural practices in Africa such as animal sacrifice and polygamy, which were accepted in the African Initiated Churches (AICs). But he shows that this trend does not hold in present Christianity in Ghana. See Werner Kahl, *Jesus als Lebensretter*, 106-112.

Ghanaian Pentecostals because of the significant role blood plays in rituals associated with salvation in the traditional African religion among the Akans.<sup>329</sup> Having explored the beliefs and practices on salvation in ATR in chapter two of this work, this chapter seeks to study the Passover ritual by paying attention to the text in Ex 12. This will provide a basis for assessing the Pentecostals reading of relevant sections of Ex 12.

## 5.2 Translation of Ex 12

1. And Yhwh said to Moses and to Aaron in the land of Egypt saying:
2. This month shall be head of months to you.<sup>330</sup> It shall be to you the first month of the year.
3. Tell the whole congregation of Israel saying: on the tenth of this month, they shall take to them, each man a lamb according to households of their fathers, a lamb according to the house.
4. And if the household is small (for a lamb) then he shall take, he and his neighbor nearest to his house, according to the number of souls. Each according to how much he can eat you shall reckon with the lamb.
5. It shall be a year old male lamb without blemish to you. You shall take (it) from the young rams.
- 6 And it shall be preserved to you until the fourteenth day of this month. The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall slaughter it, between the evenings.
- 7 They shall take from the blood and put it upon two of the doorposts and upon the lintel upon the houses where they shall eat it in them.

---

<sup>329</sup> See chapter two above for a discussion the how animals are sacrificed in the performance of some rituals which are meant to protect or restore life.

<sup>330</sup> varoâ has been translated here as head, top, chief, etc. See F. Brown, S. Driver and C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, (Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2004), 910-911. My choice of "head" is based on the understanding of the month being the main month of the year. Not only in terms of it being the first month chronologically, but also in terms of importance. This corresponds with the translation of var in Gesenius as "Haupt." See Herbert Donner (ed.), Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über Das Alte Testament*, (Heidelberg: Springer, 2013), 1207.

8 They shall eat the flesh in this night, roasted of fire, and unleavened bread in addition to bitter herbs, they shall eat it.

9 You shall neither eat from it raw nor boiled in water, rather roasted of fire. Its head together with its lower legs and its inward part.

10 And you shall not leave some from it until morning. You shall burn that which is left over from it until morning in the fire.

11 Thus you shall eat it: Your loins girded, your sandals on your feet and your rod in your hand. You shall eat it in haste. It is Passover to Yhwh.

12 And I shall pass through the land of Egypt in this night, and I will smite every first born in the land of Egypt from man to animal. And against all the gods of Egypt, I will execute judgment. I am Yhwh.

13 The blood shall be a sign to you upon the houses where you are there. And I shall see the blood and I shall pass over you and no striking shall be among you for destruction in my smiting in the land of Egypt.

14 And this day shall be a memorial to you and you shall keep a feast with it to Yhwh. You shall keep it an everlasting statute to your generations.

15. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread only. On the first day, you shall also remove leaven from your house; for everyone who eats that which is leavened that, soul shall be cut off from Israel, from the first day until the seventh.

16. The first day and the seventh day shall be holy assembly to you. No work shall be done in them; albeit what shall be eaten by every soul, it alone shall be done to you.

17. And you shall keep the Mazzot, for in this same day I brought out your army from the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall keep this day an everlasting statute to your generations.

18. In the first month, on the fourteenth day, you shall eat unleavened bread in the evening until the twenty first day of the month in the evening.

19. Seven days, no leaven shall be found in your houses, for anyone who eats anything unleavened, that person is to be cut off from the assembly of Israel, among the sojourner and among native of the land.

20. You shall not eat anything leavened in all your dwelling places. You shall eat unleavened bread.

21. And Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them: Draw and take to you sheep according to your clans and slaughter the Passover.

22. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip in the blood which is in the basin. Then you shall reach toward the lintel and to two of the doorposts from the blood which is in the basin. And you shall not go out – a man from the entrance of his house until morning.

23. And Yhwh shall pass through to slaughter Egypt, and he shall see the blood upon the lintel and upon the two doorposts and Yhwh shall pass over the entrance and he shall not permit the destroyer to come to your house to smite.

24. And you shall keep this word as a statute to you and your sons till everlasting.

25. And when you come to the land which Yhwh shall give to you as he spoke, then you shall keep this service.

26. And when your sons say to you 'what is this service to you?'

27. You shall say it is the sacrifice of Passover to Yhwh, who passed over upon the houses of the sons of Israel in his smiting of Egypt, but he snatched our houses. And the people bowed down, they bowed deeply.

28. And the sons of Israel went and did just as Yhwh commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

29. And in the middle of the night, Yhwh smote every firstborn in the of Egypt, from the first born of Pharaoh, the one sitting on the throne up to the captive who is in the house of the pit and every first born among animals.

30. Then Pharaoh rose up that night, and all his servants, as well as all the Egyptians, and there was a great cry among the Egyptians, since there was no house where there was no dead person.

31. And he called Moses and Aaron at night and said: Arise, go out from the midst of my people, you and the Israelites, and serve Yhwh as you spoke.

32. and take your flock and your cattle and go just as you spoke and bless me also.

33. And Egypt was strong on the people to hasten to send them away from the land because they said: 'All of us are dying men'.

34. And the people carried dough before it was leavened, bound their kneading trough in their mantle on their shoulders.

35. And the sons of Israel did as Moses spoke, and they asked from the Egyptians vessels of silver and vessels of gold and mantle.

36. And Yhwh gave favor to the people in the eyes of the Egyptians and they gave them and they stripped off the Egyptians.

37. And the sons of Israel set off from Ramses Succoth on foot, as many as six hundred thousand men, apart from children.

38. And also a great mixed company went up with them, and sheep and many herd of cattle

39. And they baked dough which they brought out from Egypt, unleavened bread, for there was no leavened, since they were expelled from Egypt and they were not able to delay and also, they did not make provision to them.

40. And the dwelling of the sons of Israel which they dwelt in the land of Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.

41. And from the end of the four hundred and thirty year, on the same day, the whole army of Yhwh went from the land of Egypt.

42. It was a night of watch to Yhwh to bring them out from the land of Egypt. This is the night watch of Yhwh to all generations of the sons of Israel.

43. And Yhwh said to Moses and Aaron, these are the statutes of the Passover. No son of a foreigner shall eat it.

44. And every male servant purchased with silver, you shall circumcise him, then he shall eat of it.

45. A sojourner and a hired laborer shall not eat of it.

46. It shall be eaten in one house. You shall not bring out from the flesh from the house outside, and you shall not break a bone of it.

47. The whole assembly of Israel shall do it.

48. And if a foreigner shall sojourn with you and he does Passover to Yhwh, all males shall be circumcised to him, and then he shall approach to do it like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised shall eat of it.

49. There shall be one law for the native and for the foreigner in your midst.

50. And the sons of Israel did, just as Yhwh commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

51. And on this same day, Yhwh brought out the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt, down from warfare.

### 5.3 Presentation of the content of Ex 12

Exodus 12 is composed of two main parts which give account of the same event of the liberation of the Israelites from their bondage in the land of Egypt. These are Ex 12:1-42 and Ex 12:43-51. Each of these units begins with Yhwh issuing out instructions to Moses and Aaron, with very similar formulations. Ex 12:1-42 begins with Yhwh speaking to Moses and Aaron as presented in the formulation:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן (Ex 12:1), and in Ex 12:43-51, Yhwh addresses Moses and Aaron with וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶהֱרֹן. Each of the two parts ends with a narration of how Yhwh brought out the Israelites from the land of Egypt. The account in Ex 12:1-42 ends with לַיְלָה שְׁמֵרִים הוּא לַיהוָה לְהוֹצִיאָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם... (Ex 12:42). It must be pointed out that there are differences in the details provided in the accounts of the two parts with regards to the processes leading to the liberation of the Israelites. The text comprises of a mixture of different genres. For instance, there are narratives, ordinances and regulations, as well as commentaries.<sup>331</sup>

This notwithstanding, Ex 12 can be read as one unit. The text gives account of the activity of Yhwh, who is the main character, and whose activities result in further actions and activities by other characters in the text. For instance, Yhwh interacts with Moses and Aaron as he instructs them on the Passover ritual and its statutes

<sup>331</sup> Cf Helmut Utzschneider, Wolfgang Oswald, *Exodus 1-15* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2013), 244.

(Ex 12:1-20, 43-49). Furthermore, Yhwh engages with Pharaoh and the Egyptians in the land of Egypt (Ex 12:29). In each of these interactions, Yhwh is the main active subject, and his actions lead to what may be described as an immediate reaction. For instance, the interaction of Yhwh and Moses and Aaron in Ex 12:1-20 causes Moses to instruct the elders of the Israelites on the Passover ritual (Ex 12:21-27). Furthermore, Yhwh smites every first born of the Egyptians (Ex 12:29) and consequently, Pharaoh urges the Israelites strongly to depart from the land of Egypt (Ex 12:30-33). Besides, the immediate result of Yhwh's activity with Moses and Aaron in Ex 12:43-49 is the obedience of the sons of Israel to all that Yhwh instructed (Ex 12:50). To each of the immediate reactions, there is a corresponding effect, which would be referred to in this work as 'subsequent effect' of the activity of Yhwh. These are narrated in Ex 12:28,34-42 and 51. Thus the subsequent effect of the instructions Moses gives to the elders of the Israelites is their obedience to the instructions they received (Ex 12:28), leading to the departure of the Israelites from the land of Egypt (Ex 12:34-42). This event takes place as a result of the striking of every first born of the Egyptians by Yhwh (Ex 12:30-33). In the same way, the subsequent effect of the obedience of the Israelites to the instructions Yhwh gave to Moses and Aaron (Ex 12:50) is their liberation from the oppressive hands of the Egyptians (Ex 12:51). It must be noted that unlike the other 'subsequent effects' being described in Ex 12:50, it is Yhwh who implements the 'subsequent effect' in Ex 12:51 according to the narrative. In other words, the accounts in the chapter follow a trend of how the actions of Yhwh lead to further actions which culminate in the release of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. The last but not the least, Ex 12:29 also parallels Ex 12:51 in terms of action Yhwh takes in bringing the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage. In other words, there is a chain of activities in the form of instructions – obedience – action of Yhwh and release of the Israelites from their bondage. For clarity, below is a diagrammatic presentation of the pattern in the text.

Fig.1: A Table showing a pattern within the account in Ex 12.

	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase Three
The (inter)action of Yhwh with People	Ex 12:1-20	Ex 12:29	Ex 12:43-49
The immediate reaction to Yhwh's (inter)action	Ex 12:21-27	Ex 12:30-33	Ex 12:50
Subsequent effect of Yhwh's (inter)action	Ex 12:28	Ex 12:34-42	Ex 12:51

#### 5.4 The Passover ritual: Its composition

Below is a discussion of the composition of the Passover ritual as presented in Ex 12. Information on the Passover ritual is found in Ex 12:1-27.

##### 5.4.1 The flesh of the animal

The animal for the Passover can be said to be central to the ritual. As a result, most of the instructions on the ritual revolve around it. From the instructions of Yhwh, the animal should be a year old kid, taken from the sheep or the goats [עֵזָה] (Ex 12:5). However in his transmission of the instructions to the elders of the Israelites, Moses specifically urges them to take a small cattle [בָּקָר] for the ritual (Ex 12:21). In any case, the selected animal should be a year old male, without blemish. It has been observed that with these characteristics, the Passover animal fulfills the qualities of a sacrificial animal. It should be without blemish (Lev 1:3, 3:1, 9:3, 22:19) and it should be a male (Lev 1:3,10).<sup>332</sup> Thus, even though the animal is to be slaughtered outside a cultic setting, it qualifies for use as a ritual material.

The flesh of the animal could only be prepared by roasting. It could not be eaten raw or boiled with water. The whole animal is to be roasted, including its head, its legs

<sup>332</sup> Helmut Utschneider, Wolfgang Oswald, *Exodus 1-15*, 250.



and its inward parts (Ex 12:9). Besides, the whole flesh should be consumed on the same night.<sup>333</sup> Any leftover should be burnt with fire (Ex 12:10). It has been argued that the command to consume the whole flesh of the animal is symbolic of the unity of the Israelites who participate in the ritual.<sup>334</sup>

#### 5.4.2 Unleavened bread

As part of the Passover ritual, the Israelites are instructed to eat the roasted flesh of the slaughtered Passover animal with unleavened bread [מַצּוֹת] (Ex 12:8) as part of the Passover meal. The account in Ex 12:8 is silent on the function of the unleavened bread in the context of the Passover meal. In a sense, instructions on the unleavened bread [מַצּוֹת] mentioned in Ex 12:8 can be distinguished from those on the feast of the unleavened bread [חַמְצוֹת] in Ex 12:15-20, which is supposed to be observed as a “feast” [חַג] (Ex 12:14). According to the account, it is because the “sons of Israel” were expelled from Egypt [בְּיִגְרָשׁוֹ מִמִּצְרַיִם] (Ex 12:39) that they had to eat unleavened bread since they were not able to prepare leaven. Apart from the notion that unleavened bread was eaten as part of ritual meals,<sup>335</sup> unleavened bread was meant to remind the Israelites of the experience of their departure from the land of Egypt. Notker Füglistner thus observes that the unleavened bread is both a sign of remembrance (*Erinnerungszeichen*) as well as a means of remembrance (*Erinnerungsmittel*)<sup>336</sup> for the departure of the Israelites from the land of Egypt.

<sup>333</sup> It has been argued that “this same night” in Ex 12:10 could be a reference to the fourteenth day of the first month. From the perspective of the narrative as a whole, however, it refers to the night of the liberation of the Israelites (Ex 12:22), the killing of the Egyptian firstborn (Ex 12:29) and the night of watching for Yhwh to bring the Israelites out of the hands of the Egyptians (Ex 12:42). See Utzschneider and Oswald, *Exodus 1-15*, 252.

<sup>334</sup> See Bräumer, 183. According to Cassuto, the Israelites were forbidden from eating the flesh of the animal raw, so as to differentiate it from an ancient custom in which the flesh of the spring sacrifice was eaten raw. See Cassuto, *Exodus*, 139.

<sup>335</sup> See Segal, *Passover*, 167ff for a discussion on the use of unleavened bread in ritual meal among the nomads in antiquity. Based on this notion, Segal expresses the probability that the inclusion of unleavened bread in the Passover meal is to remind the sons of Israel of the haste with which they departed the land of Egypt.

<sup>336</sup> Notker Füglistner, *Die Heilbedeutung des Pascha*, 107.

### 5.4.3 Bitter herbs

Bitter herbs [מרורים] are supposed to be included in the Passover meal (Ex 12:8). Again no reason is assigned to its inclusion. Opinions differ on the motif of its inclusion. Some argue that the bitter nature of the herbs is to remind the Israelites of their painful experience in Egypt, from which Yhwh delivered them. This view is shared by Gary Smith, who argues that the root is used to refer to physical and emotional turmoil, which may be caused by human beings or God.<sup>337</sup>

William Propp argues that the bitter herbs may be a reference to a variety of lettuce. According to him, it is an abstract plural meaning “bitterness”. Eating merorim is to suffer pain and humiliation (Lam 3:15). He maintains that, “Later Jews inevitably saw the bitter herbs of Pesah as recalling the Hebrews’ travails in Egypt, citing Ex 1:14.”<sup>338</sup> Based on the remembrance motif of the inclusion of the bitter herbs in the Passover meal, Füglistner observes that the bitter herbs have a liturgical function to fulfill. According to him,

“Sie sollen den Feiernden die von den Vorfahren in Ägypten ausgestandenen Bitternisse in Erinnerung rufen und in etwa nachverkosten lassen.”<sup>339</sup>

### 5.4.4 Hyssop

In Ex 12:22, specific instructions are given to the elders of the Israelites to apply the blood in the basin using a bunch of hyssop. Segal indicates that hyssop is “employed in two Temple ceremonies of symbolic cleansing from ritual uncleanness”.<sup>340</sup> He therefore observes that with respect to the Passover, the Hyssop plays the role of a ‘lightening conductor’ which protected the officiant of the ritual from having a direct contact to the sacred or the unholy. In line with this, Haran associates the use of hyssop in the ritual to the emphasis on purification and highlights the need to view

<sup>337</sup> Gary V. Smith, “מרור” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, Volume 2*, 1110-1112. The inclusion of bitter herbs in the Passover meal as a symbol of the bitter experiences of the “sons of Israel” in Egypt is also reiterated by other scholars. See Geoffrey Wigoder (ed.), “Maror” in *The Encyclopedia of Judaism* (Israel: The Jerusalem Publishing House, 1989), 459.

<sup>338</sup> William C.H Propp, “Unleavened Bread and Passover” in *The Anchor Bible*, 394.

<sup>339</sup> Füglistner *Die Heilbedeutung des Pascha*, 120.

<sup>340</sup> Segal, *Passover*, 159.

the Passover holistically by stressing on its purificatory significance as well.<sup>341</sup> In the context of the Passover, the function of the use of the bunch of hyssop can only be inferred from this cleanness motif since the account does not spell out its function.

#### 5.4.5 The Blood of the Passover animal and its significance

The blood of the animal to be used in for the ritual is a significant part of the Passover. The blood is to be kept in a basin [כַּף] (Ex 12:22), and from it, the blood is supposed to be put upon two of the doorposts and the lintels of the houses in which the flesh of the slaughtered animal is to be eaten (Ex 12:7). This is done by using “a bunch of hyssop” [אַנְדֹּת אֶזְוִב] (Ex 12:22).<sup>342</sup> From this account, it can be argued that the blood signifies, among other things, a protective shield and a mark of identification for the inhabitants of the house. Therefore once it is applied, no one should go out from the “entrance” of the house until the following morning

[לֹא תֵצֵא אִישׁ מִפֶּתַח-בֵּיתוֹ עַד-בֹּקֶר] (Ex 12:22) since Yhwh would pass over the “entrance” [וְרָאָה תֹא-הָדָם] when he sees the blood [וּפָסַח יְהוָה עַל-הַפֶּתַח]. It is on the basis of the blood that Yhwh will not allow the “destroyer” “to strike” the “sons of Israel”

[וְלֹא יִתֵּן הַמַּשְׁחִית לְנֶפֶשׁ] (Ex 12:23).

In Ex 12:13, it is the people within the house who are protected, even though it is the houses that are marked with the blood. This can be inferred from the use of the second person plural in the text, referring to the “sons of Israel”. The blood is a sign to the people [לָכֶם לְאֵת]; and Yhwh declares, “I will pass over you” [וּפָסַחְתִּי עֲלֵכֶם]; the effect is that no striking will be among the “sons of Israel”.

In Ex 12:23 it is Yhwh who sees the blood at the entrance of the houses but it is an agent who would strike all first born of the Egyptians thus, preventing the destroyer from coming to their “houses” to strike. Thus, the destroyer [הַמַּשְׁחִית] who, supposedly, operates under the control of Yhwh, targets the entrances of the houses; hence the injunction that no one shall go out of the “entrance of his house” [מִפֶּתַח-בֵּיתוֹ] until

<sup>341</sup> Menahem Haran, “The Passover Sacrifice” in G.W. Anderson, P. A. H. De Boer, et al (eds), *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum Vol. 23*, (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 89. On the use of hyssop for purification rite, see also Nahum M. Sarna, *Exodus*, 60.

<sup>342</sup> Based on the elements mentioned here in association with the Passover ritual, Utzschneider and Oswald draw parallels between the Passover ritual and a temple ritual, which also has to do with cleansing of the sins of the people. Ibid. 263.

morning (Ex 12:22) as a way of avoiding being included in the pending striking of the Egyptians by Yhwh or the destroyer.

It can therefore be said that the blood of the Passover animal performs a function beyond what may be described as “physical”. This is because, whether it is Yhwh himself who will directly smite the firstborn of Egypt, as presented in Ex 12:13, or indirectly through the “destroyer” [הַמְשַׁחֵת] as suggested in Ex 12:23, it is an activity of a deity, i.e. a spiritual agent. It is in this sense that I agree with the assertion of Willi-Plein that the blood has a magical component, which enables it to ward off any evil or danger that could come upon the “sons of Israel” as Yhwh passes through the land of Egypt. In the words of Willi-Plein, the blood is

“... eine magisch wirksame Darstellung mit apotropäischer, Unheil abwehrender (jedoch nicht etwa sühnender) Wirkung. Der Ritus wehrt einen „Stoß“ des Vernichters ab und ist irgendwie mit der Gefährdung der Erstgeborenen verbunden.”<sup>343</sup>

This view is also held by Füglistner in his observation that:

“Das Blut des Urpascha hat also, indem es drohendes Unheil abwendet, in der alttestamentlichen Vorstellung vor allem schützend-abwehrende, d.h. *apotropäische* Bedeutung...”<sup>344</sup>

#### 5.4.5.1 Origin of the blood ritual

Different theories have been proposed by scholars with regards to the origin of the Passover. These include the understanding of the Passover is a sacred dance, as a family ritual meal and as a blood ritual.<sup>345</sup> For the purpose of the current work, the discussion will be limited to the Passover as a blood ritual. The choice is not only based on the fact that the current researcher finds it to have more parallels with the description of the Passover ritual in Ex 12, but also it lends itself more to the reading of Ex 12 by Pentecostals in Ghana. Related to the idea of the origin of the Passover

<sup>343</sup> Willi-Plein, *Opfer und Kult*, 116.

<sup>344</sup> Füglistner, *Die Heilsbedeutung des Pascha*, 90.

<sup>345</sup> See J.B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover: From The Earliest Times to A.D. 70* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 95ff for a discussion of the arguments for and against the theory that the Passover could be traced to a sacred dance. For a discussion on the Passover as a family ritual meal, see Theodor Herzl Gaster, *Passover: Its history and traditions* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1958), 16-17, and Peter Laaf, *Die Pascha-Feier Israels: Eine literarkritische und überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studie* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein GmbH, 1970), 150ff.

from a family (meal) ritual in a nomadic community is the use of blood in the ceremony. Apart from the flesh of the animal being consumed, the blood of the animal is smeared on the lintels of their houses. Thus blood plays a significant role in ancient religious societies which use family meals as a religious act.<sup>346</sup> The animal which was sacrificed was to be a “surrogate for all the people and their livestock”<sup>347</sup> in the ancient nomadic and semi-nomadic spring festivals. The blood which was smeared on the lintel was believed to have some magical powers to offset any punishment or assault from the gods and other spirit beings. The blood of the sacrificial animal, thus, was believed to assume an apotropaic role among the nomads.<sup>348</sup> In effect, it can be said that in the practice of the nomads, the blood plays a ‘magical’ or an extra ordinary function of shielding the nomads from any possible spiritual dangers to which they might be exposed. The observance of the nomadic rituals in spring also corresponds with the specific period fixed for the observance of the Passover by the Israelites.<sup>349</sup> Therefore there is indeed a high probability that the origins of the Passover can be located in the blood ritual of nomadic and semi-nomadic blood ritual traditions.

The question of how the Passover is interpreted and appropriated among Pentecostals in Ghana will be discussed in the subsequent chapters. This will be based on the observations made in this chapter.

---

<sup>346</sup> Gaster, *Passover*, 21.

<sup>347</sup> Gaster, *Passover*, 22.

<sup>348</sup> This opinion is shared by scholars such as Ina Willi-Plein who supports the view of the Passover as a ritual whose origins can be traced back to the nomadic past of the Israelites. She observes that the ritual has apotropaic functions, as it is connected to the prevention of the destroyer. See Ina Willi-Plein, *Opfer und Kult im alttestamentlichen Israel: Textbefragungen und Zwischenergebnisse* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1993), 111. Cf. Laaf, *Die Pascha-Feier Israels*, 117-118

<sup>349</sup> Haran, “The Passover Sacrifice” 90.



## **Chapter Six**

### **6.1 Reception and interpretation of Exodus 12 in Pentecostalism: Case studies**

#### **6.1.1 Introduction**

This part of the work is focused on demonstrating the influence of the Passover in the discourse on salvation in Pentecostalism in Ghana. This will be done using selected cases, by drawing especially on sermons of prominent Pentecostals figures in Ghana.

The “Passover” has become synonymous with the Holy Communion among Pentecostals in Ghana. It has been observed that the celebration of the Holy Communion was until recently not a common practice among Pentecostals. However in recent times it is gaining prominence on the liturgical calendar of Pentecostals in Ghana with an interpretation that is markedly different from what has been known among the historic mission churches, like the Catholic Church or the Presbyterian Churches. Among Pentecostals, the Holy Communion is perceived as a ‘Passover’ for the believer today. Asamoah-Gyadu observes that among Pentecostals in Ghana,

“[t]he elements of the Holy Communion...serve as a means of experiencing the power of God through visible substances consecrated for the use of God’s people.” <sup>350</sup>

With this motivation, the Holy Communion is gaining more grounds in the discourse of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana. Mention can be made of Mensah Otabil’s Int. Central Gospel Church (ICGC) and Samuel Korankye Ankrah’s Royal House Chapel where there is monthly celebration of the Holy Communion. It can be said, at

---

<sup>350</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity*, 147.

least, of these two cases that the Passover motif plays a significant role in their discourse on the Holy Communion. The interpretation of Otabil on the Passover in this presentation, as well as the connection he draws between the Passover and the Holy Communion is an example to this trend. In these services one can perceive allusions and references to the Passover which took place in the land of Egypt, in the celebration of the Holy Communion by some Pentecostals in Ghana. Therefore the sermons and the observations of Sam Korankye Ankrah's Royal House Chapel International and the sermon of Mensah Otabil analyzed below occurred in the context of the celebration of the Holy Communion. The sermon of Nicholas Duncan-Williams did not take place during the celebration of the Holy Communion, even though reference is made to it.

### **6.1.2 Royal House Chapel**

Royal House Chapel is a popular Pentecostal-type church. It has its headquarters in Accra, Ghana and was founded and is headed by Apostle General Rev. Sam Korankye Ankrah. It is included in the case studies because of the role the Exodus motif in general and the Passover motif in particular play in the belief and practices of the church. These motifs find expression especially in their monthly Holy Communion Services. A strong connection is made between the Holy Communion and the Passover. As it is done in Pentecostalism in Ghana, the Holy Communion does not take place within the usual church service setting. Rather special days are set aside for its observance; and it is usually observed in the night for it to correspond with the time of the Passover. In the case of the Royal House Chapel, the service is christened "Night of the Blood", and it takes place on the night of the fourteenth day every month, in correspondence with the date of the Passover according to Ex 12. Furthermore, during the services, there are direct and indirect allusions to the Exodus and the Passover motifs.

In the case of the Royal House Chapel, the analysis of the interpretation of the Passover will be based on prayers, exhortations and general observations made from selected services of the "Night of the Blood" in the church. In addition, the analysis will be based on the interpretations given by different leaders of the church. Prayers and songs sung in the services in relation to the Passover will also be analyzed.



### 6.1.2.1 The Holy Communion as a form of Passover

Unlike what pertains in the historic mission churches with regards to the celebration of the Holy Communion which usually takes place during a regular Sunday service, the Holy Communion at Royal House Chapel takes place on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of every month. The name given to the program, the “Night of the Blood”, and the fact that it is celebrated on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month is indicative of the undercurrent role of the Passover in the celebrations. The “blood” as an element is more emphasized in the service than the “body”, even though the latter is not entirely absent in their discourse, as the analysis will show.

### 6.1.2.2 The apotropaic function of the blood

In the first place, it can be observed that the “blood”<sup>351</sup> as an element of the Holy Communion is believed to have an apotropaic function. As such it is expected to ward off life threatening forces which seek to hinder the believer from the experience of “abundant life”. During the service on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2014, Ankrah prayed the following after the congregation had taken the cup, which is believed to represent “the blood of Jesus”: “You will not be afraid of witches anymore because the blood will put them to flight.” This statement attests to the general belief among Ghanaians in witchcraft. In this context the blood of the Passover animal takes on an apotropaic function. It is expected that the wine be turned into blood, once prayer has been said upon it. In line with this understanding, there is no reference to wine as far as the elements are concerned. The wine is referred to as “blood” directly. It is expected that once it has been taken, no other force of negation should be able to “overcome” the believer. It is significant to note the specific mention of “witches”. “Witches” are perceived to be a threat to the realization of “fullness of life”. Therefore their influence

---

<sup>351</sup> It must be noted that during the communion services, “wine” and “bread” are not mentioned as elements. Rather, a strong belief is expressed that after prayer has been said, the elements are transformed into supernatural elements of the blood and the body of Jesus Christ. There is therefore a direct reference to the blood and the body of Jesus in all the services observed for this work.

has to be overcome before one can enjoy a “blessed life”. “Witches” as mentioned here may also be taken as term representing any life threatening spirit or condition.<sup>352</sup>

Ankrah further asked the congregation to pour some “blood” in their right hand and place it on their forehead and repeat the following:

“I mark my life with the blood. When the enemy sees me, when accident sees me, when sicknesses see me, when poverty sees me, when anything from hell sees me, they will bow because of the power of the blood.”<sup>353</sup>

This could be taken as a way of appropriating the protective function of the blood of the Passover animal to the contemporary believer. In other words, this can be said to be an allusion to the use of the blood of the Passover animal as identification and protection, as presented in the text of Exodus. In the Passover, the blood was used to mark the doorposts and the lintels of the houses of the Israelites, but here, it is the “life” of the people which is marked with the “blood”. The belief is that just as the Israelites were spared from being smitten, because Yhwh saw the blood upon their houses, so will the life of the believer be spared from any life – threatening situations, such as the enemy, sickness, accident, poverty, etc., because of the mark of the “blood.” In this case the “enemy” is identified with the “agent of destruction”, which is believed to be the cause of sickness, poverty, accident, etc., that is expected to see the blood and “bow”, as opposed to the situation in the Passover, where Yhwh is the one who sees the blood and passes over (Ex 12:13) or restrains the destroyer, whom God sent, from smiting the Israelites (Ex 12:23). The interpretation of Ankrah does not bring out the dependence of the life threatening condition or “the destroyer” on God (Yhwh) as presented in Exodus. For Ankrah, the “blood” is not just meant for forcing the life-threatening conditions to ‘bow’, but it is believed especially to have the power to drive out spiritual and physical conditions which are believed to pose hindrances to the realization of a “fulfilled life”.

<sup>352</sup> The meaning of witchcraft in Asante is *bayie* which is a compound word consisting of *ba* which means offspring, and *yie* which relates to the verb “to remove.” A “witch” is therefore perceived to be one who removes the offspring of other people. This may literally mean preventing the other from bearing children. It can also mean preventing others from being “productive” in their life endeavors. In other words, witchcraft is perceived as an embodiment of spiritual forces that seek to deprive people of “abundant life.”

<sup>353</sup> “Night of the Blood” service held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at the Royal House Chapel International in Accra.

In what may be described as a ritual, Ankrah asked the congregation to hold the empty cup up while he prayed as follows:

“Any struggles in your life, I bring it to an end. Financial struggles, academic struggles, spiritual struggles, harassment and troubles, I command you to go out now. Get out of that house now. Go. I chase you out. You devils, you demons, get out of that house. Leave that money alone. Leave that business; leave that office; leave that marriage; leave that young man; leave that young woman. Women are beginning to be pregnant, pregnant women are going to deliver, the jobless are going to receive jobs, scatter the enemy...”<sup>354</sup>

It can be observed from the prayers above that there is an emphasis on the activities of devils, demons, witches, struggles in life, etc. However, it is also believed that the “blood” is powerful enough to repel and to overcome all these spiritual and physical conditions that have the tendency to make “fullness of life” elusive to the believer.

The apotropaic function of the blood also finds expression in the prayer of Pastor Johnny during the same service:

“Let this blood speak healing; let this blood speak preservation; let this blood speak a blessing. Any enchantment, and any divination against the life of anybody, by the token of the blood, we nullify and we cancel. We erase every hand writing of ordinance against anybody for destruction and for death and for any calamity, let the blood of Jesus speak.”<sup>355</sup>

Thus the “blood” of the Holy Communion is expected to perform a protective function just as the blood of the Passover animal preserved the Israelites in the midst of the smiting that was brought upon the Egyptians. It can thus be noted that the “blood” is seen as invested with power to offset the effects of forces hindering the realization of “abundant life” for the believer.

“I declare that the life of everybody shall be touched; everybody’s life shall be preserved. Everybody’s life shall be marked even for success. In Jesus mighty name I prophecy that

---

<sup>354</sup> “Night of the Blood”, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2014.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

no evil shall come near your dwelling place. When they come to your house, may they see the blood of Jesus on your doorpost.”<sup>356</sup>

Here again there is an allusion to the apotropaic function of the blood of the Passover animal, even though the blood of Jesus is mentioned. The Passover motif also finds expression in the mention of “house” and “doorpost.” Thus, unlike the Passover in the Exodus where the blood of an animal was used, it is “the blood of Jesus” which is being applied in the “Passover” of the contemporary Christian, making it even more ‘powerful’ in preserving the believer against any life threatening conditions that may confront the believer. Unlike Ankrah who asked the congregation to use some of the blood to mark their foreheads physically, Pastor Johnny ‘prophesied’ the blood with the expectation that it will accomplish the stated wishes in the prayers. The notion of the blood “speaking” is also worth noting. This is, probably, an allusion to the blood of Abel which cried out to the Lord (Gen. 4:10).

The understanding of the ‘blood’ of the Holy Communion being used for apotropaic purposes seems to have been accepted by the congregation members as well. During the “Night of the Blood” service on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2014, some members of the congregation used some of the ‘blood’ to mark the sign of the cross on their foreheads, while others smeared their faces with it, even though they had not been instructed to do that. This action indicates how deeply rooted the idea of the believer being ‘marked’ with the blood for protective reasons has become with members of the congregation.

During another service of “Night of the Blood” on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2014 Ankrah equated life threatening conditions such as sicknesses, accidents, death, frustration, and “Satanic moves” and “antics” to the “angel of the Lord”. This finds expression in his opinion that it is not only the angel of the Lord who has to see the blood and pass over, but also life threatening situations. This is expressed in the following prayer:

“Tonight, let the angel of the Lord see the blood and pass over; let sicknesses see the blood and pass over; let accident see the blood and pass over, let death see the blood

---

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

and pass over; let frustrations see the blood and pass over; let any satanic moves and antics see the blood and pass over.”<sup>357</sup>

Ankrah equates the “angel of the Lord” to the “destroyer” who is here interpreted as sicknesses, accident, death, etc. This goes contrary to the texts being alluded to in this instance. If this is an allusion to Ex 12:13, then it is Yhwh who is supposed to “see the blood” and “pass over” the Israelites. If it is an allusion to Ex 12:23, it is still Yhwh who sees the blood and prevents the “destroyer” from bringing destruction upon the Israelites. Thus, in any case, it is Yhwh who sees the blood; and also controls the activity of the agent of destruction. This understanding does not emerge from the interpretation given by Ankrah to the text. For him, it is the agent of destruction who is supposed to see the blood and pass over; thus making the agent of destruction independent of Yhwh.

Ankrah also suggests that declaring what the blood does in the life of the believer is the appropriation of the sprinkling of the blood of the Passover animal. This is implied in his assertion that “because of the powerful things you have said tonight, when they see you they shall pass over because of the blood.” Thus by saying, or declaring what the “blood” does, the ‘power’ of the blood is invoked into the life situation of the believer, and the blood also repels any evil that might, otherwise, deny the believer of the experience of “abundant life.” In other words, it can be observed that ‘declarations’ and ‘commands’ are believed to be able to define and enforce what the blood should do in the life of the believer. “They” here possibly refers to life threatening conditions, both spiritual and non spiritual.

### **6.1.2.3 The Passover as means of experiencing “abundant life”**

An observation of various services of the “Night of the Blood” of the Royal House Chapel indicates that the Passover is appropriated as a means to the experience of “abundant life.” In the discussion below, attention will be drawn to other motifs apart from the apotropaic function of the blood expressed in the interpretation of the Holy Communion as a “Passover.”

---

<sup>357</sup> This prayer was said during the service of the “Night of the Blood”, 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2014.

#### 6.1.2.4 Covenant

In a prayer, Ankrah suggests the notion of a “Passover covenant” in his declaration that: “Tonight, I invoke the Passover covenant and the sprinkling of the blood.” The idea of covenant in the Holy Communion as a “Passover” is also contained in the prayer of Rev. King Foli during the “Night of the Blood” service held on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2014. He observes:

“Zachariah 9 declares, as for you, because of the blood of your covenant, your business shall be delivered and shall be brought out of the prison wherein there is no water. An opportunity to approach the blood table is an opportunity for a covenant to be enacted or reenacted. Tonight as we approach the table, we declare in the name of Jesus, let a better covenant be enacted. Any covenant of death, that we inherited from our father’s and our mother’s background, by reason of this covenant we declare them all annulled. By this covenant, we declare, let there be a new covenant of healing, covenant of fruitfulness, covenant of deliverance, covenant of abundance in every facet of our life, in the name of Jesus.”

Even though the prayer is said in the name of Jesus, and the covenant is linked to the “blood table,” it is difficult to situate the connections Foli makes to “covenant” during the celebration of the Holy Communion, compared to references to the “last supper” in Gospel accounts. In the prayer there is an emphasis on material “blessing” which is expected as a result of the “covenant.” From the prayer, there is the expectation of “fruitfulness”, “deliverance” and “abundance” “in every facet of the life” of the believer. This demonstrates that a link is being drawn between the “covenant” and “abundant life.”

This can be compared to the reference of Ankrah to “covenant of the Passover” during the same “Night of the Blood” on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014. Ankrah also connects the idea of “covenant” to the deliverance of the believer from “undesirable” conditions. This can be inferred from the following prayer: “Tonight I establish deliverance from death, shame, armed robbers, and sicknesses.” Not only is the “blood” expected to deliver the people from death, but also the “blood” of the Holy Communion is expected to deliver the believer from other conditions or situations which are

considered inimical to life, such as “shame, armed robbery and sickness.”<sup>358</sup> Furthermore, he invokes the “covenant of the Passover” once again in an allusion to Ex 12:36, and urges the congregation to pray, for any silver, or gold that the “Egyptians have taken in the Spirit” to be returned and be restored.

“Egyptians” as used here is a metaphor for any forces and conditions, whether spiritual or non spiritual, that is believed to hinder the believer from experiencing “abundant life” in the here and now. “Egypt” is also used in Pentecostalism to represent the former background and life of the believer. It is believed that such background can also pose a threat to the realization of “abundant life”. The believer is expected to be liberated from the influence of such forces and conditions in order for him or her to experience a new life which is also described as the “Promised Land” of the believer. In other words, the Exodus in general and the Passover in particular is perceived as a “type” of salvation which can be appropriated by the believer today. This is in line with the general perception of the Old Testament as a “shadow” of the New Testament as pointed out earlier in this chapter. According to Bishop Joseph Nyarko Antwi, “The exodus is a shadow of what God is doing today. The Israelites were in bondage in Egypt as slaves and God brought them from bondage into the Promised Land. In the same way the Christian is delivered from some things into the liberty in Christ. So the Exodus is a type or a shadow of what God is doing today—deliverance from the past, deliverance from ancestral, generational, familiar curses into Christ”. This observation was made in an interview conducted with him for this work on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 in Accra. The understanding of the Exodus as a “type” of salvation for the contemporary believer is also shared by others in the Pentecostal fraternity. For instance, in an interview with James Saah on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2012, in Accra, he also made the following observations: “When Charismatics talk about Promised Land, we are talking about two things. For me as a highly educated Charismatic, my understanding of it is about a certain place of glory and honour temporal on this earth. When we say ‘receive your promised land’ we are talking about some material things you can receive in the here and now. On the other side, “Promised land” also refers to heaven which will be inherited post death, where Abraham and the lot are watching from the balcony. That is another promised land.

<sup>358</sup> The inclusion of “armed robbery” in the list of life threatening conditions is a reference to a rather recent phenomenon in the Ghanaian society. Until the last two decades this was not an issue of concern since it was virtually absent.

Depending on the context, one will know which of the two is being referred to. If it is blessing people then the Promised Land will be about material things but if it is about post death, then we are talking about eternal life.” In the same interview, Saah points out that Egypt represents the world, and through salvation, the believer is taken out of it. The metaphoric use of “Egypt” and the “Promised Land” is also pointed out in the sermon of Mensah Otabil as will be discussed below.

Putting the views of Ankrah and Foli together, it can be said the expected “abundant life” is linked to the “Passover,” the “blood of Jesus,” and the “covenant.”

In Ex 12, however, there is no explicit connection drawn between the Passover and any covenant. The association of the Holy Communion to “covenant” could be an allusion to the statements of Jesus on the sacrament in the accounts on the last supper (Matthew 26:27-28 and Luke 22:20). If that is the case, then Ankrah and Foli identify the “blood” of the Holy Communion literally as the blood of the Passover animal in the exodus, informed by their readings of the New Testament. This finds expression in their appropriation of the “blood” as a means of “enacting and re-enacting the covenant.” Allusions are also made to the Passover animal. The blood of the Passover animal and the blood of Jesus are thus used interchangeably by Ankrah and Foli as means of experiencing “abundant life.” It can therefore be said that they equate the blood of the Passover animal to the Blood of Jesus, and the two are appropriated with the expectation that the believer experiences “abundant life.” That may account for the understanding of Foli according to whom the “blood table” becomes a means of “enactment” and “reenactment” of a “covenant” which is expected to override a “covenant of death”. It is also expected to lead to deliverance, fruitfulness, and abundance of life.

#### **6.1.2.5 Miracle**

Another interpretation given to the Passover in the Royal House Chapel is one that emphasizes a miracle. This can be inferred from prayer during the service on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2014. Pastor Worlanyo Agbo led the congregation to pray as follows:

“Because of the blood, before this month comes to an end, may you be driving your car, may you be building your house, may you be buying your land, may you be travelling out and



coming in, in the mighty name of Jesus. The document you submitted for your visa, the document you submitted for your loan, you shall be called before the month ends in the mighty name of Jesus.”

The prayer suggests that the “blood” can cause people to be resourceful miraculously in order for them to meet their existential needs, such as acquiring a piece of land, a car, building a house, travelling internationally. This is irrespective of the economic conditions of the people, whether they have the means or not. Thus, the blood can cause the life conditions of the believer to be transformed miraculously.<sup>359</sup> Besides, during the service on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2014, Rev Mrs. Rita Korankye Ankrah, who led the service made the following assertions after the “blood” had been taken:

“You have no idea what has come into your body. ... You are leaving here with miracle in your bag. You are leaving here with dollars in your bag. Money will call you by name. Money will walk into your bank account, your wardrobe, etc. By the time you get home, your miracles will be waiting for you. By the time you get home, your ears will hear good news...”

These statements show the expectation that the “blood” in the Holy Communion becomes a means for the believer to experience “abundant life” miraculously. It can be inferred from the assertion above that the “blood” of the Holy Communion is believed to have some “magical” power. Therefore once it has been taken into the body, it is expected to cause a sudden transformation of the living circumstances of a person.

The emphasis of Rita Ankrah on the material benefits from the “blood” of the Holy Communion can be explained in the light of the understanding that the blood of the Passover animal protected the Israelites and also led to their liberation from the bondage of the Egyptians. In other words, through the blood of the Passover animal, the Israelites were liberated from a condition which could be described as a “life-threatening,” and therefore the “blood” of the Holy Communion, which is appropriated

---

<sup>359</sup> In line with this understanding, testifying to miracles received as a result of participation in the “Night of the Blood” services form part of the liturgy of the service. On the 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2014, during a sermon in the monthly service of the night of the blood, by Rev. Rita Korankye Ankrah, she gave a testimony of a member of the church who dreamt that she was being injected and she heard someone telling her that the injection was HIV. Afterwards, she tested HIV positive. When she informed the leadership of the church she was given communion which is also a spiritual element since it is the blood of Jesus and after a second test, she was found to be negative again.

as a 'type' of the blood of the Passover animal for the Christian today is believed to be capable of addressing the life interest of the contemporary believer, which is considered to be an essential component in the understanding of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana.

### 6.1.3 Sermon of Pastor Mensah Otabil

#### Title: "Celebrating the Passover"

In the International Central Gospel Church, Christ Temple, the communion service takes place during an evening service, corresponding with the fact that the Passover took place at night. The analysis below is based on a sermon themed "Celebrating the Passover" preached by Pastor Mensah Otabil in one of such services in Kumasi.<sup>360</sup>

According to Otabil, the Passover was a "major act of God" which led to the release of the Israelites from the land of Egypt. In the sermon, he observes: "In the first Passover, there were acts of God ahead of time. But those acts of God did not bring the desired deliverance. But there was this major act of God that brought about the deliverance."<sup>361</sup> He observes that the Passover brought panic to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians as it led to the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians irrespective of their status in society. He suggests that the Passover was the miracle which Pharaoh could not resist as he did in the previous nine miracle events. It must be noted that Otabil does not specify what he refers to as the "Passover". It is not clear whether it is the ritual of the Passover or the act of Yhwh passing through the land of Egypt to smite the firstborn or both.

As a way appropriating the Passover to the present audience, Otabil observes:

"I believe that if we discern what the Passover was and what it is now, then we can also take hold of this major act of God. So that if there have been many things happening in your life

---

<sup>360</sup> Pastor Mensah Otabil is the Founder and General Overseer of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC)

<sup>361</sup> Mensah Otabil in a sermon titled "Celebrating the Passover" recorded on a DVD on an unknown date.

that have not brought the desired deliverance, at communion we can expect a major work of God to bring deliverance to our lives.”

From this observation, it can be said that Otabil perceives the Holy Communion as the “second” Passover. He also suggests that it is possible to experience the ‘power’ of the Passover in the here and now in the same way as it was experienced by the Israelites in the land of Egypt. This becomes possible as one participates in the Holy Communion. This implies, for him, the Holy Communion becomes the “major act of God” for the believer today, and it is expected to bring the “desired deliverance” to the believer. Thus, the need for ‘deliverance’ becomes a motivation for the choice of the Passover text.

In line with this understanding, as the elements were being distributed to the congregation Otabil remarked that God was giving the congregation all that they needed. In other words, the elements of bread and wine used for the communion are believed to have the potency to provide the needs of the people. They are sacred and therefore they carry the power of God to effect transformation of the living conditions of the believer. This is affirmed by the following prayers of Otabil as the bread and the wine were being distributed to the congregation:

“Distribute healing, there are those who are still in Egypt Lord take them out from Pharaoh’s hand. There are those who are struggling financially, Lord take from the Egyptians and give to your righteous ones. There are those who cannot find their way to the next phase of their lives, lead them to the Promised land.”

Although Otabil alludes to the Passover of the Exodus of the Israelites, his interpretation suggests a reason for its reenactment which can be said to be different from what is provided in the regulations of the institution on the text. As noted in the study of the text, the Passover was to be kept by all generations of the Israelites in remembrance of their deliverance from the Egyptian captivity, while the feast of the unleavened bread was to be used as a means of remembering the experience of their liberation; and the fact that the two are to be used for these purposes. In the interpretation of Otabil, there is no direct reference or allusion to the feast of the

unleavened bread. Besides, there is no appropriation of the remembrance motif of the text, even though he quotes and makes direct allusions to the Passover of the Exodus. His interpretation emphasizes the 'power' which is believed to be contained in the "Passover" that can enable the believer to experience "abundant life" in the here and now.

Allusions to "Egypt" and the "Promised Land" in the prayer give indication of the influence of the exodus motif in general to his understanding of salvation. Participation in the Holy Communion should lead to healing, good finances, and general success in life. "Egypt" and the "Promised Land" are used here metaphorically. "Egypt" in this understanding is a reference to any undesirable condition or any condition that may be described as life-threatening as already pointed out in this work. This includes poverty, accident, sicknesses and diseases, failure, disappointment, etc. It also refers to the world, or state of a person before he or she became a Christian. The "Promised Land" then becomes the desired condition or place of the believer. In the prayer, allusion is also made to Ex 12:36, which is an account of how the Egyptians were "plundered" by the Israelites as they took articles of gold and silver from them. In other words, just as the favor of God caused the Egyptians to provide for the Israelites even though they were slaves, so can the Christian also receive from the "Egyptians", here referring to the wealth of non believers. It is worthy of note that it is the Lord who is expected to "take from the Egyptians and give to his righteous ones." Thus the believer (or the righteous one) only receives what is desirable from the Lord even if it is at the cost of the other who is not a believer.

Since the Holy Communion is understood as a form of Passover for the contemporary Christian, participation in it is expected to provide the means through which the power of God expresses itself to bring the desired deliverance from the "Egypt" of the believer to his or her "Promised Land." Otábil therefore prays for the actualization of the power of the Passover to be experienced by the believers of today, as they appropriate the experience of the deliverance of the Israelites from the land of Egypt to their current life situation. This view is also expressed in the following prayer which Otábil led the congregation to pray before the "blood" was taken:

"I remember your blood which was shared for me. It poured from your head, it poured from your hands, it poured from your feet, and it poured from your back. And I receive your blood upon my life. Cover me with this blood. Put it upon my life, touch my body with this blood, touch my soul with this blood, touch my spirit with this blood, and deliver me from every spiritual wickedness by the blood of Jesus. I come into a new covenant and I stand in a new covenant by the blood of Jesus, I receive my full benefits of what Christ did on Calvary's cross. I receive healing, strength, protection, deliverance, in Jesus' name, Amen."

The blood is also expected to be a covering on the life of the believer, and also protect the believer from "spiritual wickedness". Even though these can be said to be allusions to the apotropaic function of the blood of the Passover animal, the prayer mentions the blood as a means of a covenant in the name of Jesus. Thus, the apotropaic function of the blood of the Passover animal is identified with the "full benefit of what Jesus did on Calvary's cross." It is not clear how the Passover is linked to the death of Christ in the sermon. It can however be inferred that the wine of the Holy Communion is taken on one hand as the blood of Jesus, and on the other hand as the blood of the Passover animal simultaneously. The celebration of the Holy Communion therefore becomes the point of convergence for the "the major act of God" and the "full benefits of what Jesus did on Calvary's cross." It can be said that this understanding underscores the interpretation which conflates different motifs about blood in the New Testament (on the crucifixion of Jesus) and the Old Testament (on the Passover) together as if they were the same text unit.

The prayer makes reference to the blood of Jesus, which is believed to be the wine taken in the Holy Communion. The understanding that the communion creates a platform for the believer to experience a "major act of God", as Otabil observes in his interpretation of the Passover, is also expressed in the prayer. The congregation is urged to receive the blood "upon" their life; and be "covered" with the blood. It can be inferred from the language of the prayer that the blood is expected to protect the life of the believer – body, soul and spirit; that is, the totality of the person. The blood is also expected to "deliver the believer from spiritual wickedness." This reflects the understanding of salvation in Pentecostalism which is supposed to be expressed in "abundant life" in the here and now. The quest for deliverance from "spiritual wickedness" in the prayer also agrees with the understanding that the desired

“abundant life” is constantly threatened by evil spiritual forces. Therefore if the Holy Communion represents the Passover, then that “major act of God” should lead to the deliverance of the believer, thus taking him or her from “Egypt” into the “Promised Land”. For Otobil, the full benefits of the work of Christ on the Cross are expressed in “healing, protection and deliverance” as indicated in the prayer above. It is also noteworthy to point out that the forgiveness of sins is not mentioned as part of the benefits of the blood of Jesus. The emphasis here on what may be described as “physical” benefits reflects the strong connection that is made between the communion and the Passover in the land of Egypt, which was a physical experience.

From the analysis of the interpretation of Otobil on the Passover in his sermon and the various prayers during the Communion Service, it can be said that the blood of Jesus is metaphorically appropriated as the blood of the Passover animal in the Exodus story, and therefore it is expected to function as the blood of the Passover animal. In the light of this, it is expected that the “blood” of the Holy Communion also leads to the “liberation” of the believer. The anticipated liberation is expected to be expressed in a complete transformation of the spiritual, physical and social life of the Christian. It must be observed that even though bread was also taken during the communion service, not much is said about it, either in the various prayers or in the sermon. This signifies a preoccupation with the blood as the element “needed” as a substitute for the blood of the Passover animal. This preoccupation with the salvific function of the blood seems to be prepared by ATR and it becomes plausible in this context, especially with respect to its apotropaic dimension.

#### **6.1.4 Sermon of Archbishop Nicholas Duncan-Williams.**

##### **Title. “The Place of the Blood of Jesus in the Life of the Believer”**

(Based on Rev. 12:11, Rom 4:5).

Delivering a sermon on the theme “The Place of the Blood of Jesus in the Life of the Believer”, Duncan-Williams<sup>362</sup> read from Ex 12:22, 23 as one of the Scriptural proof of his sermon. The analysis below is based on his interpretation of the text in relation to the Passover.

---

<sup>362</sup> He is the founder and General Overseer of the Action Faith Ministries. Besides Mensah Otobil, he is a prominent Pentecostal figure in Ghanaian Christianity in the past thirty three years.

According to him, the blood of the Passover animal was a means of grace, as it caused God to intervene in the situation of the Israelites in spite of their imperfections. He begins by asking:

“Are you telling me that the Israelites who dwelt in Goshen and those places were righteous? They had some serious issues. But as long as the blood covered their lintels, it covered everything. God was seeing the blood and not their mistakes.”

Duncan-Williams seem to attribute other functions to the blood of the Passover animal which was used in marking the lintels and the doorposts of the houses of the Israelites. Apart from the identification and the protective function of the blood, he also suggests that the blood of the Passover animal caused Yhwh to overlook the shortcomings of the Israelites. Thus he reads an element of ‘grace’ into the text. From the synchronic study of the text, however, there are no indications that Yhwh smote the Israelites because of their sins. Rather, it can be said that Yhwh wanted to prove his superiority to Pharaoh and all his authority as well as executing his judgment on all the gods of the Egyptians, thereby showing himself as the only true God.

According to Duncan Williams, it was because Yhwh did not “see” the imperfections of the Israelites due to their blood cover, that they were not affected by the destruction which came upon the Egyptians. His interpretation of the significance of the blood upon the doorposts and the lintels of the houses of the Israelites highlights the potency of the blood to cover the imperfections of the Israelites.

From the study of the function of the blood of the Passover animal, the aspect of “grace” is not explicit in the text. It has been observed from the study that the blood was meant for an identification of the Israelites. It was to mark the Israelites out, so that when Yhwh sees it, he would pass over the houses of the Israelites, as he passes through the land of Egypt to smite the firstborn of the Egyptians. The assertion of Duncan Williams in the sermon that “we all have issues but we have access to the throne room because of the blood” provides a clue to the interpretation he gives to the function of the blood which was used in marking the houses of the Israelites. The notion of the “blood” giving the believer access to “the throne room” is

a likely allusion to Hebrews 4 which compares the blood of Jesus to the blood of animals which were sacrificed in the Old Testament. It can thus be observed that in interpreting the Ex 12:22-23, Duncan-Williams draws on the function of the blood of the Jesus in the New Testament in his appropriation of the blood of the Passover animal to the contemporary believer. In other words, he does not differentiate between the function of the blood of Jesus and that of the Passover animal for the contemporary believer. In Jesus Christ, the blood of the Passover animal finds relevance for the contemporary believer.

Consistent with this interpretation tendency, Duncan-Williams gives his interpretation of the use of hyssop in the Passover ritual. According to him, this is where confession/testimony comes in: "As long as the blood was in the basin, it could not protect them. They had to apply it using the hyssop. That is why the Bible says let the redeemed of the Lord say so. As soon as you declare that 'I am redeemed of the Lord,' all hell take notice." Duncan Williams sees the blood of Jesus as that of the Passover animal, which is perceived to be a substance with extra ordinary powers to "protect" the people, but this could only be possible after it has been applied, through sprinkling. To the contemporary believer, the "sprinkling" of the blood can be done through the declaration that "I am redeemed", quoting Psalm 107:2 to support his claim. Thus the sprinkling accomplishes what the blood of Jesus is believed to have done for the believer.

From the study of Ex 12, it is noted that hyssop functions as an agent of purification. The interpretation of Duncan-Williams might have been informed by the understanding that the blood functions as a means of overcoming life negating forces which hinder the believer from experiencing "abundant life." Therefore the "declaration" of the believer is understood to be the means of "sprinkling" the blood upon the circumstances of the believer. As noted earlier, this cannot be supported by the text.

Duncan-Williams urges the believer to declare that "I am redeemed by the Lord" as a way of "sprinkling" the blood from the "basin", thus activating and appropriating the protective function of the blood of the Passover animal to the contemporary believer. It can be inferred that the motif of the blood of Jesus is used with the Passover motif



as its background. He also alludes to the apotropaic and the protective functions of the blood in his claim that:

“When you are covered in the blood, you come under the radar. They cannot locate you. You can come in and go out. The enemy picks some of you quickly because you don’t know how to come under the radar. When you take refuge in the blood, the enemy cannot locate you. He comes into your area and he cannot smell you. All he sees is the blood. All he smells is the blood. And he has to stay away when he sees the blood. It is mandatory that he stay away, when he sees the blood”.<sup>363</sup>

The reference of Duncan-Williams here is to the devil, and his agents of destruction, or the personification of any life threatening situation. The statement above, which can be said to be an allusion to the function of the blood of the Passover animal among the Israelites in the land of Egypt, indicates the belief in the fact that the blood is meant for protection, as it is able to cause the “enemy” to “stay away” from the believer.

It must be noted that from the interpretation of Duncan-Williams, it is the enemy (or Satan) who sees the blood and stays away, and not the Lord (Yhwh) as in the text. In both Ex 12:13 and 12:23 where the function of the blood of the Passover animal is mentioned, it is Yhwh who sees that blood; and it is he also, who has the authority over any destruction that could come to the Israelites. Based on Ex 12:23, which is used in the sermon under discussion, it is indicated in the account that when Yhwh sees the blood, he will not allow the destroyer access to the Israelites. This is contrary to the view expressed by Duncan-Williams which seeks to present the agent of destruction as an entity which is independent of God (Yhwh) and antagonistic to God’s plans in carrying out his destructive activities.

This interpretation of Duncan-Williams is consistent with the understanding among Pentecostals in Ghana which seeks to reject the notion of God as a source of pain. God is presented as the one who wields all the power, over any other life threatening power, and therefore uses his power to overcome all the evil powers of Satan and his

---

<sup>363</sup> At this point, Duncan-Williams gives a testimony of an instance when he asked his prayer team to pray for a covering of the “blood” while he was leading a church program at a different place outside the central congregation in Accra. According to him, he sensed a spiritual warfare during the program and therefore he needed protection against a possible attack from the spirits with whom he was dealing.

destructive agents; thereby bringing “abundant life” to the believer. This understanding is expressed in some of the songs sung among Pentecostals. For example:

Winner eeh winner  
 Winner eeh winner  
 Jesus will win oh, winner  
 Jesus will win again oh winner  
 Looser eeh looser  
 Satan will lose oh looser  
 Satan will lose again oh looser

Life is traditionally believed to be a journey filled with battles. This finds expression in the saying *Ɔbra ye ɔko* which means, “life is war.” In line with this understanding, the believer is thought to be engaged in constant “warfare” with Satan and other evil spiritual forces. But the Christian is assured of victory because it is believed that Jesus has overcome Satan for the believer. This understanding is captured by Allotey in his observation that

“...the devil became the author of pain, sorrow, sickness, sin, poverty and a life of mediocrity even as he seeks ways to dominate mankind. But thank God for the super work that Jesus did on the cross. ...Jesus totally destroyed the devil in the open. The devil has lost his power. ...The devil is a trespasser. Jesus came to undo what Adam did and to restore us to our original state: state of blessedness, state of multiplication, state of increase, state of authority, state of dominion and state of power.”<sup>364</sup>

Thus there is a strong emphasis on the notion of the devil as the source of every life threatening condition. However the understanding of the victory of Jesus over the devil is also very much emphasized in contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostalism.

In light of this, the idea of God as the source of evil is inconsistent with the understanding in Pentecostalism that God uses his authority to overcome Satan and his forces to bring ‘victory’ to the believer in his or her desire to experience a “blessed” life, as a seed of Abraham. Thus if God is able to overcome the devil and every life threatening condition in the life of the believer, how could he, at the same

---

<sup>364</sup> Dominic N. Allotey, “There is a Miracle in your Mouth” (Unpublished), 7.

time, be the source of evil or, in the case of the Passover, the source of destruction, sending the agent of destruction?

After Zechariah 9:11 has been read, Duncan-Williams made the following remarks:

“Blood stands for sacrifice. Some of you the situation you are in – whether it is finance or marriage, etc, it is going to take some dangerous sacrificial giving to come out of it. I see somebody today; by the sacrifice of your covenant, you are coming out of the marital pit, you are coming out of financial pit, emotional pit, mental pit, etc. It does not matter what the situation is, I declare you are coming out. I’ve been lonely, restricted, for too long. But by the blood of my covenant, I am coming out. The blood is the key so use that key to discharge yourself from any undesirable situation you find yourself in. Use the key for a baby, for that business, etc. Use your mouth to invoke the blood, and you will see a miracle. Say: I fortify my walls with the blood of Jesus. I demand the unconditional release of the finances of this house, and the breakthroughs of the finances if the children of this house. I command by the blood of the lamb, the unconditional release of the harvest of this house.”

## 6.2 Summary of case studies

This section of the work is focused on a summary of the sermons and observations made with respect to the Passover, and a critical analysis of the interpretation of the Passover text in Exodus 12 as presented in the analyses of the various sermons. An attempt has been made in this work to argue that the Exodus of the Israelites in general and the Passover motif in particular informs and shapes the understanding of salvation among Pentecostals in Ghana. From the analysis of the sermons and observations made, what can be said about how the Pentecostals read the Passover text in Ex 12? Which aspects of the text do they concentrate on? What factors inform their interpretation of the text? Critical investigations into these matters will help bring out interpretation tendencies of the Passover motif among Pentecostals in Ghana.

The Passover is believed to be the “major act of God” that led to the liberation of the Israelites from their bondage in the land of Egypt. From the discussion above, it can be said that the liberation of the Israelites is perceived by Pentecostals in Ghana as “salvation,” since it led to a transformation of the living conditions of the Israelites. Among Pentecostals, the Passover is interpreted typologically, as prime example for

God's liberation of his people, ie., the believer. As such, the Passover which is also related to the Holy Communion has become a major point of reference to Pentecostals in their discourse on salvation.

The Passover is understood to be the "major act of God" that resulted in the liberation of the Israelites, after all the other "acts of God" failed to cause the release of the Israelites from the land of Egypt. With this understanding, it is believed that the Holy Communion which Otábil perceives as the 'second Passover,' becomes a 'platform' from which the believer can "discern" the "major act of God." The quest by the contemporary Christian to experience the "major act of God" is in harmony with the perception that salvation should be experienced in the physical transformation of the believer in the here and now, in anticipation of an eternal place with the Lord.

Another interpretation of the Passover among Pentecostals for this study is the appropriation of the protective and the apotropaic functions of the blood of the Passover animal. The elements of bread and wine which are used for the celebration of the Holy Communion are believed to contain extraordinary "powers" to protect the believer from any possible life threatening conditions in which the believer may find himself or herself. At the same time, the elements are believed to have the 'power' to prevent life threatening conditions from affecting the Christian and depriving the Christian of the desired "abundant life" which salvation is expected to bring into the life of the Christian. It must be pointed out that from its application by Pentecostals, the elements of the Holy Communion can be said to be used as a "type" of the elements used in the Passover ritual, especially the blood of the Passover animal and the unleavened bread with which the flesh of the animal is supposed to be eaten. However, as the studies of the sermons demonstrate, there is more emphasis on the "blood" as a salvific element. Just like the "bread" of the Holy Communion, the unleavened bread is not mentioned in the appropriation of the Passover in the discourse on salvation.

In line with the emphasis on "blood" and what it is expected to achieve for the believer, the 'blood' of the Holy Communion is taken as the blood of Jesus, and it is used interchangeably with the blood of the Passover animal. Therefore the blood is expected to be 'discerned' (according to Otábil) as mentioned above. In the view of Duncan-Williams, the blood is to be "sprinkled," and according to him, this can be

done by the “declaration” of the believer that “I am the redeemed of the Lord.” For him, when the “blood of the Passover” is applied in this way, every life threatening condition is defeated thus, facilitating the experience of “abundant life” by the believer. In other words, the blood is expected to work “automatically” to bring about what may be described as an ‘instant’ transformation in the living conditions of the believer in the here and now.

Furthermore, the blood of the Passover animal is believed to be a means of grace. This can be implied from the suggestion of Duncan-Williams that although the Israelites were as sinful as the Egyptians, the former were not smitten. He attributes this to the fact that the houses of the Israelites were marked with the blood of the Passover animal, thus causing the agent of destruction to pass over the houses of the Israelites.

In the interpretation of the Passover text by the most prominent players of contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostalism, the blood of the Passover animal is perceived as a means of making a covenant with God, which should facilitate the experience of “abundant life.” This is brought to expression in the above sermon of Duncan-Williams as well as in the observations of the “Night of the Blood” services of the Royal House Chapel International.

From their interpretation of the Passover text, it can be said that the Passover text is attractive to Pentecostals in Ghana because it is believed to be a “type” of salvation. The Passover ritual also shares some similarities with some rituals in ATR in connection with the traditional understanding of salvation. As pointed out in Chapter Two of this work, the processes which facilitate *nkwagyee* (or salvation) usually involve one ritual or the other. This could be the reason for the ‘adoption’ of the Holy Communion as a “type” of Passover for Pentecostals since it provides a similar motif compared to the rituals which are undertaken in ATR with the aim of securing salvation for the individuals, and the larger society as a whole. The traditional African worldview provides a similar motif to that of the Passover ritual, thus making it attractive to Pentecostals in Ghana who seek to situate their beliefs and practices on salvation within traditional culture.

From the perspective of ATR, *nkwagye* (or salvation) presupposes the presence of a life threatening condition as discussed in Chapter Two above. Therefore salvation from the perspective of the traditional African religion is expected to help ‘reverse’ the life threatening condition in order to restore a life affirming one, which will eventually result in the experience of a “good life” or “abundant life” which expresses itself in material well being of an individual, a family or the entire society. In this sense, salvation in the traditional African religion can be understood in terms of liberation from life threatening conditions. The processes which lead to salvation in ATR usually involve one ritual or the other. These rituals may involve blood or not, depending on the life threatening condition. The association of ritual with the process of salvation in ATR is similar to the Passover ritual which facilitated the final release of the Israelites from their bondage in the land of Egypt. The beliefs and practices of salvation from the perspective of the traditional African religion can therefore be said to be an influencing factor that makes the Passover an attractive “type” of salvation for Pentecostals in Ghana. This may also be cited as the basis for the interpretation given to the Holy Communion by Pentecostals in Ghana as the case studies have demonstrated.

### **6.3 Evaluation**

This section of the work will be focused on an evaluation of the reading of the Passover text in Ex 12 by Pentecostals, using the case studies above. As mentioned in Chapter One of this work, Ukpong’s evaluative approach will be used as a basis for the evaluation. The choice of this approach is based on its ‘all inclusiveness’ in interpreting the Bible. It focuses on an interpretation which takes the cultural, social, economic, and the political background (or life interest) of the interpreter into account, without neglecting the need for a critical reading of the text, using the historical critical method as a tool. Therefore results from the study of Ex 12 in the previous chapter will be an important point of reference in the evaluation of Pentecostal reading of Ex 12 as presented in the case studies.

### 6.3.1 Neglect of the historical context

The interpretations of the text by the Pentecostals, as demonstrated in the case studies, consider neither the historical setting nor the literary setting of Ex 12. Questions such as the function of the Passover in the process of the liberation of the Israelites were not considered in the interpretations. For instance, it can be said that generally, the fact that the Passover is one of the plagues is not discussed in their interpretation of the text. The sermon of Otabil, however compares it with the other plagues (“other acts of God” as he calls them) and emphasizes on the Passover as the “mighty act of God”, thus bringing out its special role in the liberation of the Israelites from their bondage in the land of Egypt. Besides, the possible existence of the blood ritual among the ancient nomadic and semi-nomadic communities is also not connected to their emphasis and allusions to the apotropaic function of the blood of the Passover animal. It can be observed that Old Testament motifs of actual courses for Pentecostals such as the “blood” in Ex 12 are generally de-contextualized and uncritically re-contextualized and inverted with meaning of the contemporary reading context.

### 6.3.2 “Selective” interpretation and appropriation of text

One significant feature of the interpretation of Ex 12 among the Pentecostals is their neglect of the feast of the unleavened bread in their interpretation of the text even though it is tightly connected to the Passover in Ex. Not only is unleavened bread part of the Passover meal, but also the feast of the unleavened bread is instituted with the Passover to be used in remembrance of the release of the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt according to Ex 12:14 as the analysis revealed. The text is specific about how the Passover is to be celebrated by all generations. From the discussion of the sermons and the observations made, it can be said that the remembrance motif does not constitute a part of the discourse of Pentecostals on the Passover. It is the blood of the Passover animal that is almost exclusively highlighted.

From the discussions on the selected Pentecostals for the study, it can be said that generally, the feast of the unleavened bread is neither mentioned nor alluded to in

the discourse of the Pentecostals on the Passover. It is only in the *Royal House Chapel*, where “bread” as an element of the Holy Communion was mentioned. Even in this instance, which was in the context of the Holy Communion, the bread was expected to function “magically” or “automatically” in causing people to be healed and also receiving their ‘breakthroughs’, thus creating a condition that can be described as life affirming for the believer. In the interpretation of the Passover by the Pentecostals in Ghana, there is an attempt to make it possible for the Christian today to experience or actualize the liberation of the Israelites. Thus the remembrance motif associated with the Passover which is emphasized by the feast of the unleavened bread is not discussed among the Pentecostals. The Passover, which is very much alluded to, can also not be said to be exhaustively applied. The analysis of the sermons and the observations demonstrate what may be described as an ‘over emphasis’ on the blood of the Passover animal. Other elements involved in the Passover ritual are, at most, mentioned in passing in their readings, even though their interpretation can be said to be focusing on the ritual aspect of the text.

The neglect of the feast of the unleavened bread in the interpretation of the Passover text in Ex 12 and the “over-emphasis” on the blood of the Passover animal among Pentecostals in Ghana also finds expression in their perception of the Holy Communion as a “type” of Passover for the believer today. As pointed out in the analysis of the sermons and the observations, the Holy Communion becomes a platform for Pentecostals on which “blood” is provided to be “applied” with a view to experiencing the “major act of God” which can be “discerned” to facilitate the liberation of the believer from his or her “Egypt” into his or her “Promised Land.” The Pentecostals do not differentiate between the wine, which represents the blood of Jesus in the Holy Communion and the blood of the Passover lamb. It can be observed that the ‘blood’ of the Holy Communion is literally applied as the blood of the Passover animal, and therefore it is believed that, the participation in the Lord’s Supper is a call to experience “the major act of God” which is expected to bring about an instant and miraculous transformation in the existential location of the believer. In other words, even though the Holy Communion is also supposed to be used in remembrance of the suffering, death and his resurrection of Jesus Christ, it has become a platform where the power of God is expected to be manifested in order to reverse any life threatening condition in which the believer may find himself or herself, so that the believer can experience “abundant life.” Thus, the “remembrance”



aspect of the Holy Communion is also neglected as well. Here again the focus is on the “blood” of the Passover animal which is expected to bring about the liberation of the believer. The acknowledgment of the Holy Communion as another Passover, according to Otabil’s sermon, also implies an admission of the open invitation to “whosoever believes in him” to participate in the “Passover” which was, hitherto, restricted to Israelites or those who became Israelites through circumcision. This can be said to be an invitation for all to share in the “spiritual” liberation which is made available through the killing of the Jesus, the Passover lamb.

Furthermore, in drawing parallels between the Passover in the land of Egypt and the Holy Communion, no attempt is made by the Pentecostals who were studied to provide a connection of the Passover to the Holy Communion, apart from Otabil whose sermon provides a basis for inferences from the Passover in Egypt and the “Passover” in the New Testament. None of them refers, for example, to the Gospel of John which identifies Jesus as the Passover lamb that was sacrificed on Good Friday (John 12: 13, 19) as opposed to the scenarios as presented in the Synoptic Gospels. It can thus be said that in interpreting the Passover text in Ex 12, Pentecostals tend to focus mainly on the blood of the Passover animal and its apotropaic function. The other elements that are involved in the Passover ritual are neglected as they are not even mentioned. The “blood” of the Holy Communion is also appropriated interchangeably without drawing any connections between the blood of the Passover animal and the ‘blood’ of the Holy Communion.

From the above, it can be concluded that the blood of the Passover animal is the “center of attraction” to Pentecostals in their allusion to the Passover. This can be said to be the reason for the various interpretations which have been given to the blood of the Passover animal as depicted in the analysis of the sermons and the observations made. There are, however, aspects of the interpretations which do not do justice to the text. Apart from the fact that the ‘blood’ as an element in the Holy Communion is taken literary as the blood of the Passover animal, the two are conflated thus, literally equating the blood of Jesus with the blood of the Passover animal. An example is the prayer of Otabil as the elements of the Holy Communion were being distributed. He prayed as follows:

“Distribute healing, there are those who are still in Egypt Lord take them out from Pharaoh’s hand. There are those who are struggling financially, Lord take from the Egyptians and give to your righteous ones. There are those who cannot find their way to the next phase of their lives, lead them to the Promised land.”

Even though the elements being distributed in the Holy Communion are believed to be the blood and the body of Jesus Christ, the prayer demonstrates the strong connection drawn between the elements and the Passover in Egypt according to Ex 12.

### **6.3.3 Blood of the Passover animal as a means of grace**

Besides, it has been pointed out in the analysis of the sermons that the blood of the Passover animal was interpreted by Duncan-Williams as a means of grace. This is also not supported by the study of the text. According to the text, the blood was to be a sign of identification for Yhwh, and also it was meant to ensure the protection of the first born of the Israelites, as the first born of the Egyptians were smitten. According to the account, the first born of the Egyptians were smitten as a result of the refusal of Pharaoh to release the Israelites from their bondage in the land of Egypt. In fact that was the plague Yhwh had promised to send to the land of Egypt, if Pharaoh refused to liberate the Israelites (Ex 4:22-23). In other words, the first born of the Egyptians were not killed for their individual sins as such. Rather, the Passover can be said to be part of the overall plan of God to gain glory for himself through the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. The notion of the blood of the Passover animal being a means of grace can therefore be said to be a theological imposition on the text.

### **6.3.4 (Mis)interpretation of the apotropaic function of the blood of the Passover animal**

Another appropriation of the apotropaic function of the blood of the Passover animal among Pentecostals in Ghana which can be said to be inconsistent with the outcome of the study of Ex 12 is the activities of the “destroyer” and that of Yhwh. From the analysis of the various Pentecostal readings of the Passover text, it appears as if the

“destroyer” was working independently of Yhwh. Furthermore, it is the “destroyer” which is believed to “see the blood” as a mark of identification and “pass over” the believer so that no harm will come to him or her. This understanding is very much emphasized in the sermon of Duncan-Williams and the observations from the *Royal House Chapel International*. This is contrary to the textual according to which it is Yhwh who “sees” the blood. Furthermore, the study of the text demonstrates that the “destroyer” is dependent on Yhwh in carrying out his activities. This reading of the text which seeks to reject the notion that God can allow evil circumstances in the life of the believer is inconsistent with the presentation of God in Exodus and in the Old Testament as the sovereign one who determines the course of life and death. For instance, God is the one who allows Satan to inflict pain on Job (Job 1:12); God is the one who sends an evil spirit to people (Judges 9:23; 1Samuel 16:15ff; 18:10); God is the one who closes the womb of women so that they could not give birth (Gen 20:18; 1Samuel 1:6), etc.

In this respect, the reading of the Pentecostals can also not be said to be informed by the traditional African worldview either. From the perspective of the traditional worldview of the Akans, Onyame is ultimately responsible for both good and evil. As indicated in Chapter Two of this work, it is believed that *Onyame* is the one who ultimately determines how every circumstance turns out. The saying “*ade nyinaa ne Nyame*” (everything depends on God) affirms this understanding. Another saying “*Onyame nkum wo a worenwu*” meaning “you will not die unless God sanctions it”, also ascribes death and life to God. In other words, *Onyame* is believed to be ultimately responsible for everything that happens to people in this life. This understanding is expressed in the everyday life of Ghanaians, as it is common to see inscriptions like “Unless God” on cars and shops of people. Thus, God is believed to be the ultimate source of good and evil in the traditional worldview of the Akans.

What factors could, therefore, account for this reading of the text by the Pentecostals? It can be argued that the Pentecostals read the Passover text in Ex 12 with the expectation that they can activate the “mighty act of God” in the here and now to facilitate their experience of “abundant life.” This need could be a factor that causes Pentecostals to read their ‘own’ meaning uncritically into the text. This expectation could be informed by their reading of the New Testament, with emphasis on the power of Jesus over demons, especially in the miracle stories of the Synoptic

Gospels. Thus, demon-possessed people are ‘set free’ as the power of the devil over their lives is ‘broken.’ This perception of the power of God at work in the New Testament can therefore be said to influence the reading of Pentecostals that rejecting the notion that God can be the source of evil. In the light of this, Kahl observes, based on his analysis of Ukpong’s research on the use of the Bible in Nigeria, that the New Testament is generally preferred to the Old Testament due to the demonstration of the Power of Jesus.<sup>365</sup>

“In Jesus kulminierte die rettende Allmacht Gottes auf Erden. Sie erweise sich konkret in Wohltaten für die Gläubigen, indem sie Leben fördert. Der Zugang zur δύναμις θεοῦ sei seit Jesu Auftreten durch die Präsenz des Geistes Gottes gegeben. In der Verbundenheit mit diesem Geist erwarten die Gläubigen konkrete Manifestationen des segensreichen Einwirkens der göttlichen Power in ihrem Leben. Das Interesse an dieser Allmacht geht im Rahmen der vorgegebenen Kosmologie einher mit dem Interesse an der Abwehr widergöttlicher, dämonischer Mächte, die das Leben bedrohen. Diese kosmologische Grundannahme von einer /lebensspendenden, göttlichen Macht/ versus /lebensbedrohlichen, widergöttlichen Mächten/ ist aus der Perspektive afrikanischer Leser und Leserinnen bzw. Hörer und Hörerinnen im Neuen Testament deutlich wiederzuerkennen, insbesondere in der häufigen Nennung von Dämonen oder dem Satan als von Gott unabhängige, ihm entgegenstrebende, aber von Christus überwundene Mächte.”<sup>366</sup>

From the above observation, Kahl suggests that the reading of the New Testament as well as the particular dualistic cosmology shared by many Christians in the West as a missionary legacy informs the rejection of God as the source of evil. As has been pointed out, in ATR there is the belief in the existence of spirits like witchcraft which can destroy the life of others. These spirits, however, do not operate independently of *Onyame*, as explained with some sayings of the Akans above. This understanding is also summed up in “*Gye Nyame*” (except God), a popular symbol of the Akans. In other words, in ATR, Nyame is perceived as the “Supreme Being”, who wields the ultimate authority over everything, whether good or bad. It can therefore be concluded that the reading of the Pentecostals that the “destroyer” acts independently of Yhwh could be informed by their reading of the New Testament, which emphasizes more the power of God at work in Jesus, without a corresponding

<sup>365</sup> Werner Kahl, *Jesus als Lebensretter*, 255ff.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid., 256-257.

highlight on the cross of Jesus in particular, and the suffering of the apostles in general.

This mode of reading the New Testament text among Pentecostals has been pointed out by Asamoah-Gyadu:

“The Christological meaning of Holy Communion lay not so much in participating in Christ’s suffering and having fellowship with him and the Church Militant, but rather in accessing the potential for human empowerment that comes through the breaking of the body and the shedding of the blood of Christ.”<sup>367</sup>

This way of interpreting the text by the Pentecostals can be described as ‘forcing’ meaning into the text.

From the foregoing discussion, it can be observed that in their interpretation and appropriation of the Passover text according to Ex 12, Pentecostals in Ghana focus on the apotropaic function of the blood of the Passover animal. This is done with the expectation that, every life threatening conditions, both spiritual and non spiritual will be repelled when the “blood” is “applied.”

The fact that the Passover and the feast of the unleavened bread in Ex 12 are instituted to be commemorated by all generations of the Israelites as a way of sharing their experience with their younger generations, as has been described, is neglected in the interpretation of the text by Pentecostals. This suggests an interest in appropriating the “power of God” which caused the release of the Israelites from their Egyptian bondage, rather than observing the Passover as a historical event. In other words, Pentecostals focus on aspects of the text which they believe can bring about a transformation in their existential condition. Thus matters of remembrance and history do not have much relevance to them. It can therefore be said that, the Passover text in Ex 12 is read because its “power” can be appropriated by the believer today. In that sense, the text becomes a text for today’s readers and listeners, and not just a text about some people in history. This way of reading the text is in line with the perception of the Bible as the Word of God and therefore a

---

<sup>367</sup> Asmoah-Gyadu, *Contemporary Christianity*, 147.

sacred book, and not an ordinary one, which is expected to demonstrate the power of God once it is read. It is therefore read among Pentecostals with the expectation of life-transformation that will facilitate the experience of “abundant life.” Asamoah-Gyadu has related the perception of the sacredness of the Bible in Africa to the perception of Africans of the Qur’an and words in the African traditional context before the translation of the Bible into the vernacular. According to him,

“[t]he Qur’an was read, but it was also used for various talismanic purposes. In the traditional context, words, especially if spoken in the name of a supernatural being like a holy God, have performative effects. It is this mindset that has determined how the Bible and its contents have been appropriated in African Christianity.”<sup>368</sup>

Asamoah-Gyadu’s observation reiterates the point made in Chapter Two of this work that in ATR, the words of a person in authority are believed to have both spiritual and non spiritual influence. With this thought, the Bible, which is believed to be the word of God, is also regarded as a sacred book. This understanding may also account for the urgency placed on making declarations based on the Word of God among Pentecostals in Ghana as pointed out in Chapter Three of this work. This perception of the Bible can be a motivation for the interpretation of Ex 12 among Pentecostals as pointed out in the analysis of their readings of Ex 12. It must be noted, however, that the assertion of Asamoah-Gyadu cannot be said to be generally the case for all readers of the Bible in Africa as suggested. Much as there are “ordinary” readers of the Bible, there are also those who are guided by the historical-critical tools in their reading of the Bible in Africa, especially in the historic Mission Churches.

#### **6.4 Blood in ATR of the Akans**

It is worth investigating why Pentecostals emphasize on the “blood” motif at the neglect of other aspects of the Passover in their reading of Ex 12. A possible reason for this approach of reading the text among Pentecostals is the traditional culture as dominant reading matrix of the Akans in particular and of Ghanaians in general. Blood plays a very important role in the performance of rituals associated *nkwagyee* or salvation. These rituals are undertaken to restore cosmic balance between the

---

<sup>368</sup> Ibid, 177.

visible and the invisible world, and therefore can be meant for reversing a situation which can be said to be life threatening, or meant for preventing the occurrence of any life threatening situation. An example is the *kyiribra* ritual.<sup>369</sup> This is a ritual which is meant to reverse the effect of the anger of the deities caused by a girl who engaged herself in sexual activities before her public 'out dooring' as a matured girl. In the traditional society, this was perceived as a taboo that incurs the anger of the deities both to the parties involved and the community as a whole. Therefore a ritual is performed to reverse the potential life threatening condition which would result from the act. An animal is killed and the blood is poured on the girl from her head down her body. This is believed to be a way of 'cleansing' her of any 'impurity' that her action might have brought upon herself and the society as a whole.<sup>370</sup> Furthermore, from the description of an Akan ritual about salvation in Chapter Two it can be said that blood plays a key role in either preventing a life threatening condition from happening, or reversing its continued effect once it has occurred. For instance, if there is sexual misconduct, especially in the forest, it is believed that the land is defiled. In that case the need arise for a ritual to be performed to pacify the deities so that the culprits are also spared of any punishment that could have resulted from their act. Such rituals involve the slaughtering of an animal, such as a sheep. The blood of the animal is used to perform a ritual at the place the incident took place as a means of purification. Some of the blood of the animal is also used to 'cleanse' the 'black stools'<sup>371</sup> since it is believed that such acts defile the stools as well.<sup>372</sup> According to Sarpong,

<sup>369</sup> *Kyiribra* is a compound word from two Twi words, *kyiri* which means "to hate" and *bra* which means "life" or "menses." Therefore the word means to hate life or to hate menses. According to Sarpong, *Kyiribra* is the offence which a girl, with her accomplice, commits by 'taking seed' before the performance of her nobility rite." See Peter Sarpong, *Girls' Nobility Rites in Ashanti* (Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1977), 48.

<sup>370</sup> See *ibid.* 47-53 for details of the *kyiribra* ritual. It must be pointed out that this ritual is hardly practiced, even though it remains an acceptable practice in the traditional religion among the Akans. Even before the current campaign on human rights which seek to eradicate such cultural practices, Sarpong informs us that in the Offinso chiefdom, where he conducted his research only one of such ritual was performed, and this was in 1961. *Ibid.* 49.

<sup>371</sup> A Stool is made of carved wood. They are used by chiefs and queen mother, especially whenever they are performing duties in public in their capacity as chief or queen mother. At the 'sacred houses' of families and communities of the Akans, the ancestors are represented by the stools which they are believed to have used during their existence in this world. David Kumah observes that the stools "serve as ancestral shrines through which ceremonies relating to the ancestors are performed." See David Kumah, *Stools in Asante* (Master's Thesis, submitted to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, 2009) xix <http://ir.knust.edu.gh/bitstream/123456789/326/1/STOOLS%20IN%20ASANTE%20CULTURE-CONTENTS.pdf>, assessed on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2014. These stools painted in black, are believed to have 'spiritual significance' and therefore any 'impure' act in the family or within the society is believed to affect their sacredness. Therefore rituals, involving blood are performed to restore their sacredness. See Sarpong, observes that the stool of the chief or the queen mother is what makes him or her "identified with the ancestors." See Sarpong *op.cit.* 60.

<sup>372</sup> This information was provided by Nana Asabere II during an interview with him on October 19, 2010 in Kumasi.

"[t]hese ceremonies are principally meant to cleanse the 'criminals', to pacify the spirits, and to stay the execution of their punishments."<sup>373</sup>

Besides, blood is closely connected to life in the traditional worldview of the Akans. Every human being is believed to consist of the *bogya*, *sunsum*, *akra*, *honhom*, *sasa* and *ntorɔ*. According to Sarpong, the *bogya* (or blood) which is derived from the mother is the "tangible palpable aspect of the person", as opposed to the others which are invisible and intangible. In fact, Sarpong describes the *bogya* as the principle of "being".<sup>374</sup> In other words, blood is understood in the traditional worldview as life. In the light of this, Kenneth Kojo Anti has observed that in the ATR, blood is "used to establish links with the Spirit world."<sup>375</sup> Blood is therefore perceived in ATR to be "very important as a means of communication with supernatural powers." Writing on blood sacrifices in a South African context, Schadrack Mvunabandi observes that

"[T]hey have served as a media of communication with supernatural powers in the metaphysical world, and as a means of acquiring material and spiritual benefactions."<sup>376</sup>

Blood is therefore regarded as an expedient 'material' for issues about life, not only in the physical, but also in the metaphysical world as well. It can be observed that among the Akans, religion is expected to cater for the existential needs of the people so that they can experience "abundant life" which is expressed in good health, prosperity, good marriage, fertility, long life, peace and tranquility, etc. It is believed that in order for this aspiration to be in a reality, one needs the support of the Supreme Being through the intermediary deities. The interaction between humans and the spirit world include rituals which usually involve blood.

---

<sup>373</sup> Sarpong, op.cit. 51.

<sup>374</sup> See Sarpong, *People Differ*, 90.

<sup>375</sup> Kenneth Kojo Anti, "Women in African Traditional Religions: Presentation for the Women's Center, Eastern Washington University." <http://www.mamiwata.com/women.html> . Assessed on 4th October, 2014.

<sup>376</sup> Schadrack Mvunabandi, "The Communicative Power of Blood Sacrifices: A Predominantly South African Perspective with Special Reference to the Epistle of Hebrews." (A PhD Dissertation submitted to the University of Pretoria in April, 2008). <http://upetd.up.ac.za/thesis/available/etd-11052008-161103/unrestricted/00front.pdf>. Assessed on 1st October, 2014.



With this background, the Passover ritual becomes an attractive point of reference for Pentecostals in their discourse on salvation. This could possibly be the underlining factor to the assertions of Duncan-Williams that in his sermon discussed above that:

“The Bible says there is life in the blood. I take communion a lot. Sometimes when I’m travelling and I sense danger, sometimes I can take 7 communions, 8 communions and sometimes even 21 communions. Because the life is in the blood and the more communion I take the more of his life flows through my veins and I’m empowered and my confidence and my faith rises like a lion. When anything fails the blood will not fail me. When accusations come upon me I lift up the blood of the lamb as the standard to veto the enemy’s accusations and to dismiss all charges.”

These assertions by Duncan-Williams in the sermon for the study can be said to be a summary of the allusions to the blood of the Passover animal as well the ‘blood’ in the Holy Communion, which is also perceived as a “type” of the Passover in Egypt, as the study of the Pentecostals’ reading of the Passover text has demonstrated. In any case, the assertions above demonstrate the similarity in the understanding of the role of ‘blood’ in communication between humans and the “invisible” world.

Therefore it can be said that in their discourse on salvation, the blood of the Passover ritual becomes a ‘converging point’ between the traditional worldview of Pentecostals and their faith in Jesus Christ. It becomes a “platform” for Pentecostals to “perform a ritual” familiar to them from the traditional African worldview and keep their Christian identity at the same time.

Another allusion to the blood of the Passover animal by Pentecostals in Ghana which can be said to be informed by the traditional African worldview is their association of the blood of the Passover animal with a ‘covenant’. As noted in the analysis of the sermons, the notion of covenant is indicated in the sermon of Duncan-Williams and the prayer of Foli. It must be pointed out, however, that both referred to Zechariah 9:11 in support of their reading which associates the blood of the Passover animal with a covenant. However Ankrah refers directly to the “Passover covenant.”

Thus, their references to “covenant” are made in connection with the blood of the Passover animal as indicated in the analysis of their reading of Ex 12. However, this notion can be said to be an imposition on the text, as the motif of covenant cannot be

supported by the textual evidence of Ex 12. Therefore it is worth investigating the possible influencing factor for this interpretation.

In ATR, one has to enter into a covenant with a deity as part of the means of meeting one's spiritual needs. The Asante expression for entering into such covenant is "*di aduro*." This literally means "eat medicine."<sup>377</sup> The expression suggests eating or drinking a substance provided by the deity. This can be for curing an ailment or for securing "spiritual protection" against the activities of malevolent spirits and "human enemies."<sup>378</sup> In the traditional religion, one has to commit oneself to a strong deity for protection. This calls for a covenant between the person and the deity (*ɔdi aduro*), and also to adhere strictly to the demands of the deity otherwise one gets exposed to the afflictions of evil spirits (*abusuyefo*). Such covenant is usually sealed with the blood of an animal, depending on the deity. Because of the covenant, the deity is bound to take spiritual oversight responsibility for the person. At the end of the year, the person is also expected, as part of the terms of the covenant, to pay what is agreed upon to the deity. Such covenants are made essentially to secure "abundant life" In other words, making a covenant with a deity is an essential prerequisite for experiencing "abundant life."

It is worthy of note that there are similarities between what the adherent of ATR expects from the covenant with the deities, compared to the anticipation of the prayers of the Pentecostals. These include protection from the activities of malevolent spirits, fertility, "fruitfulness" in life, long life, etc. It can therefore be said that the traditional African worldview of the Pentecostals informs their association of the blood of the Passover animal with a "covenant", which is in harmony with the traditional understanding. The reference to blood as a "key" by Duncan-Williams might be seen in the light of this understanding. In urging the believers to pray, he asserts in his sermon above that:

"The blood is the key so use that key to discharge yourself from any undesirable situation you find yourself in. Use the key for a baby, for that business, etc..."

---

<sup>377</sup> It has already been pointed out that *aduro* (medicine) in this religious sense refers to deity. It can be *ɔbosom* or any medicine man.

<sup>378</sup> Nana Asabere II provided this information in interview held with him on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2010 in Kumasi.

In other words it is believed that the believer gets access to God by means of a “blood covenant.” This interpretation suggests a reference to the apotropaic function of the blood of the Passover animal. Such reading can be said to have been informed by the traditional understanding of covenant which is a prerequisite for a believer to access the “spirit world” for spiritual support and assistance. Thus, for Pentecostals, the blood becomes the “key” which can be used to unlock the doors to the experience of “abundant life.”

## 6.5 A “conflationist” reading of the Bible

As shown above, Pentecostals tend to conflate particular portions of ATR of special importance to them with their interpretation of the Old Testament in general and the Exodus in particular. In this mode, the whole Bible is interpreted.

The Old Testament is not read in isolation from the New Testament. This is demonstrated by their attempt to identify texts from the New Testament which share some similarity with the Old Testament text. For instance, the Passover text in Ex 12 is related to the Holy Communion in the New Testament. Even though the connection drawn between the Old Testament text and the New Testament is virtually missing, their appropriation of the Holy Communion as a form of “Passover” for the believer of today can be said to be positive. Understood as “another Passover”, the observance of the Holy Communion becomes an opportunity for believers to “access” the “mighty act of God.” Thus, their interpretation allows the Word of God to address the current life interests of the believer. This instance of actualizing the Biblical text through an unhistoric and isolated reading is illustrated by the prayer below:

“The number 14 stands for deliverance. So we invoke deliverance into this emblem; that deliverance may come to mother Ghana. May deliverance come into our economy, may deliverance come into our cedi, may the government of the day have solutions to our economic problems. We stand as representatives of West Africa and we are saying Oh God, if you be the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac and the God of Royal House Chapel, we activate that covenant tonight and we are saying of that spirit called Ebola, that Spirit called Cholera that has invaded Ghana and West Africa, as we drink the blood tonight, let that Spirit vanish in the name of Jesus.”<sup>379</sup>

<sup>379</sup> This prayer was said by Rev. Edem of the *Royal House Chapel International* during the “Night of the Blood” service held on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2014.

The prayer was said just before the distribution of the elements for the Holy Communion. It can be noted that the focus of the prayer was not to “bless” the elements, but rather, it was meant to “empower” the elements to be used as “*aduro*” (or spiritual medicine) so that by drinking it as a community of believers, the social, economic, political, and health needs of the people, including the whole of West Africa, will be beneficiaries of the “deliverance” that is expected from their participation in the Holy Communion which is believed to be “another Passover.”

Their reading of the text which combines similar motifs in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, as demonstrated in the prayer above, is in harmony with the perception among Pentecostals that both the Old Testament and the New Testament constitute the Bible, and that both Testaments are relevant for the believer today.<sup>380</sup> ATR forms the common matrix for Biblical interpretation in addressing contingency needs.

---

<sup>380</sup> This understanding was expressed by most of the Pentecostals who were interviewed for this work. These include Pastor Gracer Bondzie, Pastor Enoch Ghartey, Pastor Ransford Obeng, Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong, etc. This is not to suggest a contrary view to the findings of various researches that Pentecostals in Ghana and in other parts of Africa use the New Testament more than the Old Testament. For a detailed discussion of the frequent use of the New Testament compared to the Old Testament, see Kahl, *Jesus als Lebensretter*, 255ff.

## Chapter Seven

## 7                    **General conclusion on the hermeneutics of Pentecostals in Ghana with respect to their interpretation of Ex 12**

From the discussion of the sermons of well-known Pentecostals in Ghana the following observations can be made regarding their tendencies in interpreting the Passover text in Ex 12. In the first place, it can be said that Pentecostals identify the Passover as a “type” of salvation which was to be revealed in Jesus Christ. In line with this understanding, they draw parallels between the “shadow” (the Passover animal in the Passover in Egypt) and the “real” (the blood of Jesus as the Passover). In their appropriation of this understanding, however, they do not differentiate between the blood of the Passover animal and the “blood of Jesus.” For instance, it can be inferred from their interpretation that the “blood of Jesus” is referred to interchangeably with the blood of the Passover animal as indicated in the discussion of the sermons that were studied. This is expressed in their allusions to the Passover motif, even when they pray in the name of Jesus. It can thus be concluded that they literally perceive the cup of the Holy Communion as the blood of the Passover animal. It can therefore be said that Pentecostals in Ghana tend to apply a typological hermeneutics in their reading of the Passover text.

Another tendency in the interpretation of Pentecostals is their reliance on personal religious experience of the presence of the Holy Spirit as a basis for reading Scripture. An example is the assertion by Duncan-Williams that the believer proclaims that “I am the redeemed of the Lord”, as preparation of the appropriation of the blood of Jesus, with the “blood” playing an *apotropaic* function in the life of the believer, by putting away any life threatening condition. The same can be said of the interpretation and appropriation of the Passover text in Royal House Chapel International. The analysis of the observation of Korankye Ankrah and Rita Ankrah also demonstrates their use of personal religious experience as a way of interpreting the text. For instance, Korankye Ankrah asked the congregation to smear and touch their eyes and their ears with some of the “blood” during Holy Communion. For him,

this was meant to “open” their eyes so that they could “see” extraordinary things. In the same way, their ears were supposed to be “opened” so that they could hear “good news”. Another instance is when Rita Ankrah asked the congregation to carry the containers of the “blood” of the Holy Communion with them. This was to be placed at particular locations, where one expected a miracle. For instance, according to her, students were supposed to put it on their books, while those seeking life partners were supposed to keep the container by their side as they slept. This is understood to be a way of causing the believer to experience the desired condition that would be reflective of “abundant life”.

It can be said that the reliance of the Pentecostals on the Holy Spirit for understanding the Bible is caused by the fact of the historical and cultural distance between the contemporary reader and the original audience of Biblical texts. The Holy Spirit then becomes the one who is believed to wield the ultimate ability to make the Bible “speak” to the modern reader, addressing his or her existential circumstances in the here and now. This has been described by Arrington as a “fundamental principle of Pentecostal hermeneutics.” In his words,

“A fundamental principle of Pentecostal hermeneutics is: Scripture given by the Holy Spirit must be mediated interpretively by the Holy Spirit. The illumination of the interpreter by the Holy Spirit is a vital part in elucidating the contemporary meaning of a biblical text. So in the interpretative process the Holy Spirit has a broader role than simply taking the things of the incarnate Christ and declaring them to us (John 16:14). The distance between the interpreter and the biblical text has been a hermeneutical problem, and, too, the distance is even greater for a contemporary interpreter in a scientific culture. This distance needs to be respected, but the Holy Spirit overcomes the distance by serving as the common context and bridging the temporal and cultural distance between the original author and the modern interpreter. Put differently, the Spirit establishes a continuum between the written word of the past and the same word in the present, thereby illuminating what the ancient author's words mean to us living in the twentieth century and how they speak to us today. Through the Holy Spirit the Word of God becomes alive and speaks to our present situation with new possibilities for personal and social transformation.”<sup>381</sup>

---

<sup>381</sup> French L. Arrington, “The Use of the Bible by Pentecostals” (PNEUMA. The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, Vol. 16, No. 1, Spring 199), 104.

In other words, it can be said that Pentecostals rely on the Holy Spirit to “reduce” the distance between the context of the Bible and that of the contemporary reader. It is therefore not unusual for Pentecostals to make claims to the Holy Spirit leading them to interpret the Bible in one way or the other. For instance, Sam Korankye Ankrah indicated in the “Night of the Blood” service which took on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014 that the Holy Spirit has taught him that, when he drinks the “blood”, he drinks it into an unknown future. Such a claim can be said to be based on his personal experience, yet it is considered a “valid” interpretation not for himself alone, but also for the congregation who look up to him as the “mouth piece” of God. Thus it can be observed among Pentecostals in Ghana that their reliance on the Holy Spirit for their interpretation of the text allows them some amount of flexibility in their appropriation of the text. The case of the “Night of the Blood” services at the *Royal House Chapel International* can be cited as an instance. The various directives given to the congregation by Korankye Ankrah and Rita Ankrah in the May and August 2014 editions of the service are believed to have been through the “guidance” of the Holy Spirit. The prayers which were associated with the “directives” point to the fact that they were meant to address the current social, economic, and religious location of the contemporary audience of the “Word of God.”

The “spiritual” dimension of the interpretation of “messages” from a deity to adherents finds parallels in ATR among the Akans of Ghana. It is part of the responsibility of the traditional priest or priestess to receive messages from a deity in a language, which only a linguist can interpret. In the same way, it is believed, especially among Pentecostals that the Holy Spirit still “speaks” through the interpreter to the believers a “message” which may be peculiar to a particular group of people at a particular time. In other words, for the Pentecostals, the focus of interpretation is the message of the text, and it is expected to address the current life interest of the reader. In the light of this, it can be said of Pentecostals that there cannot be what may be referred to as a “static” message based on a “formula” for interpretation. This is because for Pentecostals, the Bible is expected, among others things, to address the current social, economic, political, and cultural circumstances of the believing community. The inherent problem associated with this interpretation tendency is how to discern what can be perceived to be justifiable and what is not. This is because the personal

religious experience of the interpreter, subjective as it is, becomes essential in the process of the interpretation.

Another interpretation tendency with respect to Ex 12 among the Pentecostals is what may be described as their “extreme” appropriation of the *apotropaic* function of the blood of the Passover animal. Judging from their appropriation, one may not be wrong in suggesting that it is the only “message” they “glean” from their reading of the text. Their appropriation of the *blood* is also indicative of the fact that the text is read with the aim of “assessing the *power*” of the blood in order to overcome *evil forces*, both spiritual and non-spiritual, which may be posing hindrances to the believer in his or her quest to experience “*abundant life*” which expresses itself in material well-being in the here and now. In other words, Pentecostals read the Passover text with the expectation of experiencing “life transformation” so that the text becomes “their experience as well.” This understanding is in line with the expectation of religion from the traditional African worldview, in which religious activities are ultimately meant to facilitate the experience of “good life” in the here and now.

From the discussion above, the following conclusions can be drawn with respect to the hermeneutics of Pentecostals in Ghana. In the first place, the hermeneutics they employ can be described as a “*materialistic* hermeneutics.” This can be discerned from their emphasis on aspects of the text that they consider to be “appropriate” to apply for material benefits for the contemporary reader. This finds expression in their appropriation of Ex 12 with the expectation that the believer will be “liberated” from his or her “Egypt” (lack of well-being) to his or her “Promised Land” (well-being).

Furthermore, the hermeneutics of the Pentecostals can be described as a “*spiritualistic* hermeneutics” – in a double sense. First, Pentecostals rely on the Holy Spirit in their interpretation process of the text. Thus historical-critical methods of exploring the understanding of the text do not play any role in their hermeneutical process. In other words, the Holy Spirit is regarded by Pentecostals as a major influencing factor in their actualization of the text. The second dimension of the “spiritualistic interpretation” of Pentecostals is their emphasis on “demonic” activities that are a threat to the experience of “abundant life by the believer.” In the light of



this, the Passover text is read with an emphasis on the *apotropaic* function of the blood of the Passover animal. This is appropriated in the context of the Holy Communion which is thought to have been fore-shadowed in the Passover scenario and which is believed to have the “power” to cause the believer to experience “abundant life.”

It can be observed that both the “spiritualistic” and “materialistic” hermeneutics of the Pentecostals are informed by their traditional African background, which leads to a particular interpretation of the New Testament which mentions the role of the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and the antagonistic forces like demons on the other hand. From this particular adoption of the New Testament from an ATR perspective, the Old Testament is being read by Pentecostals. This reading strategy bears the problematic potential of blurring difference in the Biblical texts in general, and OT texts such as Ex 12 in particular – since the OT with its strong focus on the majesty and sovereignty of God generally does not speak of antagonistic activities of independent demons in ways appropriated by Ghanaian Pentecostals.

## Bibliography

Abogunri, S.O. (ed.). *Decolonisation of the Biblical Interpretation in Africa*. Ibadan: Nigerian Association of Biblical Studies, 2005.

Adamo, D. T. *What is African Biblical Studies?* In S. O. Abogunrin, (ed.) *Decolonization of Biblical Interpretation in African*. Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), 17-31, 2005.

Agyin–Asare, C. *Power in prayer: Taking the blessings of God by force*. Lagos: Assiamah Enterprises, 2005.

Albertz, R. *Personal Names and Family Religion*. Albertz, R. and Schmitt, R (ed.). *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*. Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 2012, 245-386.

Allotey D. N. *There is a Miracle in your Mouth* (Unpublished).

Amanor, D. *The Rising of the Sun: Shining from Obscurity. An autobiography of Sam Korankye Ankra*, Unpublished.

Anderson, A. *Pentecostal Gospel, Religion and Culture in African Perspective*. In O. Boersma (ed.) *Encounter beyond routine: Cultural roots, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in development*. International Consultation, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 17<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2010 (Hamburg: EMW) 2011.

Arthur, C. *Akanfoo Amammere ho Adesua 1: A textbook on Akan Culture* (Unpublished manuscript).

Arthur, C. *Akanfoo Amammere ho Adesua 2: A textbook on Akan Culture* (Unpublished manuscript).

Asaju, D.F. *Afro-centric Biblical Studies: Another Decolonization?* In S. O. Abogunrin (ed.) *Decolonization of Biblical Interpretation in Africa*, Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), 2005, 121-129.

Asamoah-Gyadu, J.K. *Contemporary Pentecostal Christianity: Interpretation from an African Context*. Oxford: Regnum, 2013.

Asamoah-Gyadu, J.K. *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Asamoah-Gyadu, J.K. *African Reformation; Your Life Shall Never be the Same: Mission, Development and Contemporary Pentecostalism in Sub – Saharan Africa*. In O. Boersma (ed.) *Encounter beyond routine: Cultural roots, cultural transition, understanding of faith and cooperation in development*. International Consultation, Academy of Mission, Hamburg, 17<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2010 (Hamburg: EMW) 2011.

Asante, L. *The Phenomenon of Anointing in the Mainline and Charismatic Churches: A Case Study of the Catholic Church and Some Charismatic Churches in Ghana* (Unpublished Thesis for a Masters Degree), 2001.

- Atiemo, A.O. *Mmusuyi and Deliverance: A Study of Conflict and Consensus in the Encounter between African Traditional Religion and Christianity* (Unpublished Master's Thesis) 1995.
- Baden J.S. *J,E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch. (Forschungen zum Alten Testament 68.)* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009.
- Bar-On, S. *Zur Literarkritischen Analyse von Ex 12,21-27.* Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 107 (1995):18-30.
- Bertleman, F., Street, A. *The Roots of Modern-Day Pentecost.* South Plainfield. NJ: Bridge Publishing, 1980.
- Bräumer, H. *Das zweite Buch Mose: Kapitel 1-18.* Wuppertal: R.Brokhhaus Verlag, 1996.
- Brown, F., Driver, S. and Briggs, C. *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon.* Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2004.
- Burgess, S. M., Gary B. McGee (eds.). *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988.
- Buttrick, G. A.(ed.). *The Interpreter's Bible: Volume 1.* Nashville, NY: Abingdon Press, 1952.
- Cassuto, U. (Israel Abrahams translated). *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus.* Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1967.
- Chigbundu, A. *Altar versus Altars: Deliverance by Sacrifice.* Benin City: Freedom Publications, 2007.
- Childs, B. S. *Exodus: Commentary.* London: SCM Press Ltd, 1974.
- Christaller, J.G. *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language called Tshi (Twi).* Basel: Basel Evangelical Missionary Society, 1933.
- Croatto, J. S. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Toward a Theory of Reading as a Production of Meaning.* Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1987.
- Danquah, J.B. *The Akan Doctrine of God.* London. London: White Friars Press, 1944.
- De Vaux, R., Smith, D. (trans.). *The Early History of Israel,* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978.
- Donner, H. (ed.), Gesenius, W. *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament.* Heidelberg: Springer, 2013.
- Dube, M. W. (ed.). *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible.* Geneva: WCC Publications, 2001.
- Ekem, J. D.K. *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Akan Traditional Priesthood in Dialogical Relation to the Priest-Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews and its Implications for a Relevant Functional Priesthood in Selected Churches Among the Akans of Ghana.* Hamburg: Lottbek, 1994.
- Frempong, S.S. *Who Needs deliverance* (Unpublished).

- Frerichs, E. S. and Leonard H. Lesko (eds.). *Exodus: The Egyptian Evidence*, Winona Lake. In: Eisenbrauns, 1997.
- Füglister, N. *Die Heilsbedeutung des Pascha*. München: Kösel – Verlag, 1963.
- Gaster, T.H. *Passover: Its history and traditions*. London: Abelard-Schuman, 1958.
- Grabbe, L. L. *Ancient Israel: What Do We Know and How Do We Know It*. York Road London: Continuum, 2009.
- Hayes, J. H. and J. M. Miller. *Israelite and Judean History*, Bloomsbury Street. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1977.
- Holter, K. *Yahweh in Africa: Essays on Africa and the Old Testament*. New York: Peter Lang, 2001.
- Houtman, C. *A historical commentary on the Old Testament: Exodus, Vol. 1*. Kampen: KOK Publishing House, 1996.
- Houtman, C. *A historical commentary on the Old Testament: Exodus, Vol. 2*. Kampen: KOK Publishing House, 2004.
- Jacob, B. *Das Buch Exodus*. Stuttgart: Calwer, 1997.
- Jennings, S.C.A. *Ordinary Reading in Extraordinary Times: A Jamaican Love Story*. In Gerald West (ed.). *Reading Other-Wise: Socially Engaged Biblical Scholars Reading Their Local Communities*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.
- Ekem, J D., K. *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Akan Traditional Priesthood in Dialogical Relation to the Priest-Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews and its Implications for a Relevant Functional Priesthood in Selected Churches Among the Akans of Ghana*. Hamburg: Lottbek, 1994.
- Kahl, W. *Jesus als Lebensretter: Westafrikanische Bibelinterpretationen und ihre Relevanz für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2007.
- Kahl, W. *Growing Together: Challenges and Chances in the Encounter of Critical and Intuitive Interpreters of the Bible*. In Gerald West (ed.) *Reading Other – Wise: Socially Engaged Biblical Scholars Reading Their Local Communities*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.
- Krondorfer, B. *The Whole Gamut of Experience: Historical and Theoretical Reflections on Play*. In B. Krondorfer (ed). *Body and Bible: Interpreting and Experiencing Biblical Narratives*. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1992.
- Kumah, D. *Stools in Asante* (Master's Thesis, submitted to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, 2009).
- Kyeremateng, K.N. *The Akans of Ghana: Their Customs, History and institutions*. Accra: Sebewie, 2004.
- Kyeremateng, K.N. *Akanfoo Ammamere*. Accra: Sebewie, 2001.
- Laaf, P. *Die Pascha-Feier Israels: Eine Literarkritische und überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studie*. Bonn: Peter Hanstein GmbH, 1970.

Lademann-Priemer, G. "... the reality is not heaven but a living hell...": Voodoo and Juju – Heilungskult, Schwarzmagie, Menschenhandel und Prostitution. In: Werner Kahl, Gabriele Lademann-Priemer (Hg.), *Studien zu interkultureller Theologie an der Missionsakademie* (SITMA 1) Hamburg: Missionshilfe, 2013.

Larbi, E.K. *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity*. Accra: CPCS, 2001.

LeMarquand, G. *New Testament Exegesis in (Modern) Africa*. In *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories and Trends*, 2000.

Megbelayin, I.O.J. Decolonizing Biblical Studies in Africa: A Socio-Rhetorical Perspective. Abogunrin, S. O. (ed.). *Decolonization of Biblical Interpretation in Africa*, Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), 2005, 51-59.

Mbiti, J.S. *Introduction to African Religion Second Edition*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1991.

Mbiti, J. *African Religion and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann, 1985.

Merrill, E.H. "יָצָא" In: *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 1997.

Meyer, B. *Translating the Devil: Religion and Modernity among the Ewe in Ghana*. London: Edinburgh, 1999.

Meyerowitz, E.L.R. *The Sacred State of the Akan*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1951.

Oduyoye, M.A. *Creation, Exodus and Redemption – An African Perspective on the Biblical Narrative*. In Kwabena Asamaoah-Gyadu (ed.) *Christianity, Missions and Ecumenism in Ghana: Essays in Honor of Robert K.Aboagye - Mensah..* Asempa Publishers: Accra, 2009.

Oduyoye, M.A. *The value of African Religious Beliefs and Practices for Christian Theology*. Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres eds. In: *African Theology en Route: Papers from the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1977.

Olukoya, D.K. *Pray your way to breakthroughs*. Lagos. Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries, 1996.

Omenyo, C. *Pentecost outside Pentecostalism: A study of the development of Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches in Ghana*. Zoetermeter: Boeckencentrum, 2006.

Opoku, K.A. *West African Traditional Religion*. FEP: Accra, 1978.

Otabil, M. *Prophetic Declarations* (Unpublished) 2005 – 2011.

Oyedepo, D. *Signs and Wonders Today: A Catalogue of the Amazing Acts of God Among Men*. Lagos: Dominion Publishing House, 2006.

Oyedepo, D. *Born to Win*. Lagos: Dominion Publishing House, 2008.

Oyedepo, D. *The Blood Triumph*. Lagos: Dominion Publishing House, 1995.

- Parrinder, E.G. *West African Religion*. London: Epworth Press, 1961.
- Pobee, J.S. *Bible Study in Africa: A Passover of language*. In: *Reading With: An Exploration of the interface between critical and ordinary readings of the bible – African overtures*. In West and Musa (eds.). Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.
- Propp, W. H. C. *Exodus*. New York: Doubleday, 1999.
- Quarcoopome, T.N.O. *West African Traditional Religion*. Ibadan: African University Press, 1987.
- Anderson, A. *Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions*. In Anderson. Bergunder et.al (eds.) *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- Riches, J. *Interpreting the Bible in African Contexts: Glasgow consultation*. In: Gerald O. West and Musa W. D. (eds.) *Semeia* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996, 73.
- Sarpong, P.K. *Dear Nana: Letters to my Ancestors*. Takoradi: Franciscan Publications, 1998.
- Sarpong, P.K. *People Differ: An Approach to Inculturation in Evangelism*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2002.
- Sarpong, P. *Girls' Nubility Rites in Ashanti*. Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1977.
- Sarna, N. M. *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991.
- Scharbert, J. *Exodus*. Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1989.
- Seebode, J. *“Aduro kum aduro”: Ritual, Macht und Besessenheit in Asante (Südghana)*. Münster: LIT, 1998.
- Segal, J.B. *The Hebrew Passover, London. Oxford University Press, 1963*.
- Taylor, R.A. *“אֶזְרָא” in New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis. Volume 1*. Willem A. VanGemeren (ed.). United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1997.
- Tetteh, L. *Count your Blessing*. London: LT Media Ministries, 2002.
- Taiwo, S. B. *Decolonizing Biblical Studies in Africa: Matters Arising*. In S. O. Abogunrin (ed.) *Decolonization of Biblical Interpretation in Africa*, Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), 2005, 85-94.
- Ukpong, J.S. *Inculturation as Decolonization in Africa*. In S. O. Abogunrin (ed.), *Decolonization of Biblical Interpretation in Africa*, Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), 2005, 32-50.
- Utzschneider, H. and Oswald, W. *Internationaler Exegetischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament: Exodus 1-15*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 2013.
- Utzschneider, H. and Blum E. (eds.) *Lesearten der Bibel: Untersuchungen zu einer Theorie der Exegese des Alten Testaments*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006.

Währisch-Oblau, C. *Spiritual warfare – the royal road to liberation and development in Africa and Europe? A comparative reflection on worldviews and hermeneutics*, 2011.

Walfish, A. *Pesah*. In: R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, Geoffrey Wigoder (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Jewish Religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

West, G. *Interrogating the Comparative Paradigm in African Biblical Scholarship*. In *African and European Readers of the Bible in Dialogue*. Wit de, H. and West, G (eds). Leiden: Brill, 2008.

West, G. *Decolonizing (South) African Biblical Scholarship: The Bible in (South) African History and Culture*. In S. O. Abogunrin (ed). *Decolonization of Biblical Interpretation in Africa*, Ibadan: Nigerian Association for Biblical Studies (NABIS), 2005, 60-84.

Wigoder, G. (ed.). *Maror*. In: *The Encyclopedia of Judaism*. Israel: The Jerusalem Publishing House, 1989.

Willi-Plein, I. *Opfer und Kult im alttestamentlichen Israel: Textbefragungen und Zwischenergebnisse*. Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1993.

Williams, N.D. *Deploying the Blood*, Dominion Publications, 2012.

Williams, N.D. *Binding the strong man* (Unpublished).

Williams, N.D. *Destined to make an impact* (Unpublished).

Williams, N.D. *Enforcing prophetic decrees* (Unpublished).

Williamson, S.G. *Akan Religion and the Christian Faith-A Comparative Study of the Impact of Two Religions*. Accra: University Press, 1965.

## Journals / Reports

Akrong, A. *Neo-Witchcraft Mentality in Popular Christianity*. In: *Research Review New Series* 16(1), 1-12, 2000.

Amakye, Joseph Quayesi. *God in Ghanaian Pentecostal Songs*. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*. 22 (1) 131-151, 2013.

Amakye, J., Q. *Prosperity and Prophecy in African Pentecostalism*. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*. 20 (2), 291-305, 2011.

Amanor, K. J., D. *Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches in Ghana and the African Culture: Confrontation or Compromise?*. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*. 18 (1) , 123-140, 2009.

Archer, K. J. *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: Retrospect and Prospect*. In: *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 8 (April), 63-81, 1996.

Arrington, F.L. et al (eds.). In: *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 376-89, 1988.

Atiemo, A. and Omenyo, C. *Claiming Religious Space: The Case of Neo – Prophetism in Ghana*. In: *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*. 1 (1), 55-68, 2006.

- Autry, A. C. Dimensions of Hermeneutics in Pentecostal Focus. In: *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 3 (October), 29-50, 1993.
- Cargal, T. B.. *Beyond the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy: Pentecostals and Hermeneutics in a Postmodern Age*. In: *The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15, 165-166, 1993.
- Davies, A. *What Does it Mean to Read the Bible as A Pentecostal*. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*.18 (2), 216-229, 2009.
- Hendel, R. S. *Sacrifice as a Cultural System: The ritual Symbolism of Exodus24,3-8*. In: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*. 101, 366-389, 1989.
- Ireland, J., M. *African Traditional Religion and Pentecostal Churches in Lusaka, Zambia: An Assessment*. *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 21(2), 291-305, 2011.
- Israel, R., D, Albrecht, D. E. and McNally, R. G. *Pentecostals and Hermeneutics Texts, Rituals and Community*. In: *The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 15, 1993.
- Keel, O. *Erwägungen zum Sitz im Leben des vormosaïschen Pascha und zur Etymologie von xsp*. In: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 84, 414-434, (1972).
- Martey, E. *The importance fasting for the deliverance ministry*. In: *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*. Martey E. and Asante, E. (eds.) July (1&2), Number 1&2, 1997.
- McKay, J.W. *The Date of the Passover and its Significance*. In: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 84, 435-447, 1972.
- Ukpong, J. *Can African Old Testament scholarship escape the historical critical approach?* In: *Newsletter on African Old Testament Scholarship*, 7,1999.
- Utzschneider, H. *Die Renaissance der alttestamentlichen Literaturwissenschaft und das Buch Exodus*. In: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 64, 1994.
- Van Seters, J. *The Place of the Yahwist in the History of Passover and Massot*. In: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 95, 167-182, 1983.
- Weimer, P. *Zum Problem der Entstehungsgeschichte von Ex 12, 1-14*. In: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 107, 1995.
- Zobel, Hans-Jürgen. *Der frühe Jahwe-Glaube in der Spannung von Wüste und Kulturland*. In: *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 101, 342-365, 1989.

## Internet

- Anderson, A. *The Pentecostal Gospel, Religion and Culture in African Perspective*. Paper read at the History of Religion seminar, University of Oxford, 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2000. [http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aanderson/Publications/pentecostal\\_gospel.htm](http://artsweb.bham.ac.uk/aanderson/Publications/pentecostal_gospel.htm). Assessed on 14th July, 2012).



Anti, K., K. *Women in African Traditional Religions: Presentation for the Women's Center, Eastern Washington University.* <http://www.mamiwata.com/women.html> (Accessed on 4th October, 2014).

Archbishop D., Williams. (*Action Chapel International*) sermon on the fall of the economic value of the Ghanaian Cedi. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76Le1oTSCZk> (Accessed on 6th February, 2014).

BBC News Africa. *Shock in Ghana over gruesome death of 'witch'.* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-11848536> (Accessed on 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2013).

Elections Peacefmonline. *Criticism of Duncan Williams' sermon by a leading member of the main opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP).* <http://elections.peacefmonline.com/pages/politics/201402/188725.php> (Accessed on 6th February, 2014).

GhanaWeb. *NDC Blames Mills' Failures On 'Juju.* <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=229087>, (Accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2012).

Körting, C. on Festivals of Israel, "Festverständnis / Festkalender" (www.Bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/18305, April 2007) (Accessed on 24th July, 2014).

Larbi, Emmanuel K.. *The Nature of Continuity and Discontinuity of Ghanaian Pentecostal Concept of Salvation in African Cosmology,* [www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj10/larbi.html](http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj10/larbi.html) (Accessed on 6th January, 2014).

Mugabe, H., J. *Salvation from an African Perspective.* In: *Indian Journal of Theology*, 34. [http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ijt/36-1\\_031.pdf](http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ijt/36-1_031.pdf). (Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> May, 2014).

Pastor Oyakhilome, C. message on Prosperity and wealth. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QahhnhVdGuA&feature=related> (Accessed on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2012).

Rev. Korankye Ankrah, Sam's. (*Royal House Chapel*) sermon on the Holy Communion, the "Blood Service". [http://www.livestream.com/ahenfie/video?clipId=pla\\_fd458b71-8a20-4d75-a703-5e90a0ff1701&utm\\_source=lslibrary&utm\\_medium=ui-thumb](http://www.livestream.com/ahenfie/video?clipId=pla_fd458b71-8a20-4d75-a703-5e90a0ff1701&utm_source=lslibrary&utm_medium=ui-thumb) (Accessed on 15th February, 2014).

Schadrack Mvunabandi. *The Communicative Power of Blood Sacrifices: A Predominantly South African Perspective with Special Reference to the Epistle of Hebrews.* PhD Dissertation submitted to the University of Pretoria in April, 2008. <http://upetd.up.ac.za/thesis/available/etd-11052008-161103/unrestricted/00front.pdf>. (Accessed on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2014).

## Interviewees

Akyeamfour, N.A. Chief linguist of the King of the Asante Kingdom, Asantehene Otumfoo Osei Tutu II (Interview date: 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2010).

Amponsah, N. Obaapnin of Pampaso. (Interview date: 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2010).

Asabere, Baffour. Kogyawoaosuu Ababio III, Nsumankwaahene of the King of the Asante Kingdom of Ghana, Otumfoo Osei Tutu II. The Nsumankwaahene is the Chief Priest of all the traditional priests of the Asante Kingdom. (Interview date: 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2012).

Asabere II N. Otumfuo Nsumankwaa Mmamahene of the Otumfuo Asantehene (Interview date: 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2010).

Ayarkwa, C. Member of the Grace Deliverance Team of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in Akropong – Akwapim (Interview date: 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010).

Bishop Agyei Frimpong, Hansel . Administrative Bishop of the Word Miracle Church International. (Interview date: 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2010).

Bishop Antwi, N. International Prayer Director, Action Chapel International. (Interview date: 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012).

Bishop Saah, J. Head of the College of Bishops of the Action Chapel International Action Chapel International (Interview date: 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2010).

Catechist Abboa Offei, E. Head, Grace Deliverance Team (Interview date: 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2010).

Dua, N.K. Traditional Priest of the Akwasi Mmee Shrine at Offinso Amoawi (Interview date: 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2010).

Kyereh, N.A. Queen of traditional Priestesses in the Offinso Traditional Area of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. She doubles as the Traditional Priestess of the *Taagya* Shrine in Old Offinso (Interview date: 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2010).

Okomfoo Y. B. Traditional Priestess of the Kwabena Sugye Shrine at Agona Asaaman in the Ashanti Region of Ghana (Interview date: 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2010).

Pastor Adelego, J. Senior Pastor, Winners' Chapel International, Accra, Ghana (Interview date: 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012).

Pastor Bondzie, G. Registrar of the Dominion University College of the Action Chapel International (Interview date: 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2012).

Pastor Ghartey, E. Associate Pastor, Winners Chapel International, Accra (Interview date: 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2012).

Pastor Obeng, R. General Overseer, Calvary Charismatic Church (Interview date: 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2012).

Pastor Wright, W. (Interview date: 5<sup>th</sup> October, 2010).

Rev. Ankomah, M. Pastor, Word Miracle Church International.

Rev. Ankra, R. K. Director of Social Services, and the President of the Women's Ministry of the Royal House Chapel (Interview date: 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2012).

Rev. Arhin, N. B. Pastor, Word Miracle Church International (Interview date: 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2012)

Rev. Baidoo, J. A. Head Pastor, International Central Gospel Church, Trinity Temple, Kumasi (Interview date: 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2012).

Rev. Dr. Frimpong, K. O. Chairperson of the Asante Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Interview date: 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2010).

Rev. Kwabi, A. Minister of the Mampong congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (Interview date: 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2010).

## Appendices

- 1 Transcripts of qualitative interviews with representatives of African Traditional Religion
  - 1.1 Nsumankwaa Maama Hene Nana Asabere II
  - 1.2 Nana Afia Kyereh
  - 1.3 Nana Kwaku Dua and Obosom Asare Kofi
  - 1.4 Nana Agyei Akyeamfour
  - 1.5 Okomfoo Yaa Bea
- 2 Transcripts of qualitative interviews with representatives of Pentecostal Churches and Charismatic Ministries
  - 2.1 Bishop James Saah
  - 2.2 Pastor William Wright
  - 2.3 Mr. Abboa Offei
  - 2.4 Mr. Charles Ayarkwa
  - 2.5 Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong
  - 2.6 Rev. George Adjei Kwabi
  - 2.7 Rev. Dr. Kwabena Opuni Frimpong
  - 2.8 Rev. Nana Benyin Arhin
  - 2.9 Rev. Gracer Bonsie
  - 2.10 Pastor John Adelego
  - 2.11 Pastor Enoch Ghartey
  - 2.12 Bishop Joseph Nyarko Antwi
  - 2.13 Rev. Michael Ankomah
  - 2.14 Mrs. Rita Korankye Ankra
  - 2.15 Pastor Ransford Obeng
  - 2.16 Rev. John Abu Baidoo

# 1 Qualitative interviews with representatives of African Traditional Religion<sup>382</sup>

## 1.1 Nsumankwaa Maama Hene Nana Asabere II<sup>383</sup>

### *What constitutes evil?*

Evil, among the Asantes is something bad, something which is opposed to anything good. It is something that should not happen in the life a person. For instance, an evil act like committing incest... When a man engages himself in sexual affair with his daughter or nephew or grandchild or any of his blood relations, such a person would, in the past, be excommunicated from the family because he does not deserve to be a part of the family any more. In the past if such an act leads to pregnancy, both parties were killed.

Evil covers a wide range of issues. Having sexual intercourse in the bush<sup>384</sup> is also considered a grievous evil. To commit such an act in the bush defiles the rivers, the gods, the trees, including the *nhoma* (the strings) in the bush. This is because the soil has been defiled by that evil act. Our forefathers believed that, such an occurrence leads to lean harvest. Again if someone poisons a river with the view to catching fish, it said that '*w'ate asuo no kwagyan*', or some harm has been done to life in the river since the fish and other living organisms in it suffer undue harm. This also constitutes defilement of the river. Anyone who does such a thing is also said to have committed evil (or *w'abo mmusuo*) for killing the animals and other living organisms in the river today without thinking of its implications for the future.

When somebody hits a child with a shoe or sandal it is considered evil (or *abususem*), since shoes or sandals are all considered dirty because their direct contact to the ground and all its dirt. To use it to beat a person is therefore considered a taboo. In fact it is believed that it reduces the humanity of the one who has been hit. Another example of such an item which is not to be used to hit another person is a broom. Although it is used to tidy up a place, a broom gets in contacts with all sorts of dirty things. Therefore it is a taboo, when it is used to hit somebody. It is even not supposed to be left in an open place in the house. It is even not supposed to point to the direction of where people are seated, especially the elderly. When that happens, the elderly may ask if he has offended the one who positioned the broom that way. One is also said to have committed an evil act when he spits on someone else. If as a result of drunkenness or sickness somebody even vomits on someone else, it is understandable, but to spit on someone is a taboo and like all taboos, it results in evil.

*What is the effect of evil in the life of: a) and individual? b) a community/society?*

<sup>382</sup> Interviews with representatives of African Traditional Religion were conducted in Twi and later translated into English by the author.

<sup>383</sup> The interview was conducted on Oct 19 and Oct 22, 2010.

<sup>384</sup> "Bush" here refers to the part of the community/village which extends from the point where domestic animals like chicken, sheep, goats, etc. feed themselves.

If someone should commit a taboo or a grievous evil, it brings evil (or *mmusuo*) upon the entire community. This is because when such a thing happens and the chief of the area summons the people, it involves all those in that community. For instance, if someone should poison a river, or if someone dies in the riverside or someone dies behind a building, it is an issue for the whole community. In that case, if there is a deity in the community and the chief's attention is brought to it, the chief owes it a duty to see to the performance of the necessary rituals to offset any potential evil effects (or *mmusuo*) that could have resulted from the committal of the evil act. This ritual may be performed either at the river side or at the shrine, depending on the directions given by the deities.

If someone should have sexual intercourse in the bush, for instance, the whole community suffers for it since the action defiles the gods (or *abosom*), the rivers (or *nsuo*) and the strings (or *nhoma*) in the community. Since these are all considered as the spiritual foundation of the community, it implies the spiritual foundation of the whole community is defiled by their defilement. If people engage in sexual intercourse by a riverside, it is considered both as an evil act (or *mmusubo*) and ritual uncleanness (or *efi*). A woman in her menses is also not supposed to cross some rivers, let alone wash herself in the river after sexual intercourse. This is also an evil act (or *mmusubo*). Such a act also brings evil effects (or *mmusuo*) on the community. One more example of what is considered as an evil act is when someone steals a game or fish, crab, etc from another person's trap in the bush or in a river. Much as such an action is considered a theft, it is also an evil act (or *mmusubo*), which can attract evil (or *mmusuo*) upon a person, because even the shock the owner may experience can send a curse upon the one who stole from the trap for enjoying from the toil and labour of another person unduly. This brings evil upon the perpetrator of such an action. When we talk of impurity it is not just limited to personal uncleanness. For instance there are places where it is not allowed for people to urinate or defecate. If people do that, where does the stench go? Does it promote good health care or not? All these are impurities that must be gotten rid of in the society.

*Is it possible to prevent evil (mmusuo)?*

We try to prevent evil when someone intentionally commits an evil (or *bo mmusuo*) which brings evil (or *mmusuo*). For instance, he knows that it is a taboo to have sexual intercourse in the bush. It is also forbidden to kill a blind person or a dumb person, no matter the offence he may commit. If someone intentionally commits any of these acts, the means of preventing a potential evil from happening was to consult with the gods (or *abosom*). If the chief of a community gets up early in the morning of *Akwasidae*<sup>385</sup> and goes to the deities and offers them drinks, after petitioning them on some pressing issues concerning the community, the deities also communicate with the chief, through the linguist to the shrine if there are potential evils or danger to the community. For instance the chief may be informed that one river or another in the community has been defiled and therefore has to be purified by, say, a type of a bird or *adwera*<sup>386</sup> and *hyire*. The deity may also predict that an epidemic is eminent and so the immediate surroundings of the community should be weeded to prevent it. When this happens, the community experiences some fresh air. Such weeding,

<sup>385</sup> Sunday, dedicated traditionally to a particular divinity.

<sup>386</sup> *Adwera* is a type of leaf which is used in the traditional religion for purification purposes. The word is also related the verb *dwira* which means "purify." It is the twi translation of hyssop.

which is a form of purification also prevent entry of poisonous animals like snakes, etc. into the community. The elders say that *Se adi reye wo a ennim se adee resa*. This literally translates: "A misfortune that will befall a person will surely happen even if it is already getting dark or late in the evening." This means that some evils are not preventable. They happen no matter what precautions are taken to forestall it. However through consultation with the deities, we are able to know the potential evils ahead such as rampant death of children and pregnant women, etc. The deities also indicate how to prevent them from happening. It is like the operations of the prophets of some churches who are able to predict a pending evil and also prescribe an antidote to prevent it from happening, such as setting some days aside for prayers, etc. They all achieve the same results, although through different approaches. Some communities still hold on to the traditional religion's way of evil prevention even today. People consult the deities when they want to undertake any major decisions in life. This is because it is believed, for example, that not all journeys (or *akwantuo*)<sup>387</sup> are promising, and therefore should be embarked upon. Such predictions which come through consultation with the deities helps to stop embarking upon any such journey, thereby avoiding the potential evil (or *mmusuo*) one might, otherwise, bring upon himself. The consultation can also reveal that the prospects of a proposed marriage are not good, since there may not be children. In that case the would-be couple can advice themselves.

*Can you describe how some of the rituals are performed to prevent evil from happening?*

There are different rituals for different evils. Rituals for the removal of evil can be related to prescriptions for various diseases. Just as the doctor prescribes medicine for a disease based on diagnoses, so is it with rituals performed to remove the effect of evil (or *mmusuo*). We know that depending on its nature, the following are usually prescribed for rituals for the removal of the effect of evil: A dove, cola, *ate*, *sedee*, *nwera* (or white calico), the skin of animals like lion, leopard, tortoise, the hair of a dwarf, etc. One may also be asked to drop salt and pepper on a crossroad (or *nkwantanaso*). It is therefore a common scene in some communities to see such items on a crossroad early in the morning. These things are usually to be done at dawn, to avoid being seen by others.<sup>388</sup>

The rituals actually take different shades. For instance, one may just be asked to walk from one place in a community to the chief's palace and come back. This can also be a ritual. One may also be asked to go to the riverside to fetch water with calabash without looking back. The one prescribing the ritual has the prerogative to add whatever condition to it but in this case, one may be asked not to look behind, perhaps for concentration purposes. Sometimes, the elders try to surround the ritual with some element of fear. It is believed that, the fear can inspire some belief in the ritual. In the case of the dove, a ritual may require that it is killed, or it may be freed to fly away. Sometimes it may be required that the meat is chopped into pieces and

<sup>387</sup> "*Akwantuo*" is the Asante word for "Journey". However, as used here, the word means more than ordinary journey from one town or village in Ghana to another just a business and return. It mainly refers to a journey which may take a relatively long time, which one embarks on for a livelihood. Much as this can be within the home country, it usually refers to a journey abroad for greener pastures as well. It can also refer to marriage too.

<sup>388</sup> The respondent explained that the element of secrecy is supposed to let the client have some belief in the potency of the ritual. He cited the usual practice of herbalists who normally mangle the herbs before they are given to their clients. According to him, to reason is avoid the tendency of the client not believing the efficacy of the herb because of its ordinariness.

scattered in the community. Even *kakahini* may be used for ritual purposes. For instance one may be asked to catch seven of them, put them on a crossroads, etc. Even there is something called *Akwammee*<sup>389</sup>. A ritual may require one to cut a number of pieces from such roots for ritual purposes. As mentioned earlier on, the rituals are not fixed. It also depends on the deity prescribing the ritual. For the same issue, different deities may require a sheep or a goat or a dog, etc. These are all informed by the prescription of the deity in question through spiritual interaction.

When a man has a sexual affair with a woman in the bush, the parties involved are supposed to show the exact spot where the incident took place. The ritual will then be performed there. Usually in such instances a sheep<sup>390</sup> is slaughtered there. Those carrying out the ritual ensure that the blood flows from the heads of the victims to their feet. This serves as a means of purification but it also serves as a punishment for the evil act and as a deterrent to others. In the olden days, if such an act resulted in pregnancy, a hut was built for the couple to stay in the bush until delivery. They were reintegrated into the community after the required rituals had been performed.

*How do we reverse the effect evil? Who are the major players and what are their specific roles?*

The effects of evil can be reversed by performing the required rituals. The rituals are performed by the traditional priest, or the linguist to the deity, or the linguist of the chief of the community. Some rituals may necessarily require the chief (or traditional head of the affected community) to perform. For instance, I can delegate someone to perform a ritual on my behalf. In that case, I give that person my power and my spirit. But in some instances, delegation is not possible. The main people who are supposed to be performing these rituals get to know by themselves, which ones can be delegated and which should not. The deity can also give definite instructions as to who should do what in performing a particular ritual, and where it should be done<sup>391</sup>. When an evil befalls a community, and it is not specified that the chief should perform the ritual, then the fetish priest will be the one to undertake its performance. However if it involves the custom of the people, for instance, the chief would let his linguist perform the ritual.

*What constitutes ritual uncleanness/contamination (or impurity)?*

One thing the Asantes perceive to bring ritual uncleanness, especially in the stool house and in the chief's palace, is a dead body, or when someone dies in the bush, when some people have sexual intercourse in the bush or by the riverside, or to defecate into a river,

Another example of what constitutes ritual uncleanness among the Asantes is when a woman menstruates. During the period, she is not allowed to go to the chief's

---

<sup>389</sup> This refers to the roots of a tree which crosses a path where people normally pass.

<sup>390</sup> According to the interviewee, the blood of sheep is also used to purify the stools because sheep is upheld as a humble animal. Its blood has the power to cleanse impurity or ritual uncleanness.

<sup>391</sup> The deity gives instructions through its linguist, who understands the language of the deity. It is then communicated the fetish priest and then to the chief, if necessary. The researcher learned not all fetish priests understand the language of the deities, hence the need for linguists. The absence of such communication can lead to the fetish priest/priestess incurring the wrath of the *Obosom*.



palace nor to the shrine or any other place which is considered sacred.<sup>392</sup> It is a taboo to the stools and the deities. During this period, the woman is even not supposed to cook for a man.

Another example of ritual uncleanness is when a young lady gets her virginity broken before the necessary puberty rite (or “bragoro”) is performed. Such incident means that the person did not wait until acceptable maturity age. This is not only a sign of bad character of the persons (with more emphasis on the lady) involved, but it is also considered a taboo. Therefore both the lady and the man are excommunicated from the community to live about two kilometers away from the community into the bush till the birth of the child (in the case where the affair resulted in pregnancy). When the child is about three months old, a ritual is performed to purify the couple before they are reintegrated into the community. The excommunication also serves as a punishment for the non observance of the puberty rite is considered. The ritual performed in such a situation is called *kyiribra*.<sup>393</sup>

#### *Who and or what can be ritually unclean?*

When a person commits a taboo or gets in touch with something which is considered impure, the person also gets contaminated. For instance if someone gets in touch with menstrual and other body fluids considered as impure, the person also gets contaminated. If a person urinates into a river or defecates into it or by it, the perpetrator becomes ritually unclean. If someone should urinate behind a house, that person becomes contaminated for polluting the air which others in the neighbourhood breathe.

Other things like river, deities, trees etc can also be ritually unclean. Some activities are not supposed to be carried out under certain trees. Examples of such trees are *Framoo*, *Homakyem*, *Dampranee*, etc. These are all trees which are used for a number of rituals. *Homakyem*, for instance, is believed to have the ability to talk. Since it is considered sacred, one cannot just cut a piece without performing some rituals. It is believed that this sacred string in the forest has healing abilities. It can also drive away bad *Sasa*. Such trees are held sacred and are used for ritual purposes and so its roots, its leaves, its bark, etc are not supposed to be contaminated.

#### *What things/items are intrinsically considered impure?*

There is nothing which is intrinsically impure. However, when it comes to traditional worship issues, pig has been singled out as *abusunam* (or evil flesh). The reasons behind it are that, it feeds on all manner of items which are not considered healthy.<sup>394</sup> It has also been observed that those who eat it normally end up bringing evil upon themselves, thus affecting them spiritually. Some people also hold the view that the

<sup>392</sup> The researcher learned that provision is made in the palaces of chiefs and places where a deity is kept to serve as a temporal accommodation for women during their menses. The respondent explained that it is considered impure because if it was good for the body, it would not have come out. That is why the woman is made to stay at *afikyire* (i.e. the outer house) for six days before she could join inhabitants of the main house. This practice is not restricted only to the above-mentioned places. It is still practiced by adherents of the traditional religion.

<sup>393</sup> *Kyiribra* two Akan words *kyiri* is a verb which means “to hate” or “not to like” something or somebody. *Bra* is also a noun which means “life”. *Kyiribra* can be interpreted as “hater of life”.

<sup>394</sup> It is quite common to see pigs being reared on free range basis, especially in the rural communities. In such situations, it is a common to see pigs eating all sorts of dirty things from refuse dumps especially.

pig, just like the rat, excavates the tomb of the dead. This activity makes such animals impure. Another animal which is normally associated with evil and misfortune is the antelope. This is because it is believed that people with spiritual powers turn themselves into this animal sometimes, so after killing an antelope, it is an usual practice among hunters to break its four limbs. It is believed that this will prevent it from turning into a human being. So pig, antelope and rat are perceived as *abusuboa* (or animals associated with *mmusuo*). The gods, however, also have their specific *akywadee* (or taboos, or forbidden thing) which differs from deity to deity. Adherents to these deities are not supposed to touch the things which are forbidden by the gods. Even *Kuntunkuni*<sup>395</sup> is a forbidden item for some deities. Their adherents are therefore not supposed to put them on when visiting the deity since the chemicals (or concoction) it contains might have come from a tree which may struggle spiritually with the deity. It is generally forbidden to cross one's feet at the shrine. In the same vein, women are not supposed to cover their hair when visiting the shrine. This is because it is believed that a spiritual power in the form of, say, a python may be hidden under the hair gear to engage the deity in a spiritual battle. It is possible for some witchcraft powers to be even stronger than some gods.

#### *What is the understanding of life in the traditional religion?*

First of all, life means living in the land of the living. From the time of birth till one's death is one's life. This life may be short or long. It is within this period of living that one has the opportunity of getting whatever one may want. Hence the proverb: *Su nkwa, na nsu adee*, which translates "one should pray for life and not wealth". While some die just after birth, others die after over a hundred years and even more. The length of the life of a person is also determined by one's destiny (or *hyebere*), which is also related to the soul of the person.

#### *Under what conditions is one's life considered as good or blessed?*

When we say that it is well with somebody, it means that the person was born into a family without much problems such as *nkodaanna*, *assan* i.e. life-threatening problems and misfortunes, such as incurring losses, which also impede progress, and bad marriages, since it hinders happiness in life; accident like being hit in the farm by a broken branch of a tree; being burnt accidentally; loss of life in a river, etc. If any of these happen to a person or any of his family members like the wife, husband, children, etc is considered as *assan* (or misfortune). Other examples include frequent loss of children, especially under strange circumstances, sudden loss of property, unexpected loss of a spouse, etc. All these have the potential to change the course of life of an individual. Because of the shock these incidents bring to people, it sometimes becomes the person's *ntamkese* (or a great oath). It is believed among the Asantes that *assan* does not happen on its own. It is backed by a spiritual force. For instance, if a car loses its breaks and skips all people and goes in the direction of a house or a room of one person, it raises questions as to why that individual in the rather enclosed place has been the victim of such an incident and not those who were outside or by the roadside. Or why should only one person in the company of others who committed an act be victimized, while the others go free? When such a thing happens, people normally think that someone might have orchestrated that spiritually against the person, in order to plunge him into a problem. It is therefore believed that evil wishers can work things out spiritually to put others into *assan* and

<sup>395</sup> This is a special mourning cloth. It is dyed with black fluid which is taken from the bark of some trees.

*mmusuomu* . For instance if a grown- up man should sexually mishandle a girl below 12 years or so, and he is caught, he may attribute it to *assan*. Even though the court may indict the person, he may personally be wondering what might have pushed him to commit such an act. He may come to the conclusion that a spiritual force was behind it. The Asantes hold a strong belief that nothing happens by chance. Whatever happens in the life of a person, especially something bad, is backed by a spiritual influence. In the same vein if someone gets so rich it is often said that the witches in his family are good.), *ntotoananmu* (or *hinderances*). Even though there is no life without challenges, but the natural ones are not so remarkable to impede the forward movement of the person. Someone with a blessed life is noble (*onimuonyamfoo*), wise, knowledgeable, patient, respectable, honest, etc. One is also considered to have been blessed in life if he has money and property like buildings, drives a good car, has a happy marriage, has been able to give birth to children, etc. Such a person is so respected in the family that no important issue is discussed in the family without his active involvement. He also becomes a source of good counsel, a source of financial support (including providing loans). A healthy long life is also a mark of a blessed life.

*What are the determinants of a good life?*

The things which determine a good or fulfilled life include: the family background of the person—parents and their status in the community, the kind of parental support and care one receives, the lifestyle of the person, the kind of job of the person, the wealth of the person, whether the person suffered poverty in life or not, etc. However there may be some undesirable aspects in the life of the person, such as some hidden disease. On the basis of what is visible to all, it is possible to say one's life has been blessed or not.

*How does ritual uncleanness affect the life of an individual or a community?*

It happens that sometimes someone commits an offence in the community, which calls for the eradication of his entire family, including himself. If someone dedicates his life to a deity, it is the responsibility of that deity to protect him and also ensure his wellbeing. The deity may get offended when the person in question flouts any of the rules given to him. Depending on which deity, one may be asked not to curse somebody using the name of the deity, or he may be asked to avoid backbiting, stealing, adultery, terminating a pregnancy, etc. To disobey any of these may attract the anger of a deity since it makes offenders unclean. A person may also attract the anger of a deity if one ridicules it.

*Are there different forms of purification? If yes, what does each form stand for?*

*Asubo* refers to purification rite to wash away ritual uncleanness. *Akradwaree* refers to the cleansing of the soul. When somebody dies in the stool house, it is believed that the stools have been defiled because of the corpse which was brought to the house. This also constitutes ritual uncleanness. There is therefore the need to purify the stools. Depending on the deity, sheep, dog, dove, tortoise, guinea fowl, etc may be used for the purification ritual. The animal is killed and prayer (or libation) is said to purify the stools of any impurity that might have entered the place. *Adwera* (or hyssop) is then used to sprinkle a mixture of *hyire* (or white clay) in various parts of the community to signify the cleansing of the community of all ritual uncleanness. When a woman in her menses, either knowingly or unknowingly enters a chief's palace, *asubo* is performed to purify the palace. When the chief of a community realizes that the community is defiled, he leads the performance of *asubo* to purify

that community. In this case, *hyire* (or white clay) is mixed with water and it used to sprinkle parts of the community. However this largely differs from community to community. Depending on the community a cow, a sheep, a goat, a cock, a guinea fowl, *eto*<sup>396</sup> and eggs, etc may be used for the *asubo*. The *asubo* of a community may be done at different places, depending on which community. While the ritual may be performed in any open space in some communities, other communities have specific places where such rituals can be performed. In some communities, it is performed in the cemetery. *Akradwaree* (or purification of the soul) on the other hand is done personally. It is usually done among the Asantes with a traditional food called *eto* with some eggs. The individual consumes it to pacify the soul after going through a difficult time in life. This can be after one recovers from a near-death sickness, an accident, or when one feels exonerated from a potentially disgraceful issue. The motif behind this is to let the soul of the person know that the person still holds it in high esteem, in spite of the trauma it might have gone through.

*Who are involved in the purification ritual? What role does each one play?*

In the residence of a deity (or *abosomfie*), the *akyeame* (or linguists) are responsible for the performance. Aside the fetish priest, there is the linguist as well as others who serve the deities, including those who cook for the deity in some instances. There are different people responsible for various activities that take place at the shrine regarding worship. At the chief's palace, the *akyeame* (or linguists) and those who carry the stools are responsible for the performance of the purification rituals.

*What elements are used for the performance of the purification, and what is their significance?*

*Hyire* (or white clay) is one of the substances used. In the olden days, when someone won a case, *hyire* in its powdered form was poured on him. Its white nature signifies its cleansing nature. *Adwera* on the other hand is used to purge out the uncleanness that came upon the person. Sometimes *somme* which is also a plant is used. It is also used in both the chief's palace and in the residence of the deities for purification purposes.

*When is a person or a community said to be cursed?*

When we say a community is cursed, then we are referring to something in the past. These days when someone commits an offence in the community, it is no so much of an issue for the community in general. When someone commits an offence, because of the rituals that are performed, the person does not normally suffer any curse. In the olden days when people used to explore other places, it was usual to test inhabitants of other communities. At that time, it was usual for one to change his appearance into a strange person and make a request to test the hospitality or otherwise of the people in a community. For instance, a stranger may ask for a cup of water upon reaching a village. If the inhabitants of that village do not to give a decent cup to the stranger, perhaps because of his appearance or looks, he may pronounce a curse on the village upon reaching the outskirts, saying for instance: "this town/village will not see any more progress till the creator of the universe comes back". The one who cursed the town turns back to the village and tells them that a certain man passed through that village some time ago but he was not well received,

---

<sup>396</sup> *Eto* can be made from plantain, cocoyam or yam. Usually both ripened and green plantains are mashed together after cooking. It is the food which is usually used for rituals that involve food.

even when he requested water from them. This happened in a number of villages in the olden days. Such villages have not seen any remarkable progress even till now. An individual, on the hand, attracts a curse when one shows gross disrespect to the elderly.<sup>397</sup> When an elderly person pronounces a curse on somebody out of grief resulting from such misbehavior, it happens. Some words carry so much weight. I know an elderly person in my village. This man attended nature's call. Whiles there, he realized that one of his grandchildren was making fun of him. The man then pronounced a curse on him saying, "*Kwadwo, me na wo resereme yi? Ennee eda a wo besen tiafi yi so ama mframa afa wo to no na Nyame ahu wo*". This translates "May God repay you whenever you also squat to ease yourself like this". This pronouncement has affected the boy's life until now. He was even in prisons when his father was dead. He has become a notorious thief, and for years now nobody knows anything about his whereabouts.

#### *What are the signs of a curse upon the life of an individual or a community?*

It is said of some people that "*Onyare nso onte apo*", which literally translates: He is neither sick, nor healthy. The appearance of some people is anything but acceptable. It is difficult to determine whether they are sane or not. Such people have very questionable and funny behavior. Such people are usually even unable to marry. Their general appearance is out of normal. They are poor, not even having enough money to buy drinks and so keep begging, and yet insult the very people who support them financially, etc. None of their relatives even gets the desire to consult the deities to know what could be the cause of their predicament. In short, that person's life is *nwronwrann*, (that is, his life is out of order and indescribable, or haphazard.)

Some of the signs of a cursed community include frequent deaths of its inhabitants, including *atofowuo*,<sup>398</sup> It also gets stunted in its development. The inhabitants do not also see progress in their lives.

#### *How do we reverse such curses?*

It is possible to reverse a curse by consulting the deities. For instance if an elderly person pronounces a curse and its effects are observed, the victim can to apologize to him and once the apology is accepted, the curse is reversed. The apology is normally done through a well respected person in the community. When that is done, the elderly person usually forgives wholeheartedly and that results in the reversal of the curse. However the elderly person who was offended has to be pacified with, say 7 or 12 eggs. He then decides how many of the eggs he will take. *Saa ano a edi nkyene di mako no, eno ara tumi sane epo no.*<sup>399</sup> That is: "that mouth which consumes both salt and pepper has the power to untie what has been tied". When the elderly person decides to forgive the person, the curse is automatically reversed.

#### *What is the relationship between the world of the spirits and a fulfilled/blessed life?*

<sup>397</sup> The respondent buttressed his point with the proverb, "*Opanin ano ye obosom*", which translates: "The mouth/tongue of the elderly is a deity."

<sup>398</sup> *Atofowuo* refers to the type of death which is considered beyond the ordinary. This includes deaths which the community even considers as unacceptable. Examples include committing suicide, death of pregnant woman, etc.

<sup>399</sup> This is a common saying among the Asantes to suggest that words are powerful. The understanding is that salt gives food good taste, whiles the hotness of pepper makes it quite uncomfortable to eat but the two enter the body through the same place—the mouth. This saying means that the mouth that blesses is the one that curses.

The spirit world with respect to an individual is about the spirit behind the person's life, whether the spirits in his family are good or not. I know someone who has 13 children. By the time of his death after he was over a hundred years, but he had never lost a child. He was not confronted with most of the usual challenges of life. Some people attribute this to the fact that his witchcraft is a lion and so he protects his children. He does not use his witchcraft to feed on other people's children, so nobody (witch) requires him to bring any of his children in return. He has a white witchcraft. It can be said that if there are no spiritual struggles against a person, and he leads a good life, he will prosper. But some people also have the spiritual strength to withstand the spiritual battles so they still progress, even in the face of life's battles. There are some people who were born with strong *sunsum* (or souls??) so he cannot be bewitched. Some people are naturally endowed so they always succeed in whatever they do. They command so much respect from both young and old.

*Abusuyefoo* (or *abayifoo*) or witches are the greatest fears of the Asantes. There are families which are considered to be bad and full of troubles and so people are even advised not to marry from there. This is because the witches in the family hinder the progress of the family members. *The abusuyefoo* undertake a lot of evil acts including causing massive deaths of people in a town/ village. Usually the deities are able to foretell such planned evil acts in the spirit world. That is why it is often said that *obosom akye obi* (or the deity has arrested a witch). Usually the witch confesses what he has used its witchcraft to do. In most cases, the confession proves that about 95% of all that has been done by the witch is something bad, with only a few good things. Some of the confessions go like: I have taken his wealth, his manhood, marriage, intelligence, we play games with his eyes, we play games with his head etc. Some claim that their urine is petrol, so when they angrily pour it on a car and scratches their teeth, the car will catch fire and it really happens. We believe in these confessions because they are seen visibly about the people about whom the claims are made. I know of a young man who acquired seven cars. He donated one to his sister as a gift and within a period of about seven years, all the remaining six cars got burnt. The sister later on claimed responsibility for spiritually causing the burnings of the cars. Through such freewill confessions by witches who have been arrested by deities, some witches have claimed that they have removed the ovaries of some women and put them on highways so they have been destroyed by cars running over them. Some claim that they have hidden the wealth of some others under rocks so there is no way they can be rich people. All these claims are made by people who are believed to be in a sane mental state, who mention their witch names, the name of the animal attached to their witchcraft (or *abayiboaa*) (which are animals like hawk, a lion, a dog etc.); they make claims of killing one person or the other in the family, which is usually known to the people around. These are not mere claims; rather they are proven because the witches are able to prescribe what they consider to be an antidote to the harm they have caused people. They usually disclose the antidote after a careful coercion. When their prescriptions are adhered to, it works for the affected people. As a proof at the shrine where they made those confessions, a personal belonging of the person is kept at the shrine. Examples are a piece of cloth belonging to the person or beads belonging to the person.

*How does one get protected from the abusuyefoo (or abayifoo)?*

For one to protect himself from the abusuyefoo, one has to be very committed to whatever spiritual powers he relies on for protection. The Christian should be strong in his prayers, the Muslim should also be strong in his religion (I don't know much about Muslims). In the traditional religion, one has to commit himself to a strong deity

for protection (*Okodi aduro*), and also adhere strictly to the demands of the deity otherwise one gets exposed to the afflictions of *abusuyefoo*. For instance I know that I come from a bad family with a lot of witches (*Me fie ye den*), meanwhile I know I don't also pray the Christian prayer. Notwithstanding, someone is determined to destroy my life. So what I have done is that *m'edi aduro* (I have a covenant with a deity) and also I lead a holy life—I will not think evil about someone, I will follow other people's wives, I will not covet other people's wealth, I will not terminate pregnancy because if I was aborted I will not have been in the world, I will avoid backbiting. When one is able to lead such a good life, his protection from the deity becomes stronger. Though the *obosom* (or the god) is made of physical objects like rocks, etc, it is the power of the spirit behind it that is at issue here. It is however expected of the adherent to the deity to satisfy his side of the covenant. Failure to do that will lead to the deity disowning the person, thereby exposing himself once again to the world of evil spirits (*or abusuyefoo*).

Some examples of purification rites and their significance to the individual and the community

When a purification rite is performed in a stool house or in the chief's palace, it is usually occasioned by a funeral taking place in the town or village. In that case, it is announced that whoever is coming from the village to the shrine or the palace must come through the outskirts of the village/town. Because the person might have been where the corpse is, a mixture of *hyire* and *adwera* is put at the entrance to the house of the deity. The person is then sprinkled with the mixture to purify him of the impurity associated with the corpse. This purification rite is done to the deities, the stools, etc. whenever somebody dies in the house where they are kept. Some of the leaves of *adwera* and some *hyire* is usually placed on a ladder and put at the entrance of the town/village so that whoever enters gets automatically purified before even entering the town.

*What does pouring of libation imply?*

*Nsaguo/apayeyie* (or pouring of libation) is our prayer to *Onyankopon* (or the Supreme Being) through the ancestors. In these prayers, we ask for fertility, prosperity, long life, power and favour. We also ask that we may not hear any bad news from anywhere. We ask for truth as well. We ask the ancestors to back our request with their power since we are only humans. On the day before the *akwasidae*, there are some rules that those who perform the rituals have to observe. For instance, one is not supposed to have sexual affair. This is to ensure the purity of those playing various roles before the stools (or the ancestors). Anyone who violates any of these rules does not qualify to appear before the ancestors because he has been defiled.<sup>400</sup> The *nsaguo/apayeyie* (or pouring of libation) is, thus, mainly used to ask for good things from the Supreme Being through the ancestors. However, it concludes with what may be considered a curse, in that when any chief is pouring libation, he prays that evil people are not needed in the town/village. So the conclusion of *nsaguo/apayeyie* is usually like this:

*Onipa bonefoo dee yen mpe no wo kuro yi mu,  
Obi nso nto nsa nhyira ne busuyefoo,  
Enti nipa bonefoo a ekaa ono nko na kuro yi w'oabonehontokuro,*

<sup>400</sup> Sexual intercourse is considered impure, according to the respondent. According to him, if a woman, especially, engages in a sexual affair with her husband, she must even wash down before she may eat.

*Kuro yiedie ho nhia no  
 ... se kuro yi bekesee, na emfano ntomapa mfira  
 Saa nipa no monsakra no.  
 Se moresakra no a monsakra no mpe nson.  
 Se woannntie dee a na oye kuro yi tamfoo.  
 Saa onipa no dee, momma ne nkonkommosoo (adwenebone) mmo ne tiri so.  
 (ANAASE)  
 Eno deee saa nipa no, se ohunu se awesamene yede  
 na se aduane papan koraa fa ne hwene mu a  
 eno dee momma n'adwenbone no mmo ono ara ne tiri so.  
 (ANAASE)  
 Eno dee saa nipa no, momma yensiesie no fefeefe  
 Na yenkogya no kurotia afahye.  
 (ANAASE)  
 Eno dee saa nipa no, nananom mo adaworoma,  
 nsuo dee momma no nnom bi  
 Nanso momma no nwesa ansa na woamene.*

("We do not want to have anybody with evil intentions in this village,  
 Since nobody prays for the blessings of his enemies,  
 We pray for any body, who wishes the downfall of this village,  
 Who does not seek the progress of this village,  
 Anybody who wishes the retardation of this village,  
 who wishes that this village is deprived of its rightful status;  
 we pray that you change his evil intentions for this village.  
 We pray that you prompt him seven times to change his mind  
 If he refuses to heed your call to repentance,  
 Then he remains an enemy to the village,  
 Therefore we plead with you to return his evil intentions upon his own head.

Or

if the person recognises that food tastes good, then even when he smells the aroma  
 of food, we plead with you to let him experience his own intended evil for this village.

OR

then we plead with you that you cause us to dress him very nicely and accompany  
 him to a celebration at the outskirts of the village

OR

we plead with you *nananom* [or dear ancestors] to allow him to drink water, but only  
 by chewing it.)

*Can you please give an example of nsaguo on behalf of someone travelling abroad?*  
 I will ask *Onyankopon* (or the supreme Being) for power, and also ask *asaase Yaa*  
 (or the earth spirit) which he himself created, and also ask the *nsamanfoo* (or  
 ancestors) in my family, the *abosom*, (or deities) in my family, *nsuo* (or the water  
 bodies), *aboo* (or rocks) and *nhoma* (or strings) in the forest, then I will pray as  
 follows:

*Me nana yi de abeto m'anim se oretea ne nan akyi  
 Ako aburokyiman mu.  
 Adee meresere ama me nana yi.  
 Ekwana mu enye dwodwoodwo mma no*



Onko duru asomdwoe mu,  
 orekoro yi, meresere akwanhosan,  
 banya, boanya, sika, yiedie,  
 momma no nnkohyia oburoni bone oo,  
 ommfa n'asan nnkosan no.  
 Baabiara onam biara no momma ne kwan ntene.  
 Momma onkofa oman no mmo ne bo,  
 Asannombea monyi no mfiri ho,  
 Baabiara yerebo danse monyi no mfiri ho,  
 Na n'adwen nsi so se okoboo bra,  
 Na abrabo a ore bo no mo agyna n'akyiri akyigynapa,  
 Se onya sika a ano mmoa,  
 Odi sika a momma no ntwen ne nsa,  
 na o'ngya ebi mfa mmra fie mmeye agyapadee.  
 Saa nnooma yeinom nyinaara ena mere sere ama me dehyee yi,  
 Ahohwibra dee monyi mfiri n'akwan mu  
 Mmaadie monyi mfiri n'akwanmu.  
 Me naana yi asem biara y'ebete wo ne ho nye se asikyire ne woo.  
 O'mfa animuonyam mfiri akwantuo mu mmra  
 na yenkohyia no hyia pa,  
 na omfa agyapadee mmra fie.  
 Momma no nkoye se aboa kwaakwaadabi,  
 Na onya agyapadee a w'akodi no ha mu  
 Na w'asan abetena fie.  
 Na okyena yeaaka se asamasi tuu kwan no,  
 Agyapadee a w'anya nie.  
 Meresere nyamepa me.  
 Nyame mma dee oreye biara enye yie,  
 Na ensi no yie na omfa animuonyam mmra kuro yi mu.  
 Nnipa bonefoo a akwadaa yi bra a orekobo yi  
 O'betoa no aburokyire ho se  
 Merekoye no bone, oburoni bone a obehyia no  
 Na obeke se a akwadaa ne bra a erebo yi ekaa me nko na  
 Oko fie, n'yonkofoo a orekoto won se o'nkaa obi  
 Nanso ekaa ne nko na w'asan abetena ne "ABC" mu dee,  
 Eno dee saa nnipa, momma no nye osadweam.  
 Ansa na ebebo po no se orekoye me dehyee no biribi no, na w'ada.

(This grand child of mine has declared his intention to travel abroad to me.

I am therefore making the following requests from you on his behalf:

That he will have a safe and peaceful journey

I am pleading for a good life for him as he embarks on the journey;

That he will have children, help and favour, wealth, and prosperity

I plead with you to protect him from any wicked white person,

Who may plunge him into any evil.

Please order his steps, wherever he may be.

Help him to be law-abiding in the new country.

Prevent him from being a drunkard,

Keep him from attending Discos

Help him to focus on his mission there.

Stand by him in his new life there  
 Help him to keep his money,  
 Help him not to spend his money haphazardly  
 So that he can acquire property back home.  
 I am asking for all these for this my royal.  
 Prevent him from leading any reckless life  
 Prevent him from chasing women  
 Let it be that whenever we hear about my grand child, it will be as sweet as sugar  
 and honey  
 Let him return in dignity, so that we can meet him with pride  
 Do not make him behave like the crow, which disposes of its property outside and  
 come back home empty handed, so that it can be said of him that he acquired some  
 property from his journey  
 I am praying to the good God to prosper all his undertakings, so that he will honor  
 this village.  
 If there is any person with bad wishes for my grand child  
 concerning his journey, who plans to attack him abroad to inflict evil on him,  
 or a white person with evil wishes for my grand child,  
 or to frustrate him, to cause his repatriation;  
 or if any of the colleagues he will meet abroad hates  
 him for no reason, then make that person a drunkard,  
 so that he cannot be awake to harm my grandchild.)

*Please give a nsaguo for marriage or childbirth.*

When someone is going for marriage, we pray for prosperity and good life for the person. We also ask for childbirth without difficulties, peaceful marriage; that the couple will have unity of purpose, etc. We pray to the ancestors to help the couple to be blessed with the greatest property in marriage that is childbirth. We pray that they will give birth to as many children as they may decide, including both sexes; that they will not experience child deaths; that they will not live in pain; that they will not regret their marriage, but enjoy it. After the above requests, we conclude with a prayer such as this:

*... Nnipa bonefoo a ekaa ono nko na awadee a mmofra yi  
 rekoro yi Nyankopon beto ne nsuo agu soo na anka wode  
 anigyee atena mu na mma nso aba mu na ono dee obewhete  
 se akokobaatan ne ne mma rewhete mfuturo mu dee, eno  
 dee saa nnipa no, momma ne nkonkommosoo mmo ne tiri so.  
 Saa nnipa no yennhia no wo saa awadee no mu.*

(... Anybody with evil intentions, with ill wishes for this marriage,  
 Who would wish that there would be separation in the marriage  
 As the hen and its chicken spreading the sand, let their evil  
 Intentions go back to them. For such people we do not need them  
 in the marriage.)

## 1.2 Nana Afia Kyereh<sup>401</sup>

### *What constitutes Asan (or evil)?*

There are different kinds of evil, but mainly when something happens without our knowing anything about it, we refer to it as *asan*. But sometimes a person brings *asan* on oneself when a person disregards certain rules governing a society. *Asan* can be in the form of motor accident, being killed by a falling tree, being killed by a collapsed building, being bitten by a strange animal, etc.

### *What causes Asan (evil)?*

Some are caused by demonic forces in the family. Others are also mainly happen as an accident. The ones caused by the family results from the fact that the family members might have been already plotting evil against the person. In that case, one may be sold in the spiritual world to be killed by a car. So even if the person did not intend to travel on a particular day, he will be “pushed” to board a car for the accident to occur.

### What about Mmusuo - what constitutes it?

*Kyiribra*<sup>402</sup> was considered the greatest committal of a taboo (or *mmusubo*). A special purification rite is performed for such a person. The Puberty Rite (or Bragoro): The breast of the lady was exposed in public and mashed yam with eggs was given to the lady. The lady is smeared with shear butter. Drums are played while the elderly women in the town/village danced to the music. Meanwhile the lady will be sitting down as the centre of attraction. This was supposed to expose the lady to the men in the town, and to also let them know that the lady was of age now and so she was ready for marriage. Through this, a man might decide to marry her after the ceremony. After the public celebration, the lady was kept in the room for seven days. After this, she would go to express her appreciation to the townsfolk for their gifts and attendance. This gives an opportunity to those who intend to marry the woman to approach her family with his proposal to ask for her hand in marriage.

Every young lady was expected to go through the puberty rite. Any young lady, who did not observe this puberty rite brought evil (or *mmusuo*) to her family. When this happens, the lady including, her entire family was ex-communicated from the town. This is because that action brought *mmusuo* to the water bodies (*nsuo*), the blackened stools (*nkonwa tuntum*) and the deities( *abosom*) in the town.

Another example of *mmusuo* is when somebody visits a specific place on a forbidden day. For instance we have a river here in our town called the Offin River. It is a taboo to go to the riverside on Tuesdays. Even when one needed water badly, nobody is allowed to go and fetch water from the river. If someone flouts this regulation and goes there and the person is seen, or something bad happens to him, he has brought evil upon the town. In that case the person will be required to provide a sheep, or a correspondent amount to be paid in the chief's palace. The sheep is used to perform the necessary ritual to pacify the river for the offence of the person. It may happen that the river and its children may be bathing/purifying their souls so if someone goes

<sup>401</sup> The interview was conducted on Nov 30, 2010. Nana Afia Kyereh is the queen of the traditional priests in the Offinso traditional area, and she is the priestess of the paramount chief of Offinso.

<sup>402</sup> This refers to a young lady who engaged in sexual affairs when she had not been taken through puberty rites.

there he may see the personality of the river. Therefore if anyone is caught flouting this rule, it constitutes a deliberate attempt to bring evil (or *mmusuo*) upon the town. That is why culprits are made to pay a fee or a sheep, as a form of punishment, to cover the cost of performing the needed rituals to reverse any possible evil upon the community.

*What is the effect of evil on the life an individual/ community?*

If the person who committed the taboo which brought the evil is not seen for the necessary rituals to be performed, then the he will be affected. This can be any negative thing, including madness, death etc. but it depends on the nature of the taboo committed. For instance, if a person visits a riverside on a forbidden day and he refuses to confess to the spiritual leaders of the community, he may even die immediately on returning home, after meeting strange beings at the riverside. Sometimes also the strange being the person met at the riverside would tell him: "You were not supposed to come here today because it is forbidden. You have come here and have met me. Since you have seen me, whether you say that you saw me or not, you will surely die". Some are able to make the confession before they die. But some do not say it at all, but they die.

There is another river in the neighbourhood called *abankore*. It is a taboo to go to the riverside on Tuesdays. The river is believed to be a hunter. On Tuesdays, it carries a gun and a hunters' lamp and dresses like a hunter. No matter the spiritual powers one may have, once a person goes to the riverside on a Tuesday, he will meet this river in this personality. When the person meets the river, it will mention its name and say: "You have met me river *Abankore*. You will surely die when you get back home. This is because you were not supposed to come to the riverside today". We are therefore very careful not to visit the riverside on Tuesdays. The exception is somebody like me, the priestess, whom the river knows that I may be coming there to offer prayers. If an ordinary person dares go there on a Tuesday, he is likely to experience something evil.

When someone commits an evil like this, the effect is normally with him alone. This is because it is only the individual who dies. But if the person dies before the necessary pacification was paid, the family of the deceased person will be made to pay the penalty before it would be allowed for the corpse to be buried.

In the olden days people who indulged in sexual activities in the bush would confess on their own for the necessary rituals to be performed to reverse any potential effect of the evil committed. But these days, people rarely make such confessions. That is why there are rampant deaths, especially among the youth.

*How is the effect of evil reversed? Who are the major players and are their specific roles?*

In the case of the examples mentioned above, a sheep has to be sacrificed to the river. However, when the *mmusuo* is about the entire town, all the inhabitants are made to sweep their houses, and all the refuse are gathered in front of the palace. The chief or the queen mother of the town leads all the people and they carry the refuse while some people also pull *somme* on the ground along the streets of the town. When they get to the outskirts of the town, they dump all the leaves and the *somme* there. This signifies purifying or cleansing the town of its evil (or *mmusuo*).

The major players are the chief, the queen mother, the traditional priest/priestess. The chief summons the people. The queen mother leads the people (women) who

carry the refuse. Then the priest/priestess is the one who prays (pours libation) for the town before we return to our various homes.

*What constitutes ritual uncleanness/contamination in African Traditional Religion?*

If someone occupies a responsible position and the person engages in extra marital affairs, for instance, and he is caught, it constitutes uncleanness. On the part of the community, it depends especially on the chief of the town. For instance if the chief is disgraced, it affects the entire community. That is why the chief is not supposed to be engaged in a lot of things which are not considered honourable. The chief symbolizes the entire town.

If a man engages a woman in sexual intercourse in the bush, it also constitutes ritual uncleanness. If someone goes to a forbidden place on *edabone* (or a sacred day), it also constitutes uncleanness. Another ritual uncleanness is *kyiribra*.

*Who or what can be ritually unclean?*

It depends on the deity. That which is a taboo (or *akyiwadee*) to a deity can be considered as unclean for that deity. These may include sheep, goat, *akpteshie*<sup>403</sup>, schnapps, etc. What may be a taboo to one deity may be what another deity may want to be used in making sacrifices to it. The one who commits a taboo is ritually unclean.

*What is the understanding of life in the traditional religion?*

Our understanding of life is that one should heed the rules given by the deity. For instance it is a rule for me and the adherents of this shrine not to be engaged in extramarital affairs, stealing, killing including abortion, etc. When one flouts the rules for once, it may be a warning, but if the person continues, the deity will kill him.

*Under what conditions can one's life be considered good or blessed?*

Good or blessed life means long life. But this is connected to whether one kept the rules given by the deities or not. One's blessedness is measured by one's accomplishments, including his property, marriage, the number of children and grand children one may have, and whether the person has a building, etc.

*What are the main concerns of the people who visit you?*

People who think they have spiritual sickness come here, because of the river here. When the person brings hot drinks and it is used to pray at the river side for him, he gets well. Some times the drugs which were not working to cure a disease now begin to produce good results. Sometimes people who want to travel abroad also come here for prayers and some have been able to travel after visiting here. A number of people also come here for child birth. After we have dealt with any spiritual hindrances, they get their results. The deity here is responsible for the entire Offinsoman so we do not deal with issues concerning destruction of people. This is because the deity protects its people so it does not destroy people. Those whose

---

<sup>403</sup> This is a local hot drink, made from the palm tree.

businesses are not booming also come here for prayers. We also help those who do not hear from their relatives abroad to re-establish contact.

How does ritual uncleanness affect the life of an individual and or a community?

Some people are so rich but since they might not have acquired their riches in a good way, they do not attract the respect from the community as it would have been the case. People look down on such people and even ridicule their wealth. This is because to use a bad means to acquire wealth, it makes a person ritually unclean.

When a man engages in sexual intercourse with a woman in the bush, or a young lady commits *kyiribra*, or somebody goes to a forbidden place on *edabone* (or a sacred day), it constitutes ritual uncleanness of the people involved. When that happens, the chief and the elders of the town perform the necessary rituals to reverse the *mmusuo* associated with the evil act committed. The ritual is meant to cleanse the person of the impurity brought upon him by the act committed.

*How is an individual or a community purified?*

For the community, *somme* and *adwera* are used for the purification. The *somme* is used to sweep the whole town. However, with the individual, the *adwera* leaves are squeezed and the fluid is mixed with some eggs into a mixture, which is sprinkled on the person to purify him. If the person was charged with an animal, such as a sheep, it is slaughtered to appease the deities and schnapps are used to pour libation.

*What is a curse (duabo)?*

A curse is usually pronounced by people who feel cheated or people who think that others have not been fair to them. For instance when a lady feels that her husband is cheating on her, she may invoke a curse on the husband and the third person in the marriage. To curse somebody is to call on a spiritual power to deal with him for not being fair to someone.

*When is a person or a community said to be cursed?*

*Nnome* is the same *mmusuo* as discussed above. What are some of the signs of a curse upon the life of an individual or a community? There are three royal families in this town. There are some of the families who will never be given the chance to be a chief. This is because long ago, someone in the family was a victim of *kyiribra*. This makes all the descendants of that woman ritually unclean, and hence unfit to occupy the position of a chief.

*How do you go about performing nsaguo/apayeyie (pouring of libation)?*

First of all we call *otwereampon*, (or the Supreme Being) and then *Asaase Yaa*, (or the earth spirit). After that, we call the *nsamanfoo*, (or the ancestors) then *nnua ne nhoma*, (or the sacred trees and strings) before we call the names of the known *abosom* (or the deities), then we put our request before them in the prayers.

Nowadays, it is not common that libation is poured during marriages and other traditional ceremonies since pastors normally offer the prayers. However in the olden days, in a marriage ceremony for instance, the hot drink brought by the man was used in pouring the libation. The linguist of the town normally prays. He invites the *nsamanfoo* from the families of the would-be couple, and tell them that:

*Mo nana afei na woaduru ne mpanyinfie so a orebeko aware.  
Mo nntaa n'akyi akyigynapa. Momma ne mmadwewa nnooso.*

*Na n'se nnore te se borodee ase.  
Onnipa boneni a otaa awadee no akyiri,*

*Se mo nana yi reko awadee yi o'mpe no yiye  
Na o'besi n'awoo ho kwan, anaase ode asodie bi beba  
abeto won awadee yi n tam no  
momma ne nkonkommoosoo mmo ne so.*

(It is now that your grandchild has reached full age  
We plead with you to back him and make him very fertile  
So that he will have many descendants.  
If there is anyone with evil wishes for this marriage,  
Who will seek to prevent him from bearing children,  
Or plunge him into any marital problems, we plead with you to return  
His evil wishes back to him.)

### 1.3 Nana Kwaku Dua and Obosom Asare Kofi<sup>404</sup>

*What constitutes mmusuo (or evil)?*

The deity may reveal/direct that say a hot drink or an animal should be taken to a riverside for a particular ritual to be performed, or that an individual should bring say a cock to be used in performing a ritual on his behalf to 'remove' a pending *mmusuo* (or evil).

Sometimes it happens that someone is suddenly attacked by death. The deity may direct that some eggs or a cock should be given to a particular river to bring the person back to life.

*What causes evil?*

---

<sup>404</sup> Nana Kwaku Dua is a traditional priest to a deity called Akwasi Mmee. Obosom Asare Kofi is his son. The interview was conducted on Nov 30, 2010.

Evil comes upon a person when that person commits a forbidden act, such as stealing, murder, incest, indulging in sexual activity with a minor,

*What effects does evil bring upon an individual or a community?*

The committal of evil brings a number of effects, including madness, incurable diseases such as epilepsy etc. Evil can come upon a town or a community, when there is a statute in place. For instance, there are some forbidden places in some towns on some special days and occasions. It is forbidden to go to some riversides on some specific days in some towns. If someone flouts this rule, he brings evil upon the entire community. If the river has very strong powers, it can reveal itself in a way to the person and the community. This revelation can be in the form of a lion, a leopard, etc. It can come to the town to devour animals such as sheep and goats at night. It uses that to pacify itself. The elders of the town are able to notice such occurrences so they take steps to use the required animal (as the deity may direct) and give it to the river to bring back peace.

Apart from this, evil upon the community can be expressed in the form of series of deaths under strange circumstances, sudden epidemics, and many cases of incurable diseases all of a sudden, etc. comes upon the town folks.

*Is evil preventable? If yes how is it prevented? Who are responsible for its prevention?*

If the cause of the evil is known and the required rituals are performed, then it is prevented from reoccurring. The *Odikuro* (or the chief) and the queen mother are responsible for summoning the people and also for the performance of the ritual. For instance if the river in the town has been offended, the chief and the queen summons the people and leads them to the riverside to perform the rituals there, depending on what directions the deity may give through the priests.

*What constitutes ritual uncleanness/contamination (or impurity) in the African Traditional Religion?*

If a deity is given something it detests the one who did that becomes ritually unclean. For example, a deity may consider it a taboo to be given a drink on some days. If this is flouted, it constitutes ritual uncleanness. The deity may therefore call for a cock or a sheep (depending on the deity) to appease itself. Or if someone visits a place where there is a corpse, that person cannot immediately go to where the deities are kept.

*How does one or something get ritually unclean?*

Some one who visits a dead body, for example, becomes ritually unclean. A woman in her menses is also ritually unclean.

*How does a person get purified?*

In that case, depending on the deity, a cock or a sheep is used to perform the ritual.

*What is the understanding of life in the traditional religion?*

Ideal life consists, first of all in long life and a decent life, in line with acceptable practices in the society. The one whose life is ideal does not conduct himself in a way that can reduce his life. No. Some of the acts which can lead to a shortened life include, having sex in the bush, indulging in unacceptable sexual activities, theft, etc., which can cause someone to pronounce a curse on a person, which can eventually lead to the person's death.



*Under what conditions can one's life be considered as good or blessed?*

*Onye nnipa basa biara. Oye nnipa kann.* Such a person is a real person. He does not behave anyhow.

*Please describe the Kyiribra ritual.*

The victim is taken to the palace. There is a specific place where the *mmusuo* can be reversed. Hot drinks and sheep is used. At this place, what the victims did will be narrated to the big crowd of people who were gathered there. The animal is slaughtered and the blood is made to pass through specific parts of the lady's body. The limbs of the sheep are then broken and all the four limbs of the sheep are placed under the armpits of the culprits. Each of them carries one limb under each of their armpits. They are then brought to where the *mmusuyi* takes place. The names of the ancestors are then called, and the offence of the couple is reported. After that they are excommunicated from the town into the bush. They are made to live there until delivery of the child, after which the child is killed in the bush. The couple alone come back home. The *abrafoo* (or executioners) of the chief of the town are the ones who kill the child.

*When is a person or a community said to be cursed?*

The person might have said *abususem* (or something evil) against the chief, or an elder. When such a thing happens, and the chief or any of the elders pronounces a curse against the person, it works. Or they can pour libation to the stools and pronounce a curse on the person. Such curses are able to change the course of life of the person in a negative direction from that time on. The person can be mad, or he will not command any respect anymore, he is regarded as a non entity.

*What is the relationship between the world of the spirits and a fulfilled life?*

When prayers (or libation) are offered to the blackened stools on behalf of somebody, the person receives their blessings. Normally what is asked for include, long life, blessings in whatever he puts his hands on to do, etc.

*What are some of the main requests that people bring to you for your help?*

People ask for the help of the deity to enable them travel abroad.

*Kindly recite a libation prayer.*

*Asomasi se epe se otu kwan ko aburokyire  
Mommue okwan mma no. Monnyina n'akyi akyigyina pa,  
Monnhyirahyira no, na omfa agyapadee mmara.  
Momma no nkowu ho, momma bone biara nka no  
Momma no nya nkwa ne akwanhosan*

(This person has expressed his desire to travel abroad  
Please open the door for him, and support his course  
Shower your blessings on him, so that he will return home with a good  
Deal of property.  
Protect him from premature death while he is abroad,  
And also protect him from any form of evil.  
Let him have a prosperous and healthy life.)

#### 1.4 Nana Agyei Akyeamfour<sup>405</sup>

*What constitutes mmusuo (or evil)?*

*Mmusuo* refers to a non observance of the rules and regulations set down by our forefathers, concerning what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Examples include *ayefere*<sup>406</sup>, going to forbidden places on specified days, etc. In the olden days, the towns were very small with bushes surrounding them. The elders might have observed that on some specific days, some disasters happen to those who visit their farms or go into the bush. They therefore declare it a taboo to visit those places on those days. Anyone who defied such a rule has committed evil (or *woabo mmusuo*).

*What is the effect of evil on the life of an individual/ community?*

There are many effects on the individual. These include excommunication from the town. How far the person is made to go depends on the gravity of the evil committed. Evil can befall a town also. The evil committed by an individual may affect the entire community in which he lives. The person loses respect before the people in the community.

*Is evil preventable? If yes how is it prevented? Who are responsible for its prevention?*

When some commits an evil act, and the person is punished, the punishment, which normally involves a ritual, serves as a preventive measure against any possible *mmusuo* (or evil) which would have come upon the individual or the community concerned. Later offenders of the same act of evil receive higher punishment than earlier offenders. The elders of the family of the offender, and the chief and elders of the town all play a part in effecting the punishment as well as the attendant rituals when evil act is committed. The chief who presides over the case may issue instructions as to what could be done to prevent evil consequences from coming upon the person. Items normally used in the purification include *Adwera*, *Hyire* (or white clay), *somme*, sheep. The sheep is slaughtered and a prayer is said that *Onyankopon* (or God) should not allow that evil thing to happen again. After the prayer, the blood of the sheep is sprinkled on the land to purify it and the community, including the people. A mixture of the leaves of *somme* and the white clay is also sprinkled in the town, using the *adwera* leaves. The *somme* leaves are able to send away *sasabonne*. The white nature of the *hyire*, which is also used when one wins a case, also signifies that one has been cleansed of filth. The whole town is swept, and the filth dumped at the outskirts of the town.

The chief and his elders are responsible for the *nsaguo* (or libation) and the *mmusuyie*.

<sup>405</sup> He is one of the "Okyeame" of the Asante king (*Asantenehe*), i.e. one through whom the king speaks. These "linguists" also see to the effective organization of every gathering of the king and any group of people. They also partly decide on what case should be brought to the *Asantehene* for settlement, and at which time. They see to orderliness at the palace, among others. Two interviews were conducted, on Dec 3, 2010 and on June 20, 2012.

<sup>406</sup> *Ayefere* a term used to describe the socially unacceptable way of a man playing with somebody's wife. It also includes a man holding some parts of the body of somebody's wife.

*What constitutes ritual uncleanness/ contamination?*

When evil is committed and the required *mmusuyie* has not taken place, it constitutes ritual uncleanness. Therefore the person concerned is ritually unclean.

*Who or what can be ritually unclean?*

We do not send a cow to the Asantehene's palace. In fact it is even not supposed to be mentioned there. It is considered a bad animal, and so cannot be brought to the King's palace. The same applies to all those with whom he visits the stools room. This is because the golden stool detests it.

*Under what condition can a person be said to be impure?*

If someone has committed an evil act in the past, and there's a vacant position which he would have qualified under normal circumstances, he may be declared unqualified because of the evil he committed some time ago. For instance, if someone indulges in sexual sin in the bush, or steals, or drinks a lot, or disrespectful, etc. All these make a person unqualified for such a position, because he is impure.

*What is the understanding of life in the traditional religion?*

Everybody prays to God for a long life with vitality/ strength, without sicknesses. Living with sicknesses is not ideal life. It means long life, accompanied with all that one needs to live a happy life. God is the sole source of such life, even though a few people believe that some deities are responsible for their lives. But the majority of traditional worshipers see the Supreme Being as their source of life.

*Under what conditions can one's life be considered as good or blessed?*

A life which is blessed expresses itself in many ways, including good marriage—when a lady gets married to a man of substance, who does not only take care of the nuclear family, but also the extended family, we say that the lady has gone for a good marriage. Good job is also a sign of a good life. Other signs include successful journey- especially for those who travel abroad, bumper harvest, etc.

*How does ritual uncleanness affect the life of an individual and or the community?*

The individual does not get peace. He may even not get anyone to marry. He may also suffer stigmatization from his community because of the misdeed that brought the evil upon him or his family. It may even be that the evil was committed by his forefathers, yet the effect will be the same.

*When is a person or a community said to be cursed?*

A curse is a pronouncement by someone who has deeply been offended by another person, and out of the pain, utters bad wishes against the offender. Such pronouncements are normally made to go beyond the individual concerned to his family as well. This is especially so, when the offender does not accept his wrongdoing and therefore apologize for forgiveness. It can even happen that the effect will not be seen in the life-time of the offender but generations after him. I know of a family in Bantama. History has it that some years ago, one of their forefathers stole someone's money and a curse was pronounced on him. It has become characteristic of his descendants to die through flooding, madness, etc. The women in the family have difficulties with marriage in spite of their beauty, all because of the stigma attached to members of the family.

*What are the signs of a curse upon the life of an individual or a community?*

Sometimes the very character of the individual suggests that he is not living a normal life. For instance some people find it very difficult to say the truth, they are cheats, which may even lead to imprisonment, murder, and many other acts which are socially unacceptable. Such people exhibit such characters in unusual ways.

*What is the relationship between the world of the spirits and a fulfilled life?*

It is a traditional belief that life continues after death. And that the life one leads in the here and now determines how one will live in the other world. One of my mother's close friends died after some short ailment. She died in the evening so the body was prepared that night to be buried the next morning. She lived in a two-room apartment while she was alive. Only one of the entrances to the two rooms had a door. The other entrance had only a mat covering it. While she was alive, this woman used to visit my mother, who lived under relatively better conditions than her. She once remarked: *Ei Akosua wo dee wo tiri ye. Wo ara hwe baabi a wo tee*. That is: "Akosua, you must be thanking your stars for living under such a good condition". Early the next morning, the dead person rose again. This brought fear upon the people around so they began to run away. The woman urged them not to run away because she had come back to life. She then started crying, and narrated to them that she was travelling somewhere and got to a point where she could not see anybody. The place was so quiet but she later met a woman and she asked her for some directions to where she was going. The dead woman then asked her about the house of her mother who was already dead. She saw that her dead mother was living in a two-room apartment with poor conditions just as the one they inhabited while they were alive. Her dead mother was surprised to see her there since she was too young to be there and she asked her to return. Her mother who died earlier on told her that she should bear in mind, however, that when her right time was due for her to join the dead, she would surely inhabit the poor apartment she came to see in her period of being in the other world. The woman then cried a lot that after coming back to life because she believed that she would live under similar conditions as her living conditions in the life here.

So the spirit world is believed to be there. They believe that if one lives a good life here in this world, it shall be well with him in the world hereafter, and vice-versa.

*What happens at Akwasidae?*

In the stools room, the chief and the elders go to pray. In the first place, they thank *Onyankopon* (or the Supreme being) for giving us that good day. They then ask for *Onyankopon's* protection for the occupant of the golden stool as well as his family. They also pray for the protection of the Asante nation, as well as any good thing that one can imagine. After the prayers, a sheep is slaughtered. The blood is poured on the stools, and schnapps are also poured as libation as a purification rite (or *mmusuyie*) and the meat is used in preparing food for the people in the house. In the olden days, some people even came from outside to eat from the house during such occasions. The food is usually prepared by men, and also offered to the ancestors. After keeping it before the stools for about three hours, (between 12noon – 3pm) the food is eaten by the people in the house. This is basically what happens in the stool house.

*What is nsaguo?*

It is a prayer to *Onyankopon*, asking him for what is needed. For example, there are some families who register several deaths within a short period of time. There may be young and energetic people without any good job, there may be pretty ladies in

the family without marriages, etc. So when the chief is pouring libation, he prays for himself, his elders, his family members, the royals, and the townsfolk. This is because if the chief of a town prospers and his subjects do not prosper, the people will not follow him whole – heartedly during ceremonial occasions. So the chief prays for good things for the entire community so that it shall be well with them. The chief also prays that he will not slip in his speech or in his dealings with his people. He also prays that he will not offend any of his superiors, especially, Otumfour Asantehene.

#### *What is salvation (or nkwagyee)*

Our understanding of nkwagyee or nkwa is different from the Christian understanding. It is not life or salvation coming from Jesus Christ. Rather it refers to life which we derive from the deities in which we have put our trust. For instance when someone is sick, it is usually suggested that the person is sent to a traditional priest or a deity to enquire of the cause of the sickness and also for a possible cure of it. So our understanding of salvation is based on the belief in the deities to secure our life for us. Abosom refers to a man-made creature on which blood is poured and in which we have a strong belief that they can secure our life for us. Nsuman on the other hand refers to a when a person is possessed by the powers in a river or mmoatia (or dwarfs) and sent to the bush for spiritual empowerment. When such a person return home, his fetish practice is referred to as Suman since he draws his powers from a river. Both the nsumankom and abosomkom constitute akom. That is where we have put our faith. So when we are in need of something, for example healing, or a solution for fertility problems, we make a pledge of paying something back to the deity. So our belief is that life emanates from our abosom or our nsuman.

#### *What is nkwa (or life)?*

Nkwa refers to long life. So if a person is troubled by sicknesses, it may be suggested that he goes to see a deity in order to avoid possible misfortunes like premature death, etc. with a pledge to be paid if the request placed before him is met. The nkwa we seek from the abosom is based on the hope that they will enable us to continue to live a trouble-free life, with good health. So nkwa refers to living in good health and being successful in one's personal endeavours.

#### *What can you say about “nkwa-gyee”?*

Nkwa refers to good health and long life. So nkwa gyee means we are going for nkwa or that good health and long life. In other words we are going for something to secure the nkwa (or the long life with good life). The gyee here refers to the fact that we're going to request it from a spiritual power being it from the abosom and the nsuman and what have you. So there is a difference between nkwa and nkwa gyee. For instance if I am sick and I go for healing from a deity, it means I have gone there to seek nkwa (or life). This is because the sickness can cause your death. Since our society abhors death, we do everything possible, even if it involves carrying the sick person on our heads, to take him to a deity whom we believe has the ability to secure the life of the sick person.

#### *What role does salvation play in the religious life of an individual/ a community?*

In the case of the individual, if I am sick and a relative takes me to see a deity and I am healed, I have secured what I wanted. But in the case of a community, if an evil thing (bone) happens in the community, then we may be going for a remedy for the situation for the entire community. For instance, in my own hometown, Mpatasee

near Anomanye in Kumasi, an incident happened in the late 1980s, I think in 1987, a chimpanzee came to the community to terrorize the inhabitants for some time. It was very difficult for the community to arrest the situation so it was reported the military in Kumasi. All attempts of the military to kill the animal proved futile. For more than three months, they could not kill the animal. Wildlife experts were also brought in and it was all to no avail. When the elders of the town consulted deities it was made known to them that the community had committed evil against a river in the town. Because the river is a mother, it has been patient with the people; otherwise a lot more people in the community would have been killed. The chimpanzee was only biting people once in a while. There was a palm wine tapper in the community. He was the one who was able to kill the animal. So we believe that when an evil occurs in the community, we have to find its cause. When the instruction from the deity was fully obeyed, life was restored. Such situation calls for *nkwagyee* or (going to get life) because life is endangered.

*How does nkwagyee facilitate abundant or a good life?*

In the first place, to see that someone's life has been a good one or successful depends on number of things. It expresses itself in hard work, and humility. Humility is one thing that attracts the blessings of the elderly, which translates into a blessed and successful life. A good life expresses itself from the infancy individual as he exhibits respect for all people, especially the elderly. He becomes distinguished from his peers. On the hand, the opposite is true of the one who does not show any regard for the elderly, and also embark on all sorts of bad deeds. Such a person receives curses from the elderly and it also affects the person's life. Such a curse can travel down generations after the person who was cursed.

*Under what circumstances does a person or a community need nkwagyee/salvation?*

*Nkwagyee* becomes necessary when you find yourself in trouble without any *ogyefoo* (saviour). In the traditional belief, *ogyefoo* are the *abosom*, and *asuman*, the leaves, etc. so we turn to them for help or *nkwagyee*. So it is difficult and life threatening situations that causes us to go for "*nkwagyee*".

*Is there any relationship between salvation and life after death? If yes how is it?*

It is traditionally believed that if a person is a nuisance to society, his ghost is equally considered bad. They also believe in reincarnation. So even when the person reincarnates, he comes back with the same character. This applies to wealth as well. If a person is born into a rich family, he comes back into a rich family when he reincarnates. The opposite is also true. This is because the life we lead in this life follows us. The belief is that each person reincarnates seven times. Therefore if a person is able to change a situation of his life through *nkwagyee*, that will affect his life after death, or when he reincarnates.

*What is destiny (or hyebere/nkrabea)?*

It is believed that human beings come from the underworld/ the world of the dead, (or *asamando*) to be born, so the character of a person in this life reflects his character when he was in the world of the dead. If the character was good, his character in this life will be good, if it was bad, his character here will be bad.

Character, is also derived from the family. If the elders of your family do not have good character, you are likely not to have a good character. The exception may arise when a member of the family happens to be brought up in a different environment;

otherwise the character of the elders of the family is likely to be transferred to younger generations.

Nkrabea refers to the farewell message a person give to his ancestors in the world of the dead, with regards to the kind of life he will be leading in the land of the living.

What determines whether a person's destiny will be good or bad.

It depends on the life a person leads. Some people are tagged as good and others are tagged as bad. It all depends on how they conduct themselves. Those who lead a good life are respected and their life follows them. The opposite is also true. Before a person is born, the nananom school him as to how to live in the world of the living. This, coupled with the upbringing the person receives on this earth, determines how one leads his life. This how a person's destiny can change.

*Is it possible for one's destiny to change? – If yes why and how?*

It is possible for spiritual forces (Esum mu atumfoo) to change the destiny of people. A person might have been bound to lead a good life here on earth but he might have come to this world to meet people with diabolical intentions. Such people and evil forces can influence a potentially good person to forget the instructions he received from the world of the dead on the good things he was asked to do on this earth. Therefore he abandons the good things he was supposed to do, and rather embarks on doing evil things. We hear stories of people who started off very well but due to bad association through friends or family members, their life turns out differently. In that case we say that person's hyebere or nkrabea has changed.

*Is it possible for a destiny to be changed from a bad one to a good one?*

Yes it is possible. For instance if I'm living in a community which has had a bad influence on me and I change to a better environment, it can change my destiny for the better. That can eventually change the nature of my cycle in the reincarnation. There also instances where people consult deities to help them change the destinies of their family members for the better. Usually the deity will set some rules for the person involved. If he adheres to the rules strictly, his destiny changes. An example is those who are drunkards. Some deities are able to help them overcome it.

## 1.5 Okomfoo Yaa Bea<sup>407</sup>

*Please describe traditional religion.*

All I would say is that in our religion we don't take anything out, neither do we add anything to it. In the olden days, our forefathers were mostly adherents of the traditional religion. It was Akwasi Broni (or the white man) who has deceived us with his new teachings. Otherwise, our traditional religion emphasized fear and respect. This is because the deities visited prompt judgment on those who committed various offences. If someone steals another person's plantain from the farm, and the owner takes the pieces of the plantain to the farm, and invokes a curse, the thief was affected. This ensured truth and integrity in the society. That is why chiefs are made to swear an oath before they assume their office. The oath (or *ntamkessee*) is what has become a covenant, defiance of which will attract a curse upon the chief. So in

<sup>407</sup> The interview was conducted on Nov 27, 2010. Okomfoo Yaa Bea is a traditional priestess of Kwabena Sugye at Agona Asamang in the Ashanti Region.

this religion, there was power and respect for the elderly. People were generally afraid to breach the rules.

*What constitutes evil (Asan/mmusuo)?*

It takes different forms, including being killed by a falling tree or branch, stumbling and falling to death. Some motor accidents are also evil. If one does not keep faith with his fellow and he pronounces a curse on the person, it also brings evil (or *mmusuo*) on the person. Premature death can also be *mmusuo*.

*What causes evil?*

Unfaithfulness can cause it. Deceiving others to exploit them or deprive them of what is due them can also bring about evil. Evil can come upon someone, if the person has been sold in the spirit world.

*What is the effect of evil on the life of the individual/ community?*

When evil (*mmusuo*) befalls a person, it may lead to his death if he does not take the required steps to reverse it. On the other hand if he takes steps to perform the required rituals he will live. On the whole community it is evil (or *mmusuo*) which can happen. This expresses itself in misfortunes such as leprosy, epidemics, blindness, etc. When these happen in considerable proportions then it is said that evil (or *mmusuo*) has fallen on the community.

*Is evil preventable? If yes how is it prevented? Who are responsible for its prevention?*

When evil (or *mmusuo*) is detected, and the rituals are performed, it prevents its bad consequences from occurring. The chief of the town and his elders perform the rituals to prevent *mmusuo* from happening. For instances if it is a taboo in a town that women in their menses are not allowed to cross a river and some defy this rule, it means an evil act (or *mmusuo*) has been committed. When the *mmusuo* (or evil) is "removed" or reversed then the bad consequences (or *mmusuo*) is stayed by the performance of the rituals.

*How is does mmusuyie (or the reversal of evil) take place? Who are the major players and what are their specific roles?*

Among the Asantes, we mostly use sheep, or cock, or schnapps for the performance of the rituals for the reversal/removal of *mmusuo*. When the source of the evil (or *mmusuo*) upon the town is declared by the fetish priest of the main deity of the town, the chief and his elders can perform the rituals themselves, or they can delegate the fetish priest to do it on their behalf. But there are instances where the directives may be specifically given, regarding who should perform the rituals. In purifying a town from the evil act which might have brought evil upon a community the whole town is swept, usually by women who were well advanced in age, since they are considered pure. All the dirt in the community was then brought to the outskirts of the town. As they are sending the dirt away, they were not supposed to look back. This is to avoid the possibility of bringing the dirt back. *Mmusuyie* can also be done by sprinkling *eto* (or mashed yam) in the town. In the case of giving birth to an abnormal child, the child was believed to be the child of a river (or *atofoba*), the child is brought to the riverside and a gun was fired into the air. Moments after the gun shot, the child would vanish, suggesting that the river has taken his child back.

*What constitutes ritual uncleanness/ Contamination (or impurity) in the ATR?*



For example, the chief's palace is considered a very holy place. That is why a woman in her menses should not go there. This is because there are deities there and menstruation is a taboo for the deities. So whoever flouts this rule, for instance, will attract *nnomme* (or a curse). When I am in my menses, I do not enter the room where the deities are kept. For a period of six days I do not work.

*What things/items are intrinsically considered unclean?*

A witch (or obayifoo) can be considered unclean. This is because when he lives among people, he causes destruction to life and property. This is because it is *obayifoo* who can challenge *obosom*. Generally speaking, however, *obosom* is stronger than *obayifoo*. But most *tubosom* (or self-made deities), especially, are not as strong as the deities of rivers. This is because the river is already a creature of the Supreme Being. Therefore when *suman* (or a spirit) takes it over, it is very strong. A person whose utterances always bring problems can also be said to be unclean.

*What is the understanding of life (or nkwa) in the traditional religion?*

Long life with good health is ideal life. To have long life is to have all things.

*Under what circumstances can we say that one's life is blessed or good?*

The person lives a descent life, he progresses in all that he does. This progress in life may also be seen in generations after him as well. He has fame, good marriage, well respected. He may also have all that a person may want to have in life. A blessed life is all encompassing.

*How does ritual uncleanness affect the life of an individual and or the community?*

A lady may be following men. If it is a man, he cannot settle on one woman, he may also be a thief, or not trustworthy. The life of such people almost amount to nothing.

*What are the signs of a curse upon the life of an individual or a community?*

Some of the signs of a cursed person include leprosy, blindness, madness, etc. This can involve a whole family, when these are the results of a curse. If the one cursing mentions the whole descendants of the offender in the pronouncement of the curse, it can affect the entire family. The river behind the deity I serve revealed to me that there is a particular family in this town (Agona Asaman) which has been cursed by the deity because some of the members of the family in the past came to do fishing from the river and, in the process, took away one of his children, in the form of a fish. The curse imposed on the family was that, from that time on, every child born in the family had some unusual growths around their mouth. It was after the required rituals (*mmusuoyi*) were performed that the cycle was broken.

Obayifoo (a witch or wizard) is unclean. He only destroys life and property. The obayifoo can challenge *obosom*. Generally speaking, *obosom* is stronger than obayifoo. But there are different kinds of *obosom*. For instance, *tubosom* is not as strong as the river deities. This is because they derive their powers from a natural source—the river. That is why river deities and rivers in general are strong. That is why even the white contractors working on the road here brought a sheep for me to make some rituals before they could construct the bridge across the river here.

It is not true that all every *okomfoo* (or fetish) has *bayie* (or witchcraft). The fact is, in my case, I have no powers, but the river does. So the deity influences me to do certain supernatural things which others may attribute to me as having some spiritual powers or *bayie*. For instance if someone is coming here to destroy things here, the deity can reveal it to me so that I do not allow the person to come. This may be

interpreted to mean that I am a witch. Meanwhile I am only acting as an *okyeame* (or linguist) to the deity. One may however be right in saying that *okomfoo* has some spiritual powers.

## 2 Transcripts of qualitative interviews with representatives of Pentecostal Churches and Charismatic Ministries<sup>408</sup>

### 2.1 Bishop James Saah<sup>409</sup>

*What does it mean to have “life in fullness”? What is the biblical basis?*

It depends on where one sleeps and wakes up. I have seen the theme and seen that topic being used in many places. Life in fullness is used by transcendental meditational folks; Eckankar people hold seminars on life in fullness, because it is defined to many people differently. But if we're talking about church, the Kingdom of God, life in fullness means what is in John 10:10. That is, being redeemed from darkness, translated into the kingdom of his (God's) son, believing in Heaven and all the gifts ... I am a restoration truth person. That means I believe that everything God has promised I can receive it here and now. I am not going to receive it in the life hereafter. So life in fullness means, whatever God has promised in His word, I have access to it now and not in the hereafter alone.

*What are some of the things which show that a Christian's life is full?*

He's born again, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, has been able to shed off the power of sin, and lives a fulfilled life in holiness towards God, with a clear conscience before God and man. He has applied himself to the word of God, where he lives a successful Christian life, having his needs met to be able to support others. He is both a salt and a light to his generation. It is not easy to paint a picture of what life in fullness actually means.

*Are there hindrances to achieving this “life in fullness”? What is the biblical basis?*

Sin can be a hindrance, as well as lack of application of the principles that govern our existence on earth. For instance, one has to work hard to be blessed. No purpose can be fulfilled without skill. Skill and purpose translate into success. One may be praying but prayer alone does not deliver the result one may be expecting.

*What are some of the examples of the things God has promised in His word which must be experienced in the here and now?*

Divine health, prosperity, peace of mind, these are 3 key examples.

*Are there enemies to owning these provisions of God?*

Yes. Laziness (Prov.6) is a hindrance to prosperity. One has to work hard to achieve the results. The Bible says, he that works hard will stand before great men, he will not stand before mean men, according to the Book of Proverbs. So things like laziness and sin can all be hindrances. 1Chron. 21 "... And Satan provoked David to number Israel..." Even numbering Israel as a king when God had clearly stated that Israel

<sup>408</sup> Interviews with representatives of Pentecostal churches or Charismatic ministries were conducted in English.

<sup>409</sup> A first interview with Bishop Saah of Christian Action Faith International was conducted on October 5, 2010, a second on June 30, 2012.

should not be numbered because the King should not trust in the number of horses, because the race is not to the swift and the battle is not to the mighty, but it is the grace of God. David numbered them and scripture tells us, it was by demonic provocation. So apart from that, there are all kinds of provocations. I believe that Satan provoked David to do what he did because he worked on the spirit of lust. In John 14:31, Jesus said the Prince of this world has come but he has nothing in me. So what is in you becomes the platform. Sin is the landing strip for Satan's aircraft. So sin can also become a platform for the enemy to get to you and undermine the fullness that God promises.

*Does sin make one impure then?*

Yes, as long as we have not repented and received forgiveness from God. That is what the word says. 1 John 1:7-9 tells us that if we say we have not sinned we make God a liar, and the truth is not in us.

*How does impurity affect the attainment of the fullness of life?*

Sin will stop your prayer; prayer will stop your sin. In Psalms 32 and 51 ... the Psalmist prayed: "Take not your Holy Spirit from me..." So if there are things one has not repented of and received forgiveness with a clear conscience before God and man, one will not be able to live a free life; one will not be able to pray meaningfully and fruitfully as one should; and it will undermine one's prayer and for that reason, unable to receive the things of God.

*How does a Christian get purified?*

By the washing of water of the word. When a person reads the word it cleanses his mind and his heart. As one applies the word and avoids it helps him to avoid every appearance of evil (1 Thess 5:22). So there are things God forbids. We should not do them. These include walking in darkness, doing things that are wrong, saying the wrong things, etc. There are whole array of them which may not be for today, but there are things that are certainly out there that can precipitate a crisis of sin in a person's life, or take you away from them, that you may live a whole life before God. A Christian also gets purified by reading the Word of God to cleanse his conscience. Fasting and prayer also helps a person to be purified. Some things will not go out except by fasting and prayer (Mark 9: 29; Matt. 17:21)

*How does evil befall a person?*

Sin is organized evil, presided over by the Devil (Eph. 6). When you become weak spiritually, it gives the enemy ascendancy, because the Bible tells us that the flesh wars with the spirit and the spirit wars with the flesh. The more one prays, studies the word, joins in fellowship and forsakes not the assembly of the righteous, the higher one's spiritual sensitivity. This takes away sin from a person, because... James 4... states "...draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you..." God says in Malachi 3 "I am the LORD and I change not..." So God is static. It is we who move away. We sin and evil come our way. We move away from God, but the more we pray the closer we get to God and all those things (evil) will fall away.

*What constitutes evil? Could you give some examples?*

Things that do not glorify God. In our society, particularly I am speaking as an African; there are things that we know are contrary to the word of God. Once they are not light, they are darkness. There are no grey areas in the spirit. ... So you worship idols, where do we put it? I am not talking about the person. I am talking about the

whole entity and their fellowship with evil (Ps. 94). It also includes witchcraft, occultism, pornography, murder, adultery, fornication, and all the things the Bible mentions in Galatians 5. Some of them shuttle between light and darkness, but largely some of the big ones are plain darkness.

Other examples of evil which are backed by spirits to attack people are poverty, premature death that run through family, the spirit of failure, we even have in Judges 6, anti-harvest forces. It said as soon as the Israelites sew, the Medianites came. So there are spirits that attack people when they are on the brink of success. When they are about to get into some breakthroughs something happens and then it fizzles away. And you can see it consistently in the life of the father, and it becomes generational. Those things we tackle them fiercely.

*Do you believe such evil can befall a community?*

Yes. Otherwise there will be no such thing as communal repentance. In the Old Testament there are cases where communities had to repent before God for forgiveness. And then we come back to the New Testament where Paul says "... for the beast of Ephesus...". And that beast was not a heavenly being serving God and it was resisting Paul from succeeding in Ephesus, and then Diana, the God that fell from Heaven, also in Ephesus. The people were serving it. And then when you go to Acts 16, the girl with the spirit of divination, the python spirit. It is that spirit that threw Paul into jail. Again Paul was going to Macedonia on an assignment but in the city of Philippi, which is an off-shoot of Macedonia, they met a spirit that stopped them and caused the magistrate to arrest them and put them into jail until God came and dealt with them.

*To what extent can evil affect the life of a person or a community?*

It puts the people in the community under certain bondage to serve demonic interest (Acts 8: 9ff. 13:6ff). It is in the same way that Jansons and Jambres were with Pharaoh. You see evil powers will always want to attach themselves to people in authority because that is the way they are able to promulgate decrees that control the people. So the magicians had something to do with all the decrees that were probably emanating from Pharaoh's court. That is why they resisted Moses when he got in. I have heard Bishop Mould, one of my colleagues, talk about a certain deity somewhere in the Western Region of Ghana called "sepataangye". You cannot appease him, and he controls the whole area and there are gods like that. Deities in tress and others like the ninety-nine gods of Cape Coast, Kotokoraba in Cape Coast, etc are worshipped. The effect on the community is clear. Apart from the schools in Cape Coast, one cannot see any real progress in the community, in spite of the great people that have come out of Cape Coast. The greatness of the people who have come from there has not been translated into any splendour in the city. I would not say so.

*What is the relationship between the purity status of a person and curses?*

In Deuteronomy 23: 5 the Bible says "...and God loved them and turned the curse into a blessing because he loved them. So Satan introduces the thing into a person's life so that it will undermine the grace of God. Once one worships Idols one is defiled. And the Old Testament paints a strong picture that a person in such a situation cannot have his prayers answered except he repents so the middle road is repentance. We know specifically that sin and occultic/demonic involvement defiles and desecrates a person, buildings, and places.

*How does the devil operate in the life of a Christian?*

In the creation of God, God has limited the devil to suggestions. Satan can only suggest. Satan cannot make anybody do anything. For instance, Satan is not powerful enough to carry a man and put him on top of a woman. So whatever a person does, God makes sure he answers for it himself. The question of "Satan made me do it" is not tolerated by God. Satan is powerful but he can only suggest, and whoever yields to it bears the blunt of the law. So whatever a person sees or hears; or whatever is suggested to his mind, one has to check it in the mirror of God's word and ask: "Is what I am hearing in consonance with God's word?" That is why the Bible urges us to: "...study to show yourself approved..." Again, we are to "...desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby..." (I Peter 2:2). It is the word which is the clearing house.

*Can the devil, for instance be responsible for the death of a child of a Christian, or cause an accident, etc?*

Those are grey areas. It is difficult to tell. Because what you see is what you talk about. But I believe in the grace of God, it should not happen. But there are things that happen that leave a lot of questions. ... that certainly this must not be God. And if something is not of God then certainly we will put it at the door of the devil.

*Is it possible that Christians stay away from the attacks of the devil?*

It is not possible for Christians to stay away from the attacks of the devil. Not when we are in this world. This is enemy territory--the prince of this world. The devil told Jesus in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 in the temptation, "... and all these have been delivered to me and the glory of it. Bow to me and I will give it to you..." So Satan holds this world. Adam gave it to him.

*What is your view about "giving directions" (or Akwankyere)?*

I have been fighting it. I have been on TV for three months teaching the prophetic. I'm totally opposed to it. Because in the Old Testament people go to the prophet for directions, in the New Testament, people go to the Holy Spirit for directions. And so they are in error.... I can counsel you, I can give you advice but I cannot give you guidance in certain things. You must read the word and get guidance from God.

*What role does the anointing oil play in purifying an individual and the community?*

These are all acts of faith. Certainly anointing oil is in the Bible but I want to believe it has been seriously and extremely abused. This is because these days I have heard of anointing oil of all colours, and it is been sold at very high prices, sometimes as high as ten times its market price. I really feel sad about it. Different colours are purported to be used for dealing with different problems—something which is not in the Bible. That notwithstanding, in James 5, the anointing oil is supposed to be used in praying for the sick. So I believe in the place of the oil since it affirms the faith that is in the people and establishes.... (Throughout the word of God it is declarations that affirm what the oil does. I can put oil on your head, no matter the kind of oil, it is the word that I speak that matters. But I think the oil itself has been abused. They give it to people to cook, drink, etc. But I think its rightful place is there, even though its purpose is usually abused. I think the right purpose of the anointing is to use it, for instance, for house dedication; -- you pour some oil there, to affirm the faith of the person. To attest to the faith of the person and it is a symbolic act. I could use water, but besides oil, I do not use anything. When you pour oil there and you speak the word and the oil is there as a visible confirmation of the word I have spoken. I do not

see dedication of a house different from praying for the sick with oil, since I consider both to be the expression of faith through the word of God.

I use the oil under various circumstances. I was praying for someone in an Assemblies of God Church, where a baby died all of a sudden. While I was preaching they threw the baby to me. After I prayed, I put some oil on the child's eyes and the child came back to life. How the oil works I do not know, but it is the word I spoke I believe, because the power is in the word and not the oil. Because the word in my mouth is a two-edged sword and it is also quick and powerful. Another instance where I usually use the oil is when I am dedicating a car. I touch the car with oil when I am dedicating it, but it is only a symbolic act of the power of the words I speak. However I don't believe the oil has any mysterious powers. My faith is in the words I speak in the prayer, but because of my hearers, I use it to beef up their faith.

#### *Relationship between purity status and the efficacy of prayer?*

The Bible says God does not hear sinners. Sinners here do not refer to only those who have not accepted Christ, but also backsliders and believers who have not repented of some sins in their lives. God does not hear sinners and so that settles it. If you have sin in your life it can be a prayer barrier since you cannot by pass your conscience. Charismatics do a lot of shouting and gesticulations which we think all pass for power but it does not. Success is judged by results so whether one's prayer works or not can be judged by the results. In the Book of Kings, Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to call on their god to answer their prayer by fire, but it did not happen. However even when they had soaked the altar with water, Elijah prayed and fire came from heaven to devour the altar including the water. Sin in the life of a person/Christian will bar the results from coming.

#### *What are the causes of curses?*

When one does not honour his mother and his father, it will not be well with him. Eph. 5: 6? If one prays all the prayers and dishonours his parents, it may not be well with him. There are other laws too. For example, if one does not sow, he cannot reap, and he may die broke. This law of sowing and reaping is a foundational law of life. One cannot live wrong and end up right.

#### *To what extent can curses affect an individual, a place and or a community?*

Proverbs 26:2 says a curse will not come without a cause. So whatever the cause is, let's trace it and deal with it. Curses are spiritual things. Sometimes God reveals the cause of curses to people so they seek help to deal with it.

#### *How can curses be reversed?*

By prayer, fasting, deliverance and declaration of God's word, a curse can be reversed. There is also the need for the restoration of the laws that have been broken.

#### *How can curses be prevented?*

When one obeys the laws I have mentioned, the curses are preventable because a curse will not come without a cause. So when one avoids the cause, the curse will not come. Prov. 26:2.

#### *What is the relevance of the OT for Christianity today?*

If you see the whole bible as a holistic material and that the old and the new are intertwined – the only difference may be the inter-dispensational period but there is

a linkage between the old and the new. Genesis to Revelation is all one book. St Augustine of Hippo said the OT is the NT hidden, and the NT is the OT revealed. I think that single statement clarifies the fact that even the Apostolic and the sub-apostolic fathers had an understanding that the New Testament and the Old Testaments are one book.

*How does the OT address salvation?*

From Genesis 3 when Adam fell and God made provision for the redemption of man, there were in types, and images. So the coming of the prophets up to the NT was all, in effect, in preparation of Calvary – the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So in the OT we see images, pictures, shadows and typologies of things to come in the NT. So it is the NT which expresses the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So the OT shows us right from Genesis 3, when Adam was covered with the leaves, that this is the way redemption was going to be played out.

*Is salvation related to Abraham in any way?*

Yes. I think that can be seen from Genesis 22, when Abraham offered, in type, by faith when he offered Isaac. There is a school of thought that when Abraham offered Isaac, it made easier for God to offer Jesus Christ. The Bible says "... and Abraham said to Isaac, God shall provide himself a lamb..." so it is God who would provide a sacrifice for the propitiation of our sin and our redemption. This is expressed clearly in no other place greater than Genesis 22, where Abraham sacrifices Isaac. He did not kill him physically, yet Hebrew 11 says that Abraham sacrificed Isaac so in the mind of God, Abraham was as good as dead because Abraham's obedience.

*What is your understanding of deliverance?*

Deliverance in the NT is a very touchy subject. I know I don't have the grace for deliverance and there was a time I did not believe in it but I came to believe in it through the ministry of Dr. Abraham Chibundu which I personally witnessed. The issue is whether a Christian can be possessed and demonized or not. I believe that the spirit of a person can be occupied by only one spirit and so once a person is born again; it is the Spirit of God that occupies that person. I therefore thin that a Christian can be oppressed and demonized but he cannot be possessed. If we agree that anger is a spirit, masturbation is a spirit, depression and things which are closely related to the emotions of people, etc. I have witnessed people being delivered from such situations through the preaching of the word and the ministry of deliverance. There are instances of manifestations and these spirits are cast out, and the people involved are born- again. The people get delivered, and healed. The details are difficult to tell and the controversy will still rage. However, I believe the believer cannot be possessed (because there cannot be two spirits possessing person) but they can be oppressed, either because of lack of the word of God, or because he made allowance for another spirit to dominate him and oppress him. So it can be an on-and-off situation.

*Does the Christian need deliverance?*

Yes I think so. There are cases of schizophrenia or people who have become prisoners as a result of their exposure to negative materials like pornographic materials, etc. Such people become what I call "spiritual prisoners of war" and we need to fight to bring them back from the prisons. Some believers get oppressed, thus making deliverance essential.

*Does deliverance facilitate the realization of abundant life?*

I do not think that if a person is demonized or oppressed he is lacking some fullness of salvation. Salvation is having your name in the book of life – you are saved one time. But being oppressed means the enemy is trying to oppress you so that you do not derive full satisfaction from your commitment to God, and also not being able to do what you want to do because you lack liberty in the spirit. This is why the power of God comes mightily upon you to free you so that you can serve God fully, whether you call that abundant life is another matter.

*What is destiny?*

I am not a fatalist. A fatalist is one who believes that events are pre-timed, and that we do not have any detours. That takes away the free will of man. For the extreme fatalist, what will, be will be. I do not believe in that because we are free moral beings. From the OT, Satan provoked David to number Israel, contrary to God's command and yet God held David responsible for the act because David was a free-will being. He knows the word - What he should do, and what he should not do. If we believe it to the extreme we will not work or embark on anything because we may think that what will be will be. I think that whether it has to do with salvation or one's own personal development, it has to be worked out.

*What is your view about the Christian and destiny?*

I think we use it generically. It has become a cliché. Believers also use it figuratively. When we Charismatics talk about destiny, we are talking about a certain place of glory we have not arrived at yet. For me as an extreme Charismatic preacher, when we talk about destiny, we are talking about a certain future state where your lot will be better than where you are now. We use it to encourage the people to aspire to higher level of life and development. It does not mean a certain state of affluence that you do not have to work towards. Charismatics have a different understanding of destiny from unbelievers. For the unbeliever, destiny means a state of fatalism - that "this is the way it will be, no matter what I will do". I do not believe that because God expects us to do certain things. Among us Charismatics we teach that we must work out our own salvation. There are certain things we must do to serve God well, and besides there are certain things you must do to improve yourself so that you become a better person – go to school; save money; build a house; work on your marriage; make things better, etc. and then you will a destiny that you expect. I think it is Brown Tracy, an American inspirational speaker who said "sacrifice is the price today for security tomorrow". I want to use that to knock off destiny. So there is nothing like automatic destiny if I do not make sacrifices today that will guarantee my security tomorrow.

In the OT, material blessings were given for obedience, in the NT giving and receiving is what brings us blessing and possessions. In the OT, the saints thought the world was their primary home, they were citizens of a promised land Canaan (Deut. 8: 7-9; 11: 8-12), In the NT, the saints see their home in another world. In the OT, the Israelites destination was on this earth. In the NT the saints are aware that we have not arrived at our destination and we never arrive in this life 1 Peter 2:11.

*What does the "Promised land" signify for Charismatics?*



When Charismatics talk about Promised Land, we are talking about two things. For me as a highly educated Chrismatic, my understanding of it is about a certain place of glory and honour temporal on this earth. When we say “receive your promised land” we are talking about some material things you can receive in the here and now. On the flip side, “Promised land” also refers to heaven which will be inherited post death, where Abraham and the lot are watching from the balcony. That is another promised land. Depending on the context, one will know which of the two is being referred to. If it is blessing people then the Promised Land will be about material things but if it is about post death, then we are talking about eternal life.

*Does the Exodus relate to salvation and abundant life in any way?*

If you assume that Egypt represents the world and God took them out of Egypt, and was taking them to a land flowing with milk and honey, even if it was a physical thing, then God was taking them to a promised land, a better land where God was going to give them the Ten Commandments which would rule and govern them. So when we talk about salvation in the OT, the Israelites were taken out of Egypt, which represents the world, into a better place where God and his law would work for them. On the Exodus and abundant life, in Exodus 10, 11, the Bible says God told Moses that when they shall leave, they shall not leave empty handed. After 430 years of slavery and bondage, these were gold-laden and diamond-pocketing slaves. Even though they were slaves, they were rich slaves so they left with some level of abundance, after all in Genesis 34, 35, that is what they used to build the temple. They did not leave broke they left with some wealth.

Pharaoh: Among Charismatics, Pharaoh represents the devil is holding the people of God in bondage. He is a “type” of Satan who does not want to release us to go to our blessing and our promised land so God came to liberate them as Jesus did to us when he came to die on the cross to set us from the world.

The Plagues: I think we cannot oversimplify the plagues. I think God did it to express his power, because of the setting they were in. God did that to express his sovereign authority over all elemental issues and forces of life and has power over all other authority. In Exodus 4 when God gave the rod to Moses, God authorized him to go and deal with a greater power through God’s authority so we see that as Moses expressing the power of God.

The Passover: In the NT God leaves us with two ordinances after salvation. These are water baptism and the Holy Communion. According to 1 Corinthians 11, the Holy Communion is in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Passover was supposed to be commemorated by all generations. This was the night the Israelites were taken out of captivity and the Israelites were to celebrate it, and I take it that when we look back, the picture of it is what we do when we come to the Lord’s Table. Crossing the red sea and the Jordan: When you are born again there three enemies: the world, the devil and the flesh. There are those who believe that both the red sea and the Jordan River represents one of the three. Though I have heard it preached, I cannot push that. I personally believe that they are phases of our Christian growth because when you move from the red sea you are getting closer to your promised land. When you move over Jordan and the circumcision over Joshua Chapter 9 and you cut your fore skin you are also getting closer to the Promised Land. So I believe they are all phases and stages in our closer walk with God.

The nations which fought the Israelites, and the associations we can draw from that: The Bible says in Ephesians that we should mortify the deeds of the flesh. Even when you become born again there are things you carry away from the world against which you have to fight. These include besetting sin, works of the flesh, challenges in

your body, mind, flesh, emotions, etc. depending on the individual and we need to deal with them before you can serve God the way you should. However, they are basics and some of them are not directly expressed word for word that this is what it means in the NT as a typology of what it is in the OT so trying to read into it may be at variance with the word. Sometimes they just give us images and the Bible does not tell us clearly that in the NT this is what it really means.

*Are there any parallels between the Exodus and deliverance as we talk about today?*

I think there is. Christ died, broke the power of sin and death, (the bible tells us in Galatians 2 that “I am crucified with Christ never the less I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me and the life that I live now in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God who died and gave himself for me”). So we take it from the NT, and from Rom. 8: 1, 2, it says the law of the Spirit of Christ in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. We assume that when Christ died, I died and when he rose I rose so everything Christ did as a picture of the OT, he did it on our behalf and we are partakers of it. We are seated with him right now in heavenly places and that is where we are in types, in images and by faith. So we have also moved from the world and the flesh to a place where we have authority the devil, the world and the flesh. This is exercised by faith and this is what we call new creation realities.

## 2.2 Pastor William Wright<sup>410</sup>

*What does it mean to have life in fullness?*

I believe that to have Christ is to have life in fullness. There is no life outside of Christ. Christ is the embodiment of the fullness of life. So if you have Christ, you have the fullness of life.

*How does the fullness of life show?*

Well, in this day and age where a lot of emphasis is placed on the material, I believe sometimes it is rather unfortunate when we tend to assume that God is all about the material. But I believe that we should have both the material as well as the spiritual. Yes... the joy of the LORD, the peace of God are also very important because one could have the material and still lack these spiritual ingredients in his life. But I believe that first of all the peace of God is something that cannot be bought with money. I believe the joy of the spirit of the LORD and God intervening in other areas and affairs of one's material life all contribute to give a person a sound life.

*Are there enemies to achieving this life in fullness?*

I believe there are hindrances to achieving fullness of life. It is one thing for God to promise and it is another thing to see his promise come to pass in our lives. I believe personally that there are things ... as individual believers and Christians we have to do to bring to pass God's promises concerning our lives because most of the promises of God are conditional.... “You do this and I'll do that”.

I believe that laziness is a major enemy of most people, because we tend to think that once God has promised, definitely it will happen, irrespective of what we do or what we do not do. But I believe that there are promises of God concerning our welfare where we are commanded to do some things, and anybody who is lazy will

---

<sup>410</sup> Pastor Wright is the personal assistant to Bishop Saah and heads the branch of Christian Action Faith Ministries Int. in Achimota. The interview was conducted on Oct 5, 2010.

definitely not see that glory of God in his life. And then we can also talk about spiritual enemy, the devil, who is our arch enemy. When we read John 10:10, the Bible says that the devil comes not, but to steal, to kill and to destroy so clearly, it is a picture of a spiritual enemy we have there. Then we have cases where men can stand to oppose a person. In Nehemiah 2, when the King of Persia had sought permission from the King of Persia to rebuild the walls and the gates of Jerusalem, it is recorded in Nehemiah 2:10 that when Sanballat and Tobias heard that a man has come to seek the wellbeing of the children of Israel, they were greatly disturbed. So in talking about enemies as it relates to having fullness of life, we can look at it from these angles.

In this case I will classify Tobias and Sanballat as human enemies, though, of course, the power behind their action was the devil. There are also instances where one comes against spiritual forces. They may not necessarily be manifested through human beings. Sometimes they manifest through dreams. We have had cases where people have nightmares in their sleep such as being pressed down on their bed though they slept alone in the room. So there are cases where the enemy confronts a person head-on, through spirits that manifest themselves in strange ways. But there're cases also where the enemy manifests himself through human beings. Like Paul said in the Letter to the Thessalonians: "... pray for us that we may be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men..." so he said not all men have the Faith. I also believe that sin is a major enemy which can block us from entering into God's promise

*Does impurity prevent a person from having life in fullness?*

What comes to mind immediately is a scripture I read from the Book of Zachariah, (check) where it talks about a high priest of God, who was standing to minister before the LORD and Satan standing right beside him resisting him. At the end of the day, the Bible says, the reason was that Zachariah who was the priest of God was wearing a filthy garment, which I believe is symbolic of an impure life. So because of that Satan had access to resist him as he had access into his life so later, I think in chapter 6 or so, (check) God asked that the garment be removed, and then a new white garment be put on (him) before he could stand in his office to minister.

*How can we get purified?*

I believe the way back to God is repentance. Just yesterday and throughout today I've been thinking about something he LORD laid on my heart from the Book of Samuel, when Samuel went to the house of Jesse and the Bible says that he saw the elderly sons of Jesse and he wanted to anoint them and God said no until the LORD revealed to him that it was David... but God said man looks at the outward, but God looks at the heart. So I believe the way out (of impurity) is to repent, go back to God, ask the LORD to search our heart. I believe that we can pray, we can fast, we can evangelize, we can do all the Christian religious activities we do but if our heart is not right before God, we will be making a mistake. So repentance is the most important thing in seeking to get purified. 1 John 1: 9 talks about repentance and subsequent forgiveness and cleansing.

*Does anointing play any role in purifying a person?*

I do not believe the anointing oil has purification significance. You don't anoint to make somebody pure. I personally believe that the primary purpose of the anointing, according to Exodus 25 (check) is for us to minister to God. Moses was asked to anoint Aaron and his sons that they may minister to God. Aside of that, I know that

the anointing of God comes to empower us to do the work of God. I do not know there is any place in scripture where we anoint people to cleanse them from sin. The anointing is a symbolic representation of the power of God. If you read Isaiah 10:27 (check) that talks about it, it says “...It shall come to pass in that day when the burden of Median shall be taken off their shoulders and the yoke ... the yoke is only broken by the anointing of God and the anointing simply is the power of the Holy Spirit. The yoke here could represent bondage. In this context, it was referring to a certain burden the enemy had placed on God’s people. So the yoke could also stand for a certain impediment, a certain burden, a certain weight the enemy has placed on God’s people such that you can’t break through in life. But I don’t believe that it is right that people are anointed for their sins to be forgiven.

*What constitutes evil in the life of a person?*

I believe that first of all we must look at it from the light of scripture because sometimes we may classify some things as evil whereas God does not see it so. This is because God weighs the heart and the motif of people. It is therefore very important that in describing something as evil, we look at it in the light of scripture. Whatever scripture calls evil in our physical life must be seen as such. The other side of it is the issue of our conscience. There are things you do and your conscience and your heart condemn you. This is because the Holy Spirit lives in you as a believer. They may not be things that are written black and white in Scripture but as a child of God by the witness of the Holy Spirit that is in you, you do something and the Holy Spirit says “No, this is not right don’t do it, this is right you can do it.” So in describing something as evil I think there two things: What is clearly stated in scripture as evil is evil anywhere, any day, and any time. Again what our conscience suggests to us to be evil.

*Is evil something bad happening to a person?*

I will say yes and no. Because if I say yes entirely, it takes personal responsibility away. For instance, if somebody goes to school and he does not take his studies seriously, and he keeps failing his exams, and he blames it on an evil spirit working against him, I don’t think I will agree with such a view. But to some extent also, there are some instances which lead one to conclude that it not normal or it is not usual. For instance when Joshua destroyed Jericho, he placed a curse on the land. He said that curse is the one who will try to raise the foundations of the city again. He will do it at the expense of his first son. And he said curse shall be the one who shall try to raise the gate of the city. He will do it at the expense of his last child. Later on in either the book of Kings or Chronicles (Check), somebody tried to rise up to rebuild the walls of Jericho ... because Jericho is symbolic of a cursed land. A curse was placed on the land by the words of Joshua. Somebody rose up to rebuild the walls and then just as Joshua spoke, it did happen. So in that case whatever happened to that man happened because a curse had been pronounced on the family that would try to rebuild the walls of Jericho. So it is fifty-fifty.

*To what extent can evil affect the life of a person or a community?*

Basically what a curse does is that it places a restrain on a person. You’ll never amount to any life. There are curses that when they are not broken you’ll be going nowhere. ...Sometimes a curse can come from God. When you read Jeremiah 5: 17ff, God said “cursed is any man who puts his trust in any man. God is saying here that as long as you don’t see me God as your source and your provider, you bring yourself under a curse automatically. You’ll continue to suffer in life because you’re trying to hit yourself against the wall. Nothing will work for you. So when a curse is on

an individual or a community, if it's not broken, it places a limitation on that individual or that community and you'll be able to rise to your fullest potential.

*What is the relation between a curse and the purity status of a person?*

From the Bible point of view, it is two things. You are either cursed or blessed. From the Book of Numbers the experience between Baalam and Balaam. The man said come and curse these people for us. A great people have come out of Israel and they are mighty and they are like a force on the earth so he contracted the prophet to come and curse Israel. In his attempt he said no. He said how can I curse the people whom God has blessed? But it didn't mean that everything had gone on well with the children of Israel. They may have their personal issues with God, but the fact still remains that they are a blessed people of God. And because they're blessed, no curse can break through them. So you're either blessed or you are cursed. Anybody who accepts Jesus Christ as his personal saviour is blessed. However you can break out of the hedge. When you are a Christian you are secured within the confines of God's blessings. However there are things you can do that can bring the curse of God upon your life. For instance you lift up a finger against a man of God, like what happened to Moses and his siblings who spoke against them and the LORD strike them. So you could be a child of God and find yourself come under a curse because of what you do which is wrong.

*What role does the devil play in bringing curses upon a person?*

This is an interesting question. I think there's a scripture in 1 or 2 Chronicles 21:1 which says "And now Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel" ... what we call Satanic provocation. So what he did was because he was under a certain spell of the enemy. The enemy pushed him. So Satan can push us or compel us to take a step that brings God's judgment upon us. In the case of David, after he numbered Israel, the judgment of God came upon Israel.

*How does the devil operate in the life of a Christian?*

I think in many ways. He works through friends, (Ps 1) one example I can give on this is Amnon, one of the sons of David, The Bible says her sister Tamar was beautiful and he had wanted to sleep with her. However he realized it was an abomination and a difficult thing to do. ... But Amnon had a friend, through whose influence he ended up sleeping with his own sister. And later his brother Absalom had to take him off the way. So the enemy can come up against us through the influence of friends. That's why we are cautioned by scripture to be weary of the people we walk with. The devil also works through provocation. The devil, having lived on this earth for so long, has many tricks and strategies. Satan can provoke a person into anger and to wrath, and to unrighteousness through a close relation. Then he operates through the thoughts on our minds. Back from creation the devil keeps asking the question: "Did God say..." This is a direct challenge to God's integrity and Satan still uses that today. He still asks: "Is it true? Can God do it? Do you always have to pray about this? It's not a sin;" etc So he challenges God's integrity so far as his word is concerned in our minds and he has his way... that is it.

*Is it possible to stay away from the attacks of the devil?*

I will say yes and no. Many years ago when I became born again, an elderly person in the LORD said "We have been saved from the penalty of sin, and we are being

saved from the power of sin everyday, and we shall be saved from the presence of sin” That is to say as long as we’re on earth, sin is around us. But when we abide God’s word, we can stay away from the things God does not like from us.

*What is your view on “giving directions” to Christians?*

This is a big challenge of the church today. On this issue we must be very careful because every born again Christian has the Holy Spirit in him. And one of the things the Spirit of the LORD does for the child of God is to direct his path and to show him what the LORD wants him to do. I do believe that there are mature people in the LORD who may be able to add to one’s life by telling him one or two things the LORD is saying, but I believe that irrespective of what any man of God is saying to any child of God, it should come to confirm a certain witness one has in his heart already. Come to think of it, if my Archbishop comes to me and he tells me that God says I should marry the secretary, I think it will be wrong for me to just swallow what he is telling me. I think whatever a man of God tells any believer has to be evaluated in the light scripture. I don’t believe in this phenomenon where people are now going to men of God, for everything.... I believe this is a subtle kind of witchcraft and occultism. It is not biblical. We must have the witness of the spirit of God in us concerning anything anybody says to us. So this subject must be looked at carefully. It is causing a lot of havoc and creating confusion in the body of Christ. I want to say it is wrong, it is not biblical, and it is creating a lot of problems.

*How about purity status and the efficacy of one’s prayers?*

The Bible says that sweet water and bitter water cannot flow from the same fountain. One of the major requirements, I believe as revealed in scripture is to set ourselves apart for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This anointing refers to the power of the Holy Spirit. And one cannot pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to do ministry and still live in sin. So we purge ourselves from all unrighteous works, we separate ourselves unto the LORD in our heart, as we seek for him to place his power upon us to do his work. So there is a direct relationship between living a pure and a consecrated life and walking in the power of God. You cannot walk in the power of God and then live your own life. It is not possible.

*What role does the anointing oil play in driving away evil powers?*

The anointing oil does not play any role in driving away the power of the devil in an individual. Once again I ground my argument in the New Testament. At the mention of his name (that is the name of Jesus), every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess.... So it is one’s relationship with Christ and his place in one’s heart that grants one the power to speak to the devil and drive him out of one’s life. He said in Luke 10:19 that I give unto you power and authority to tread on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the powers of the enemy.... That power and that authority are in his name. The oil is, to a large extent, symbolic and I believe that we should use it as and when the spirit of God leads... Otherwise does it mean that when one confronted by an evil situation to deal with, and there is no anointing oil, one cannot pray; and the power of God cannot have its way because there is no anointing oil? No I believe it’s wrong. Even in James where mention is made of the use of the oil in praying for the sick, it is said that it is the prayer of faith that will make the sick person well.

*What brings about a curse?*

When one breaks the law, it brings a curse... A clear example is in Eph 6; where it says obey your parents in the LORD. Honor your father and your mother that it may

be well with you, and that your days may be long on this earth. He says this is the first commandment with a promise. When you break such a commandment, the next thing that follows is a curse.

### 2.3 Mr. Abboa Offei<sup>411</sup>

*What does it mean to have life in fullness? What is the biblical basis?*

I see life in fullness as (it is in) the Old Testament context. Here, life in fullness is not just breath but some additions to the breath. These include a direction or a destiny, a course that somebody has to take through life, which is unique to that person. There is also an addition of that which can be used to fight life battles. Example of such a life is that of Abraham. His life went through a particular course. The life of Sarah is also an example of a life with a destiny or a course or a direction that one has to go through. It does not necessarily mean a breath, but to go through a course of life.

The second aspect is that of life which gives somebody the ability to fight life's battles/ challenges. Every creation has that capacity to fight life's battles. Every animal has defensive mechanism. To have life in fullness therefore, one needs that which can be used to fight life's battles. One therefore needs to be "hot" (i.e. untouchable), and that life also involves what is translated "captain", which implies that there is an area that one has to captain or rule for life in fullness. There is a point of reference as far as that area is concerned. Somebody may be a footballer and fulfill that mission of a footballer, and become a point of reference in his community. So life in fullness is when a person possesses and rules where God has given him.

Another addition is the ability to move fast and accomplish whatever one has to accomplish before the person dies. In Gen 24: 12, the servant of Abraham said that Oh God of Abraham, send me good speed today... and that good speed is that which enables a person to finish mission and accomplish mission.

Life in fullness is also good health and good wealth. I see life in fullness therefore from the holistic view of the Old Testament. I believe Jesus' reference to life in fullness was a reference to the Semitic understanding of life, which is holistic.

*What then is meant by a blessed life in our context?*

My understanding of a blessed life as an African and a Christian is that capacity God has given to fulfill whatever one is supposed to fulfill. Some indicators of a blessed life include someone who has a fulfillment and contentment. It does not necessarily depend on what the person has or does not have. For instance if an evangelist wins so many souls for Christ, it is a blessed life; if a pastor pastors his congregation well, his life is blessed.

*What are the hindrances to achieving this "life in fullness"?*

There are physical hindrances, environmental hindrances, social hindrances, and spiritual hindrances. Somebody may be destined to be wealthy but due to spiritual programme that has been designed for him, or a covenant that has taken place against him or due to a power which has been projected to hinder that person's upward movement in life, the person is hindered. There are many examples which go

---

<sup>411</sup> Mr. Offei is the leader of the Grace Presbyterian Deliverance Team, in Akropong in the Eastern Region. The interview was conducted on Oct 25, 2010.

beyond human understanding. We have prayed with people and the following day their legs and hands are physically bound with ropes. Such people were once mad, or could not walk, or infirmed, or deformed. But when the spiritual hindrances are broken up in prayer, the person can move on. But the Bible says I wish above all things that you may prosper as your soul prospers. So if there is no spiritual problem, there is physical evidence.

*Who or what are the enemies of “life in fullness”?*

The hindrances will not let anybody get the fullness of life. But I will rather call them negatives, deviations, diversions, delay, disappointment, disturbances, People get exposed to these “negatives” through so many doors. These include making a covenant with a spiritual power consciously. But there can also be unconscious ones, where one got involved in certain practices, or somebody did it on his behalf. Also it can be a kind of a curse which has been placed on a person by somebody else. It can be a pure satanic programme such as voodoo or juju that has been programmed against the soul of a person by somebody. It can also be a soul-tie, or witchcraft attacks, etc.

*What makes a person impure?*

Impurity is an unwanted area. There are some things that are not needed in life and those things make it impure. So the Bible has made it explicitly clear that some things are not good for the human. So it is something in an environment where it is not needed. Sin makes a person impure and sin to me, as the Bible says is sin!

*How does impurity affect the attainment of “life in fullness”?*

Sin affects someone’s attainment of life in fullness. I don’t have the data but when people begin to confess, you can see that they’re relieved. Psychologically, they are relieved. I believe that spiritually too the person becomes free.

*How does the Christian get purified?*

When the person confesses his sins, he becomes purified. The Bible says if we confess our sins.

*Who are involved in the act of purification?*

The respondent believes that it is the individual who has to confess his sin to God for forgiveness. No third party comes in.

*What elements are used in the purification act?*

It is the blood of Jesus that washes us clean.

*What constitutes evil?*

Evil is the enemy to progress. This is because, may be somebody has projected a demon onto another person, which is evil. Somebody has hired principalities, powers, authority to harm another person. This is evil. And this is a disturbance to progress.

*How does evil befall a person or a community?*

What I have realized so far is that some people come under evil through no fault of theirs. It is just accidental. They just bumped into it. We have seen people who visited some tourist sites and bumped into some evil, and from that day on everything began to go bad. We have seen students who have visited shrines and as soon as they got there evil attacked them. These attacks expressed themselves in some being raped,



etc. Some too got themselves exposed to it. That is, they might have gone to a deity for protection or something. And it “blessed” them with one, and took from them three or four things.

In some other instances, there is a promise that the deity will let a spirit protect them and this spirit which is supposed to be protecting them end up giving them more negatives than positives, which brings evil upon them. For some too, it is what some others have done consciously to harm them by means of such methods like occultism, such as “stay at home”, “don’t come to work”, “touch me not”, “follow me boy”, etc.<sup>412</sup>

Some are the results of projected curses. Some are pure witchcraft programmes. We have seen somebody who buried a big pot with so many different items. The person could name all that they have used those items to do in putting evil on people. According to him, those items represent tied wombs, dissolved marriages, lost jobs, etc. which have been projected against some people. We thought it was a joke so we followed those people against whom these evils had been projected and all the allegations were proven to be true. We therefore had to pray with such people to break the curses. In such situations, somebody had really programmed the evil by consulting evil powers. It could be usage of manipulation, monitoring spirits, etc. to programme it. We have seen those who have been using some kind of incantations to bring evil unto others. And if one does not have Christ, it works perfectly against him.

Evil can also happen to locations, communities, areas, countries. For example, there is a town we had to work on. This is because as soon as one becomes the chief of this town, he dies under strange circumstances. There is another town where everyone who became the secretary to the Presbyterian Church there suffered stroke. So we had to go and pray with the church. We have communities which have been cursed. Whatever the inhabitants do, they don’t progress; there are jobs which have been put under curses by rival companies. We have seen an instance of a bank here in Ghana which had been put under a curse so we had to work on it. Any customer who took a big loan from that bank would either suffer stroke or die prematurely so that he could not repay the loan. After breaking such curses through prayers, it stopped.

There are also villages and communities under curses, and evil. In Sierra Leone, after the war, so many places were put under evil and so we had to work on it. In Tanzania too we had to work on a community which had been put under evil. There are communities like that in Ghana as well.

An example of a Community in the Bible which was put under a curse is Jericho. Somebody reported to Elisha that the water in the city was bad and aborted children and the land was barren (2 Kings 2:19-22). Again in the Bible, there was a location called Luz, but was later changed to Bethel. It was cursed. If you look into the Bible it says that previously, the city used to be called Luz, but when Jacob got there, there was no city. He had to sleep upon a stone. And Luz means “It appears like” check (or “turn aside”?). So to me it had been a city before and something happened and it was no more a city. (*check into it*). And after anointing the place he (Jacob) called it Bethel, and Bethel is there up till now.

*What role does the anointing of the oil play in this?*

---

<sup>412</sup> These are the names of specific of the type of evil which a person wishes to project against other people. As the names suggest, these are aimed at getting people unemployed, or losing a job, or wooing men.

I see the ingredients of the anointing oil and their roles. The oil for anointing has five (5) ingredients. In Exodus 30: 22ff God asked Moses to take five (5) principal spices for the holy anointing oil. These are pure myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia, and olive oil. Much as I may not know the whole usefulness of all the ingredients, I see myrrh as very bitter, though very sweet scented. That means, anybody/ anything that is anointed is like a bitter pill. It is difficult to swallow it. Evil forces cannot consume it. Pure myrrh is also a preservative for seeds and other things. This means that whenever there is anointing, the living (act?)checkof God if preserved because of the pure myrrh. Second, the inner part of the cinnamon is so hard and impregnable. So to me, the anointing makes somebody impregnable. That nothing foreign should enter him, and if anything foreign enters him, it will come out.

Third, calamus is difficult to be established. But when it is established, it is difficult to eradicate. So to me, the purpose of anointing is entrenchment. That means the anointed one is entrenched, and so no fire no wind no human, can destroy him. This is because the smallest piece that remains in the soil will come again and continue to develop and cover that area. Therefore the anointing also signifies establishment and entrenchment.

The cassia is an arid plant. This type of cassia is unique of all the types of cassia. It is humble, not very big not very beautiful not very attractive. But there is a magic of that cassia. If its roots should touch the root of another plant, irrespective of which plant, it will take the colour and the scent of that cassia. To me, this is a sign of influence. So for me I look at anointing based on the ingredients for the anointing oil and their functions. I am referring to those functions which are known, because I believe there is much that we do not know till today. Science has not brought it up yet. So when I am anointed I have that influence on the society and on whatever I am doing including my animal rearing and the flowers I grow. I have influence on them and I speak to them. I speak to everything around me. The oil is also for healing and for prosperity.

#### *How does anointing bring prosperity?*

It brings prosperity because if you look at prosperity, I do not know your definition for it. But for me prosperity is the God-given capacity to help humanity, The God-given capacity and power to help others. So I keep flowers and if I see my flowers develop and I give some to others, it means I am prosperous. Prosperity also refers to when a person have something in preponderance that can be shared with others. Therefore even if I can pray very much and I “give” prayer to someone else, that is also prosperity.

#### *To what extent can evil affect the life of a person and or a community?*

The effect of evil on the life of a person or on a community can be described from zero effect to extermination effect. It is from zero effect to 100% certainty effect. It can exterminate a whole society, or maybe only a small scratch. It may not affect some people but for others it may exterminate their whole family, and therefore communities.

#### *What is the relationship between evil and the purity status of a person?*

The purity status of a person depends on the person’s covenant with Jesus Christ. And if one is a covenanted Christian (i.e. one who has accepted him as his LORD and saviour, and have a regular fellowship with him), evil is nothing to him. This is because in terms of power and influence, the triune God is number one. The covenanted Christian is number two. Angels are number three. Principalities are

number four. Powers, spiritual wickedness are rather at the bottom, down to the ordinary human who is around number nine. So if I am a covenanted Christian, even Satan himself is below on the ladder of spiritual authority since he is an angel. I arrived at this classification based on the Bible, which says that God is God, and Christians also as gods, the children of the most high God, born in the image of the LORD Jesus Christ. The angels rather serve Christians. In Ephesians 6, we have principalities, which are below Christians so I do not see why I, being number 2 on the ladder, should be dislodged by one below me in number 3. I may suffer some scratches from the devil but he cannot influence me much.

*What role does the devil play in bringing about evil and curses upon an individual and the community?*

The devil plays the full role in bringing about curses upon individuals. They are responsible for almost everything evil. They can do anything with a person. Anything unimaginable, anything negative. It must however be noted that humans are many a time responsible for their troubles through attitudes like laziness, lack of proper planning, lack of self discipline, etc.

*How does the devil operate in the life of a Christian?*

This is a big question which calls for more time to fully exhaust. They operate by deception. They also operate by confrontation.

*How can one stay away from the attacks of the devil?*

The Christian life is a life of warfare so the attacks will come just as even Christ was attacked. I think the Christian cannot stay away from the attacks but it is possible to stay away from its total control.

*What role does “giving directions” (or Akwankyere) play in facilitating the attainment of “life in fullness” by an individual? What biblical text(s) informs this view?*

I don’t want to condemn it totally. There are a few which are genuinely of God, but many are deceptions. People are given *akwankyere* (or giving directions) and at the end of the day nothing happens, even though it is done in the name of God—“Do this and God is going to do this or that for you”. They do it and nothing happens. If nothing happens, then I think it is not a prophetic act. I personally believe that the best *akwankyere* is to get people to understand the Bible.

I do not share the view that giving directions/guidance really facilitates the attainment of the fullness of life. And many of those *akwankyere* they give, point only to life’s basics like acquiring property like a car, what is a car? A visa, what is visa? These are not real blessings as such. Whatever they use this *akwankyere* to give are very basic for me.

*What role does the anointing oil play in purifying an individual and a community?*

I believe in the presence of holy objects in an unholy area to make the place holy. If one prays over the oil and sees it as a holy object at an unholy area; or one prays over water to make it holy and put it somewhere, the place can be holy. The most holy object, however, is the presence of the believer. And the most important thing is the holiness of the object.

*What role does the anointing oil play in driving away the power of evil from the life of a person?*

I have seen anointing oil being used ... To my mind, I do not want to consider the anointing oil only, but all the sacraments have the power to drive out evil. I have witnessed a person vomiting pins as soon as he took the communion. Apparently *Tukwe* had been projected against him. I have seen people vomiting nails, stones, insects, millipedes, centipedes, as I gave the communion. So I do not want to limit it only to the oil, but all the sacraments, including baptism, marriage (in the case of Catholics).

I believe in the anointing as a means of consecration of a person, but I want to emphasize that it is not only restricted to it.

*How does the purity status of a person affect his/her spiritual power?*

It depends on the individual, and the level of his spiritual maturity. When a person is free to go to his father, he may want to go to him everyday because he is clean, and his father loves him too. To me, the power is that which passes through a person to other people. So if I can freely go to my father everyday and his power pass through me to other people as a conduit. So one's purity will give him easy access to God, who is his father. But if one sins one feels bad, because his conscience is with him so one may not want to pray. But if you feel you can pray everyday, and your conscience does not worry you, and the power can pass through you every day.

If you know your true identity in God and you know who you are and where you are at what time, evil spirit is nothing. This is because you know your identity. Impurity may distract the person's own mind, so he cannot go to God who is the source of protection in prayers.

*What are the causes of curses? What scriptures support this view?*

There are so many causes of curses. When a person insults someone and out of his grief, insults him, it can bring a curse upon the offender. Some people also hire other powers to release a curse on others. Others are also cursed because they stole someone's property. One may not have done anything to the one invoking the curse but out of sheer envy, one may be cursed. According to Proverbs, a causeless curse will not land. So if there is a cause, the curse will land. (Proverbs 26:2)

*To what extent can curses affect an individual, a place, and or a community?*

It can be distractive, it can be exterminating, and it can also be negative. That means it can be death, delay, disappointment, distress, diversion, disturbances, etc.

*What are some of the signs of a curse upon the life of an individual or a community?*

Whenever there is a curse on a person, he cannot put his hand on what is happening. But everything begins to go wrong without any understanding of what the cause could be. No efforts that will be made to correct what is going wrong succeeds and there are so many unforeseen experiences and circumstances, without any scientific or sociological reason attached. But as soon as the curse is broken, those things stop.

A curse on a community expresses itself in the form of all kinds of sicknesses without a reason; I mean inexplicable kind of sickness, in the community, inexplicable poverty, laziness, etc. These are inexplicable because the people in the community might have done everything possible to avoid these negatives but no effort works. Other signs include rampant premature deaths without explanation. Almost everything about the community can be said to be negative.

*How can curses be prevented?*

To prevent curses one has to go to God because a causeless curse will not land. And all curses have a cause.

*Why then can somebody invoke a curse on another person out of sheer envy?*

To me there must protection for every prosperity. The Bible says I am your shield and exceedingly great reward, Gen 15. So if you want that prosperity from God you should go for that protection from God in Christ. In Job 1: 9, Satan said to God: have you not put a hedge around him on all sides? So with prosperity, one needs to have the protection in Christ.

*How can curses be reversed?*

It is one of the easiest things, according to the Bible. According to Gal. 3:13, the super alter is the cross of Christ, which can also be called the “divine exchange experience” (or Easter). So you put your negative on him (Christ) and you take the positive.

## 2.4 Mr. Charles Ayarkwa<sup>413</sup>

*What does it mean to have “life in fullness”? What is the biblical basis?*

For me, life in fullness means, first and foremost, to have Jesus Christ as LORD and saviour, and also to have a meaningful life, devoid of evil, devoid of negatives and, possibly, to experience the total glory of God in ones life. A person can be said to be living in fullness of life when he is in a position to overcome most of life’s hurdles such as sicknesses, failure, disappointment, evil powers, etc. Those without the fullness of life will not be able to overcome these things.

*What do you understand by “a blessed life”?*

A blessed life, to me, is a peaceful and systematically progressive life. If someone is blessed it means he has the peace of God upon his life, and he also has progressive blessings, i.e. blessings in all forms—in health, material, financial, academic, etc. But the most important of all is if the person has peace.

*What are the hindrances to achieving this “life in fullness”? Biblical basis?*

Yes. This will take us to two terminologies in the African Traditional religion which can also be related to the Christian religion. One is “destiny”, and the other is “fate”. According Jer. 1:1ff, before we were even born, God had our destiny in stall for us. But we are born to this world to face certain challenges, difficulties, trials, etc. which manifest in the form of fate (or *hyebere*), or things that will force a person to go through life in a very hard way. For instance, somebody may be born to be a star right from infancy but along the line, sickness may strike the person. Somebody with great academic potential may not be able to continue his academic career because of sickness. In this case we can say the sickness is a form of fate that has covered his destiny, or has hampered or stopped the person’s destiny. Death of dear ones

---

<sup>413</sup> Mr. Charles Ayarkwa is a memeber of Grace Presbyterian Deliverance Team, in Akropong in the Eastern Region. The interview was conducted on Oct 25, 2010.

who matter to a person, disasters in any form such as flooding, fire out break, etc. also form part of fate or a barrier to some extent that will prevent one from having fullness of life. According to S.W. Fortner, there are four types of disaster. These are natural, human made (or artificial), negative influences from the actions of others and satanic. My reference to disaster here is mainly to the human made, and the satanic. On fate, one can analyze 1Chron. 4:9, 10. I always analyze that portion of scripture from the African perspective. No vivid description was given about how Jabez was born but based on the scripture we are told that the mother named him so because of the suffering she went through. He was a star, that is why God blessed him and instantly he became unique among his colleagues. So something really stopped him from moving the way he wanted to, or God had made him to move and he had to petition heavens to remove that barrier (or fate) so that he could have his destiny manifesting. To a large extent, therefore, fate can hinder one's destiny.

*Who or what are the enemies of "life in fullness"? Biblical basis?*

To the question of whether there are enemies to life in fullness, I will say yes and no, depending on how one looks at it. Yes because if it is from the satanic angle, we can term it as enemies. It is also yes if it is human- made. But if it is divine then we may not be able to say it is an enemy. I will call the things which fight against achieving a blessed life/life in fullness life barriers. These include sickness, etc. We are Africans and so we believe in "African electronics", I mean the witches and the wizards, the occultic powers, the fetish powers, etc. These powers have been there even before the introduction of Christianity to Africa. These are the powers we knew so in our attempt to move away from them, they seek to "punish" us for that. That is why becoming a Christian and having the fullness of life is not something we take on a silver platter. It is as if we were born into something and we are moving out of that. It brings about the "push and the pull". The power of God is pulling the person from the abyss, and satanic forces are pushing him back to where he is coming from. So to me there are some evil powers and in the Akan context, we say "there is smoke in every home". Meaning there is a witch, or a fetish power that fights against the progress of the individuals in every home.

*What makes a person impure? The Bible's position?*

Sin is what makes a person impure.

*How does impurity affect the attainment of the "life in fullness"?*

From Ex. 23:25, God told the Israelites through Moses that if they would worship and obey him, he would bless them by healing all their infirmities, and also give them food and water. When you continue from verse 26ff it says he will take away barrenness, disappointment and things of that sort from their lives, and give them a full lifespan. So it goes with a condition. Also from Deut. 28: 1-14, it is said that if we obey God as our LORD and God, then all the listed blessings will follow us... Therefore fullness of life, for me, goes with a condition. To get the fullness of life, one must satisfy the conditions.

Whoever wants to have the fullness of life must first and foremost be a believer and a Christian. This means the person lives his life according to the word of God. If somebody is not a Christian, he may have the things which others may consider to be sufficient to make someone's life good or blessed but deep down the person's life some things may be lacking. Life without Christ, irrespective of how rich or poor a person may be, is not fullness of life.

*How does a Christian get purified?*

A Christian gets purified by accepting the LORD Jesus Christ as his saviour, and pleading for forgiveness and asking to be washed in the blood of Jesus.

*Who are involved in the purification?*

The triune God and the sinner.

*What elements are used in the purification act?*

Jesus Christ, the blood of Jesus, and a repentant sinner.

*What constitutes evil?*

I see anything negative, or outside the word of God or the will of God as evil. God has plans for his children and according Jer. 29: 11, the plan of God for humanity is not evil, or bad. Therefore anything evil outside the plan of God or anything negative outside the plan of God is evil. For instance, sickness from satanic angle is evil. Somebody dreamt and in the dream he was shot. He woke up the following morning and started bleeding. He bled to the extent that no medicine could stop the bleeding. In this wise we can say that thing was evil in the person's life.

*How does evil befall a person or a community?*

There are so many ways through which evil can befall a person. First, evil befalls us through our personal invitation in the sense that if we allow ourselves or fail to obey the rules of the word of God, there is the likelihood that evil may befall us. In this wise we have invited it. Second, Satan out of his wicked schemes can project evil into a person's life. This includes sicknesses that are not of God and are not natural, deaths that are not of God and are not natural, disappointments that are not of God and are also not natural, may possibly be coming from the angle of Satan and his cohorts.

Evil can also befall a community. There is a community in the Asante region of Ghana. It is believed that people were buried alive in the village in the olden days for ritual purposes and also as a form of punishment. When the people were dying, in their anger, grieve, frustration, etc, they pronounced all kinds of curses against the community. And it will interest you to know that people from this community have been trying their best to do well in life, but they normally come to a stand-still or they hit a point where they cannot proceed further in life but rather begin to experience retrogression. Through spiritual revelations it came to light that the community is cursed by those who were buried alive. I can count at least 10 people I have met in various parts of the Ghana from that community who are struggling to make ends meet, despite all their effort.

*Is it possible to purify such places/reverse the evil(or curse) on such communities?*

Sure. Because when you read John 10:10, it says the devil came to steal, to kill and to destroy... This means that in spite of whatever curse that the devil has placed on a community, and also the Bible says that if my people who are called by name shall cry unto me (i.e. the LORD),..... I will heal their land ... So it means that if the people of the community should repent of their sins and stand in the gap and pray unto Jehovah God, God, out of his infinite mercies, will redeem that land.

*To what extent can evil affect the life of a person and or a community?*

Well the extent may be relative, depending on the individuals involved or the community involved. Some, as I have seen, experience acute and abject poverty, disappointment, retrogression, backwardness, failure, in fact like the example stated

and other examples I can give you, such people normally do not experience anything meaningful in their lives despite the efforts they put in. So it is like the output does not correspond with the input. The output is always lesser than the input in the person's life.

*What is the relationship between evil and the purity status of a person or a community?*

Life outside of Christ may be full of impure activities, in spite of how righteous a person may see himself. For me, righteousness is only in Christ Jesus, and it is a gift of God. So a person without Christ may be struggling to do well. But how well may not be what God really want him to be enjoying in life. So I think a pure person is the one who can enjoy the things of God which gives fullness of life.

If someone is pure, evil can befall him, but the impact on him may not be the same as the one who does not know Christ. Evil may come upon a Christian alright but he may have the key to either lock it or unlock it.

*Can a Christian be cursed?*

Yes a curse may be projected against a Christian alright but it will not have a meaningful impact on the person's life, compared to somebody who is not in Christ.

*What role does the devil play in bringing about evil and curses upon an individual or a community?*

The devil and his cohorts play a key role in curses and evil. From creation, the devil has never wished humanity well, especially those who are closer to God and those who are called children of God. Maybe that is the position he wanted to have and he could not so he would do everything possible to derail the believer from experiencing what God wants the person to experience in life. Therefore evil and curses, more or less, are intensified by the devil and his cohorts. A human being can initiate these things by cursing or wishing somebody evil but if the person has no evil spirits in him, the curses may be meaningless, because Proverbs say a curse without a cause is meaningless. In the same way, in as much as somebody has hurt another person, the hurt alone can call for a curse. But if the person who cursed is not evil-minded or has no evil spirit in him, or has no evil or demonic backing, the curses are just ordinary statements and may not carry any weight.

*How does the devil operate in the life of a Christian?*

The devil operates around the life of a Christian and not in the life of a Christian as far as I am concerned. This can take place in many ways. If we analyze Job's life critically, Satan himself went to God to take permission to deal with Job drastically. And he did all he could by taking away all Job's property, but Job's soul was not given to Satan. This confirms what Paul said that his life is hidden in Christ, who is also hidden in God. So for me, a believer's life is hidden in Christ. Satan can operate around the Christian; destroy all that is around him, but not what is inside him, because he who is in the Christian is greater than Satan who is trying to destroy him.

*How can one stay away from the attacks of the devil?*

The devil and his cohorts work 24 hours to destroy the believer. And the word of God says we should also watch and pray. So through prayer, righteousness and obedience to the word of God, we can equally block certain channels that he may use to attack us. But he is smart. He can use other means but if we are really in tune



with God, God shall equally reveal to us, areas that the enemy is using to attack us, and we may stop him before he attacks.

*What role does “giving directions” (or Akwankyere) play in facilitating the attainment of “life in fullness” by an individual? What biblical text informs your view?*

Speaking from a counselor’s point of view, I will say that it is good because life without guidance and counseling is not meaningful. And one of the key things Jesus did was to guide the people. But it seems it now being taken too far. We speak as if it is God who is speaking. Instead of saying “this my personal opinion”. Paul was found of doing that. Anytime Paul would like to give a personal counsel, he made it clear. But in our modern context, we pocket God and speak for him, all in the name of *Akwankyere*. It is true God has given us wisdom, which we can use to counsel others to overcome life’s challenges. In the same way if God reveals certain things to us, the best thing to do is to give it out to the individual. But I think it is not everything that we should say it is God who is giving us a direction to be given to somebody, else we lie in the name of God. In all, *Akwankyere* is good because there are certain keys a believer needs to unlock his locked blessings and, possibly, to close negative doors. That is a revelation and revelations take any form, depending on who is in operation at that time.

*What role does the anointing oil play in purifying an individual or a community?*

Yes. In Gen.28: 10-22, when Jacob was moving from his uncle to live with his family in a place called Luz, this name means a place without recognition, identity, fertility. So when Jacob woke up in the morning after seeing God and taking instructions from God he realized that despite its name and its identity at that time, that place could be changed. So he poured oil on the stone he used as a pillow as a memorial pillar, and changed the name of that place from Luz to Bethel, which means the “house of God”. And from that time, the land started doing well. And I believe that is the land the Palestinians are fighting over. My understanding here is that the oil which was poured here also purified the place of evil (or curses) and bad identity. Whoever was touched with oil in the Bible had a new identity and a new outlook. Going back to David, he was nobody as such but the very day he was anointed by Samuel, he assumed a new position spiritually. And that was where God made him a ruler of Israel. Saul was also anointed and from that time he became a new person, prophesying among the prophets.

*What role does the anointing play in driving away the power of the devil in the life of an individual or a community?*

I believe that to some extent the anointing oil plays a role in driving away the power of the devil but it depends on the preparation made before the oil was used. The oil is just an ordinary chemical compound, but if the person using it really believes and prays fervently over it, and uses it, it changes from ordinary oil to a spiritual commodity. It ceases to be ordinary oil and it becomes a spiritual compound. It can even assume a dimension of the blood of Jesus and we know whoever or wherever the blood of Jesus touches, it gets sanctified. So if the blood of Jesus or the oil is used meaningfully, I believe sanctification and purification takes place spiritually and physically.

*How does the purity status of an individual affect his/her spiritual powers?*

There is a connection between the purity status of a person and the efficacy of his prayers in that when you read from Ex. 30: 31 it talks about the preparation of the

anointing oil. After it is prepared, Aaron was charged to use it on specific people and specific items to purify them and set them aside for divine purposes and for God's service. So as soon as a person is touched with the oil of God, (we believe the oil is one of the emblems of the Holy Spirit) so more or less the Holy Spirit's enablement comes upon the person. It is similar to the practice in the African Traditional Religion where anytime a priest was called into the priesthood, he is anointed. The anointing can also signify purifying a person by taking him from the ordinary state, and being set aside for sacred purposes.

*What are the causes of curses?*

I see four main causes of curses. 1. A self imposed curse, that is when a person who is believed to have been blessed by God, because he doesn't know his identity, begins to curse himself by issuing negative and uncalled-for statements about himself. A typical example is what Mephibosheth said when he met David after he had been invited to dine with at the King's table. He referred to himself as a dog that was not fit to dine with the king. He belittled himself to the extent of calling himself a dead dog. This may be a figure of speech alright but I think it should not have come from him at all. David ignored the statement he made because of his covenant with Jonathan

2. Curses from significant others. These are statements and evil wishes people who matter to an individual speak into the life of the person. Examples are: "You'll never succeed"; "You'll marry me or you don't marry anybody"; "You good for nothing"; "It will never be well with you"; etc. Such statements can come from an Aunt, a spouse, parents, a loved one, etc. If the one who made the statement has some evil powers backing him, or even at the time of the statement if there are spiritual mercenaries around, they can take hold of the statement and use it against the person.

3. Demonic curses. These are curses from alters, from Satan himself, from occultic powers, from Mallams, witches and wizards, etc.

4. A curse from God himself. Ex 37: talks about the wrath of God being extended to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generations, meaning God can equally curse some people. A typical example in the Bible is about Korah who was cursed and his descendants, I believe, even though it was removed.

One other thing that can bring a curse upon the life of an individual is sin in general. Any sin at all can create an opening in a person's life for a curse to enter one's life.

*To what extent can curses affect an individual, a place or a community?*

I understand a curse to be a spiritual decree or law issued against an individual in order to prevent him or forbid them from doing what, naturally, they could have done. So a curse is more or less a barrier, a load, a cover, a lid, that is placed on an individual. In that case the person's physical and spiritual life goes only to the level of the lid and it does not exceed it.

What are some of the signs of a curse upon the life of an individual or upon a community?

Dreams give indications of a curse. If a person sees himself in his dreams carrying huge sums of money, for instance, but in no time either the money is taken away from him or at the time the money was to be distributed he would not have any portion, even though he brought it. It may imply that the person's finances are being spiritually attacked. Somebody may also carry a heavy load in his dream. I mean the dream state of the person is almost always negative. Physically too you see the person manifesting abject poverty, acute and progressive disappointments, failures, etc. The person has no progressive life. And if it is a community, it does not prosper,

the people in the community are always wayward, drunkards, womanizers, they do not have life, they plant the field and the effort put in will not tally the output.

*How can curses be prevented?*

You prevent curses by living a righteous life in Christ. That is the only way. Because the work here has revealed that one may be innocent doing his own thing, without any malice, but somebody's evil intent against him may affect him. If the bad wisher has a strong will, by the time he finishes saying that in the mind it manifests in the victim's life. Or somebody can use juju or voodoo against another person, or project an occultic power against the person just to stop him from what he is doing. But if the person's life is hidden in Christ, the evil forces may work alright but it will not affect the Christian.

*How can curses be reversed?*

By accepting the LORD Jesus Christ as lord and personal saviour, calling on him for forgiveness, and calling on him to remove the curse from you, and possibly going to see seasoned men of God to also support you in prayer to revoke the curse from you.

## 2.5 Bishop Hansel Agyei Frimpong<sup>414</sup>

*What does it mean to have "life in fullness"? What is the biblical basis?*

When you look at the context from which most of the Bible translators translate "life in fullness", you could pick one scripture: John 10:10. That is where most translators translate it "life in all its fullness", and if you look at the foundation of that verse, Jesus was referring to the life that he came to this world with—Eternal life. God's very kind of life. That is the kind of life that he brought also to me. Life in all its fullness is receiving the life of the Father, which he sent Jesus to come and give to the whole world. 1Jn 5: 11, 12 put it very succinctly. It says "And this is the record that God has given to us life, and this life is in His son. He that has the Son has life..." So this kind of life, this fullness of life is only in Jesus Christ.

*What does a "blessed life" mean?*

Blessing is relative. It depends on where somebody is standing. But the truth of the matter is, God called one man called Abraham. And God blessed him and God said he would make him a blessing to the whole world. He would bless his seed after him. When somebody receives Christ as LORD, the Bible says he becomes the seed of Abraham and therefore blessed. And so a blessed life actually begins when you find Christ your LORD and personal saviour. Blessing cannot be hidden. It is actually part of the nature of God. God is a blessed God. And when God's life is in a person, it radiates from the inside to the outside. It shows on the outside. And so when somebody is blessed, it shows in so many places. I mean it shows in his health, his wealth, his relationship with others. It actually affects his entire family. It is not something one can use a single word to describe. But it is the good life that God makes shine out of a person when one is in line with his purpose and his will.

---

<sup>414</sup> Bishop Frimpong is general secretary of the Word Miracle Church International in Accra. Two interviews were conducted, one on Oct 26, 2010, and one on June 18, 2012.

*What are the hindrances to achieving this “life in fullness”? Is there any biblical basis for the belief?*

Yes and no. Yes in the sense that, 1. We have pointed out that blessing is in Christ. And so if somebody does not receive Christ, he cannot enjoy this blessed life. This life in fullness cannot begin. Having come to Christ also, there is a hindrance that could prevent one from experiencing the totality of the blessing, or the life. One of them is carnality, immaturity. As every human being is born in the natural, so is it in the spiritual. In the natural we're born babies and we grow. In the same vein, in the realm of the spirit, when one is born again, he is born a baby. The Bible says "... as new born babies, desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby. If somebody gets born again and he does not grow/mature in the things of God, it will be very difficult for the good life to show on the outside. And that is why the Bible tells us to renew our mind. When one is born again, his spirit is born again but he remains the same person so he has to be renewed through the word of God. So the Bible says "... be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." If somebody does not allow himself to be trained through the word of God, for his mind to be renewed, it will be very difficult for the life, which is in spirit, to show on the outside.

*What or who are the enemies of “life in fullness”? What is the biblical basis for this conviction?*

First is carnality and lack of spiritual development. By spiritual development, I am referring to us allowing ourselves for the word of God to re-programme us in the ways of God. God's word is His way, which is also the same as His will. And when somebody is walking in the word of God, he is walking in the will of God. When we go outside the word, it is the same as going outside His will, and it is also the same as sin and definitely we cannot expect the provisions of God to begin to work in our lives. And so if God has provided blessing for us in all the context—health, strength, satisfaction, etc., and we walk outside of it, then we move out of the jurisdiction where God's goodness prevail, and then it could be very difficult and we could easily be afflicted by the enemy also. And so I believe that the most important thing is for people to really align themselves with God's word. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..." says the word of God, and not because the devil is strong; and not because there are many witches in the world, but because of lack of knowledge. And so I believe that the greatest hindrance is lack of knowledge of the will of God in the life of believers. The NT believer is very different from the OT believer. This is because when we receive Jesus Christ, we are not human beings trying to obey God's word. When one receives Jesus Christ, one is born again. 2Cor. 5:17 implies that the person becomes a new specie, one that has just arrived, born of the nature of God. The old nature of sin has been put off in Christ and God has recreated the human spirit with his life and his nature. And so the new man has the ability to live right because God's nature is righteousness, and so righteousness has been imparted to our spirit and so it becomes a natural thing for a child of God to live a Christian life. However, because many people have not been trained, we still live the Christian life with the OT mentality, which is: I want to do what is right, then I will be right in the sight of God. But the Bible says even the Israelites, to whom the law was given, were not justified by keeping the law because by the deeds of the law, no man shall be justified in the sight of God. And so God sent Jesus Christ made in human likeness and he took our place and satisfied God by fulfilling the law and dying in our place and then granting us the righteousness of God, so the Bible says in Him we have become the righteousness of God. God has given us the ability to live for God.

What this means is that we have the nature of righteousness. That is why when a Christian lives in righteousness, it does not compel God to bless him because it is his nature.

*How does a Christian get purified?*

Jesus said in John 15:3, that: You are clean because of the word I have spoken to you. And so purification of the soul of a man comes through the word of God, and also through the Holy Spirit. Of course through the blood of Jesus Christ we have been cleansed as Christians. Anytime we do something wrong, God is calling us to repent. That is where repentance comes in. This is because the Holy Spirit will let you know that what you did or said was not the right thing so the person gets convicted and he turns round. Sin is not a mystery anymore to God; it is no more anything dangerous to God because he has found its solution. Jesus Christ came and put away sin. The Bible says: sin shall no longer have dominion over you, which means the power of sin to hold a person in bondage has been broken. Now, to the believer, God is saying you can live right. You can walk right. You can choose to sin, or not to sin. Now sin is not a compulsion. It is a desire or a person's choice because if you say no, it shall be no. He says sin shall no longer have the mastery over the believer (Rom.6 :). What it means is that sin (going outside the will of God) cannot stop the blessings of God upon a person's life, unless the person refuses to come back. In that case it is the person who has chosen to stray away from the blessings of God. For instance, among the Israelites in the wilderness, it was only those within the camp who received the manna.

So we get purified through the word of God (John 17: 17), the blood of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God but the Word of God is the greatest purification agent of God.

*What constitutes evil?*

Certainly there is the devil in the world even though Jesus Christ has paralysed him and broken his power over the believer. But he still has jurisdiction over the unsaved, the rebellious people. And so the devil is still very much alive in the world, and he is the perpetrator of evil. And so evil comes from the wicked spirits of this world. Examples of what can be considered evil include people dying before their time, getting involved in an accident, being made unfruitful, bad marriages, barrenness, etc. However, when somebody comes into Christ, and he does not want evil to affect him, he could live without evil affecting him, because God has given us the authority over the devil. Therefore as long as the Christian lives as God wants him to live, it is possible to live without being affected by evil.

How can evil befall a person or the community?

Certainly there have been many instances where Satan has brought evil, plaques, or calamity over a whole nation, a whole state and a whole community. This can take the form of an epidemic, and sometimes we need to stand up and pray against that evil to get it out of the place. So if there is any community where we allow the devil to operate he could bring evil and make it so big that it affects the whole community. That is why the church has a very important role to play in the life of the world today. This is because the church is the place where the light of God radiates from.

*How does evil affect a whole community?*

If a community lacks intercessors, as in Ezekiel 22:30, then darkness will take over the place because there are no lights (or Christians). And when darkness takes over the place, the devil's works are in operation and anything can happen. Evil befalls a

community if it allows the devil to have in roads into it. The enemy is looking to have any body or any place. In 1 Peter 5: 8-9, Christians are urged to be vigilant because the enemy is seeking whom he could devour. So Satan is looking for any vulnerable person or community to take over and if any community allows themselves through ignorance of God's word, by entering into fetishism, by living any how outside of the will of God, by shutting their heart from the gospel of Christ, then certainly it is an open invitation to the devil to come in. Because the moment you reject God and His son Jesus Christ, you're just saying that you live under the devil. There is no vacuum in the realms of the spirit. You are either under the control of God's authority, or you're under the authority of the devil. So communities can be plagued with evil when they shut the gospel light from reaching them.

*To what extent can evil affect the life of a person or a community?*

It could be very devastating because in the Book of Revelations, God gave a fore word to the Apostle John that the Devil is coming to the people with great anger because he knows that his time is short. So if you allow him, he could go to the fullest extent. And so when evil comes to a certain community or a people and the light of God does not get to them, or somebody doesn't rise up to pray, and speak the word of God and help the people to come out of their deception, Satan can go all out. He can bring madness to a person, incurable diseases, famine in a community, wind to destroy a community, (and the Bible has some examples like the testimony of Job when the devil attacked his family.

*What is the relationship between evil and the purity status of a person or a community?*

Certainly, once you are in good standing with God, in His right place then you are pure in his sight. Once you find yourself on God's side then you are pure in his sight and that means that the enemy's works against you will be very minimal or probably non existent. And then if you are also not walking with God, then you have come out of purity and once you are out of purity, definitely you throw yourself into the jurisdiction and the area of influence of the devil. I mean the devil can easily plaque you.

*How does the devil operate in the life of a Christian?*

As far as God is concerned the devil can take as much as you give him because the Bible says: Give no place to the devil. If you say you will not give him one space, he cannot have it. For instance, if it was not so God would be very wrong in saying: give him no place. If he knew the devil was stronger than me, the devil had more power than I, the devil can take something that I have not even given to him, and then God would be wrong in saying: do not give him any place. God can only tell you not to give the devil place because he knows you can say no, and the devil will bow to it. So the devil is not supposed to operate in the life of a Christian. This is because inside the spirit of a Christian is the life of God, and the Holy Spirit himself lives inside a Christian. Therefore the devil is not supposed to have any place in the life of the Christian. The devil is darkness. He is the power of darkness, the prince of the power of darkness and the Bible says he that walks with Christ is walking in light. Jesus said he that walks with him shall walk in light, and he shall never walk in darkness. And so as long as Christ lives in our heart and we walk in accordance with the word of God, Satan is not supposed to have any way to influence us. But through ignorance, Satan can have a way of handing out some of his evil things against a Christian. For instance, if a Christian does not know that he has been healed by Christ and that

sickness is not to be tolerated in his life, Satan can suggest to him that sickness is normal; that diabetes is hereditary so if you have it because a member of your family have it, it is normal, and the person will accept it. But the moment the person lives with reality that the body of Jesus Christ was broken for his healing and that he has taken away my sin and my sickness, and so I refuse to be sick, sickness will die that very moment. And so the issue is the knowledge level of the believer. That will determine whether the devil can have one or two places in the life of a believer, or not at all. Because the devil is darkness and darkness is ignorance. It is lack of light so when there is no understanding in the things of God, it is a free invitation for the enemy to operate, even though the person may not even know. In the life of many Christians, the devil operates through deception, losses, etc., but it depends on how much light one has in him. Some of the things the devil can take a way from a believer are: joy, peace from marriage, health, etc.

*How can a Christian stay away from the attacks of the devil?*

Once you become a Christian, you are no longer under the attacks of the devil. From the New Testament, we understand that there are two main divide: The kingdom of light, and the kingdom of darkness; the kingdom of the devil, the kingdom of the LORD Jesus Christ. The Bibles say that he has delivered us from the power of darkness (cf. Colossians1: 12, 13). When you are in the kingdom of darkness, definitely you troubles are justified. You are under the devil, so he can whip you any day. However when Jesus translates you into his light; into the kingdom of God, then since Satan's ability does not extend to where Christ is, you can live free from the devil's attacks. That is why the knowledge of God's word is paramount for the believer. There are so many Christians who do not care about the word of God. We find so many Christians who are just interested in going to church, without paying heed to the word of God. No wonder Satan plaques them, and they think it is normal, they think the devil can still attack Christians. But it is that fact we have not allowed ourselves for the word of God to tutor us, to deliver our inheritance to us. In Book of Acts, Paul said: I commend you to God and to the power of the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to deliver to you, your inheritance among the saints. If any Christian is going to enjoy his inheritance as God has given to us, it takes the knowledge of the word of God. If you don't know it, you cannot take it. It is just like human rights. Many people's rights have been taken away, not because somebody forced them to take it, but they themselves did not know it was their right, and once you do not know it, somebody can easily take your right from you.

*What role does "giving directions" (or Akwankyere) play in facilitating the attainment of "life in fullness" by an individual? What biblical text(s) informs this view?*

I do not believe that *akwankyere* plays any role in facilitating the attainment of life in fullness in the life of the Christian. The issue is, God does not want his people to be deceived, and so every man of God (and I am talking about the five-fold ministry), is supposed to bring knowledge at the doorsteps of the children of God, so that by that they can live their own life. I don't believe in going for directions from a prophet, I don't believe in that. Jesus said his sheep knows him, and they hear his voice. When you know Jesus and you walk with him and his word, God speaks, but the most profound and elaborate way is through his word. Even if he speaks through an angel or through his Holy Spirit to a person inaudibly, it will have to be consistent with the word of God. And so I believe that what every man of God must concern himself in doing is to teach God's people, the oracles of God, the truth of who we have become in Christ Jesus; what Christ has done for us; what God has made us to be. When we

get to know it, there will be no need of any “giving of directions” for anybody, because the Spirit has become our guide. He is our shepherd. He is supposed to teach us. Jesus said when he comes he will teach us all things. He did not say some prophet will do that for you. But of course, in the house of God we train people by putting the word of God to them and opening their understanding. Then they can study the word of God for themselves and get revelation knowledge to live their lives by. So I believe that going for special counseling, has no place in the New Testament era. But in the Old Testament it was practised and there were reasons why they had to go to a prophet for directions, because first, the Holy Spirit had not come, and the only people who had the favour to receive the Holy Spirit on their lives were the prophets, the King, or the Priest. So nobody could have the light of God until one goes to see these people. Second, the Bible was not available. Only a few had access even to the scroll which was in the temple. But today the Spirit of God has come to live in the believer. He is the author of the Bible, and the director of destiny. He now lives in the heart of the believer.

*What role does the anointing oil play in purifying an individual?*

I believe that there is no place for the anointing oil today. It is not a command, neither has it any potency apart from what you give it. When the real comes, the shadow does not count for anything again. The oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament times, God used the oil because at that time, Christ had not come to die. So God put his Spirit upon some selected few and before a prophet or a king would be anointed, they poured oil on them. In the New Testament there are a few suggestions that seem to say that even during the days of Jesus some of the disciples used some oil, but Jesus never mentioned oil. What James said, to me, is not strong since that seem to be the only place in the New Testament where the oil is mentioned. That is why I think the importance a person gives to it, it becomes so for him. I am not condemning its usage. But I am saying that at a certain growth level in Christ it becomes inferior. I do sometimes anoint some people with oil because I see that their faith is attached to it. In our organization, it is allowed for people to use it so if somebody brings oil for me to pray on it for the person, I do it because our faith levels are not the same. But when I am bringing people up, I tell them to wean themselves from some of these elementary things because when you put your faith in these elementary things, when those things are not there or they fail to work, what becomes your lot? *What is the place of objects then in prayer, since Jesus also used spittle to heal?* If you give water to somebody to drink and the person gets healed, I cannot say it is wrong or right because the Holy Spirit may have revealed that to you and you got your result. But I cannot build a doctrine on that. Or you cannot build a doctrine on that either. So the issue is, God’s revelation to a person could allow him to do one thing or the other, but we don’t major on it and build a doctrine on it. So I don’t believe in the use of anointing in driving away the power of the devil. Driving away the devil is not by the anointing oil, it is by using your authority in Christ, and that is devoid of oil. If with you, it works with sprinkling the oil and speaking in the name of Jesus together then I have no problems with that. God wants us to study His word to know that we have been made-- masters of the devil, by our birth in Christ, which has made us into the very nature of God.

*How does the purity status of a person affect his/her spiritual powers?*

When a person is born again, Christ and the Holy Spirit have come. Power is in the Holy Spirit, who is also the ultimate source of power. Jesus was able to walk here in power because the Holy Spirit was upon him and anointed him. When a person



receives Christ and the Holy Spirit indwells the person, the fullness of the source of power has come. And so power does not come from the fact that one is doing something to purify himself. But when the power is in you, you should allow it to flow. But if you are not conscious of it, you can give yourself to anything. And so I walk off from the will of God from the counsel of God, and because I walk off, the power of God does not flow from my life.

Certainly, a sinner by nature cannot wield the power of God. It takes righteousness to wield the power of God. That is what Christ has made us. This gives us the ability to wield the power of God which is already resident in us.

*What are the causes of curses? What scriptures support this view?*

Many Christians today live their lives with revelation of the Old Testament – Curses and blessing. But when one reads Gal. 3: 13, 14 it says Christ was made a curse for us.... So why should the Christian think that he is still cursed? The truth is that the Christian is blessed in and out whether he knows it or not. But until you know it, you cannot see much. Even before Christ came, God had said he was not going to allow curses to go down from fathers to children. (Ezek.18: 1ff) This means the teachings that the sins of the father are visited upon third and fourth generations have no foundation at all in the Bible. I do not believe in generational curses in Christianity at all because if I am born again and I have received the life and nature of God, is God cursed?

Curse actually means empowerment for failure, as blessing is empowerment for success. So when a person is cursed, what it means is that you have been given power to keep on failing. That is why somebody put it that way and I believe it. It is like putting a crab in a gallon. When it tries to come up, it falls down again. The person tries his best and the person tried to come up, but he falls down again. Because it is like an impediment has been put on his life to bring him perpetually down. That is what curse actually means. It is a negative force that compels a person to always fail, to come down, to lose dignity, etc.

And so where does it come from? If somebody is not a Christian, he is already under a curse. The whole world is under the evil one so if you are not a child of God, a curse is already operating in your life. But if a person receives Jesus Christ, he has already received the blessing of God. I believe that the primary cause of curse is self imposition because as a man thinks in his heart, so he is. And the Bible says life and death is in the power of the tongue. God said I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, so choose. And so if you decide that I am cursed, so you are. If you'll declare: I know I will never succeed, then definitely nobody has cursed you, you have cursed yourself. And so yes, there is curse, but to the child of God, curse is only what he allows himself to come under. But if he refuses to live under any curse, no curse has the power, no matter what. Even the fact that a child of God did something wrong, does not bring a curse upon the person. If your child disobeyed you in the house, is he cursed? No. Curse means you have lost your previous dignity. You have come out of the place of blessing. But our children offend us all the time, even though we teach them not to do wrong things. We scold them but we bring them back. In fact sometimes after scolding them we buy them sweets to let them become happy. If we base people could think that, what about God? So the truth of the matter is, when a child of God does something wrong, God is not surprised when a Christian does something wrong. Because his Spirit convicts us, and if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just.... When God forgives his child of his sin, he does not take from his portion. His inheritance is restored to him. In the OT, when God was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, God visited Abraham and Abraham received Him. Then God

promised Abraham that he was going to have a child in a year's time. Sarah started laughing when she heard it from the tent. And when Sarah was questioned as to why she laughed, she denied. The lies that Sarah told God did not take away the promise of a child in a year.

In the Old Testament God killed the sons of Aaron for using the wrong fire because he was establishing a covenant. That is why after that incident, people did worse things but they were not killed. In the same way, Ananias was struck dead when he told a lie because God was establishing the presence of the Holy Spirit? That is why God did it once

*To what extent can curses affect an individual, a place and or a community?*

If a community shuts up the light of God and we say they are under a curse, it's a dangerous thing. It means that they have allowed themselves to fail. They have upon themselves the negative ability to shut themselves to low levels of life. And darkness or curse is very dangerous. And that is why I am saying that the greater form of curse is ignorance. If any body could deprive you of knowing the truth about your purpose for life, about why you are here, that person has brought you to a great curse.

*What are some of the signs of a curse upon the life of an individual or upon a community?*

Somebody may temporarily be manifesting some signs like being sick or sickly, or he may not be prospering as he may want but he may not be cursed as such. As much as we know that curses bring people down, makes a person fail and all that, they may temporarily be happening in somebody's life and not because of a curse but because the person has not really found out. For instance, before the grinding machine came to us, we ground corn by pounding it. Let's assume that by pounding, we could get one bag of corn dough a day, with the coming of the machine, we can grind multiples of the one bag within the same period. So when knowledge has not come, one lives with very limited productivity. So one may find some of these traces and begin to think that he is not progressing. It may not be a curse, but rather because he has not found the truth. So traces of negativity like unnatural death, perpetual failure, and natural disasters, etc. Some of them may be natural, but the circumstances surrounding some of them may cause one to ask question. In some families, there is madness, drunkards, etc.

*How can curses be reversed?*

That is why when you become a Christian from that family and you realize these occurrences, by you that thing must end. With you and your seed that thing is ended already. I saw a certain plaque in my family when I got born again. My father was working somewhere very big. And they called him to the village for farming. He cultivated a big cocoa farm but he died without leaving us any inheritance. Actually he died without making any much impact, financially. But where he was previously working, he could have made it.

My elder brother had also worked with a reputable company for about 20years. Just before he was about to be honoured in the job, he just quit the job, just like my father. So he also lost every entitlement. A year later, his colleagues in the job received a huge package for their long service. Another brother of mine was also working with a company here. He had amassed wealth through the job. An issue cropped up in the job so he fought with his boss and he also quit the job. He finally lost everything and became a palm wine tapper. There are other such instances among my own siblings. So when I saw the trend. When I got born again, I started preaching the gospel to

them and also prayed for them. The first brother got another good job and his fortunes came back. The next brother was also called back to his former work place. He is now very wealthy. One of them is now a Pastor. The darkness was turned over.

*How can curses be reversed?*

For curses to be reversed, one must receive the gospel. Because when one receives the light of God which is Christ, every curse runs away from their life.

---

*What is the relevance of the OT for Christianity today?*

The whole 66 books of the Bible is the word of God to us, i.e. the logos or the written word of God to us. So the OT writings are as very important as the new. Without the old I doubt if we would have had the new. Certainly by the grace of God and by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, there are so many things we do not practice again as a ritual or ceremony. But the OT writings, especially those of the prophets are as relevant to us today as the writings of the NT Apostles.

*Which passages do you consider applicable to Christianity today?*

Even without referring to particular scriptures, the historical background to many of the things we do today are very important. For instance if you look at some of the miracles that God did in the OT times with Elijahs and the Elishas , it gives a big proof that the God of the Bible is a God of miracles. Our church has always believed in the power of God and the demonstration of it. And so when we read stories like Elijah being used to raise the son of a widow from the dead, God using Elisha to do similar things, it gives us the prove that the God of the Bible is a God of miracles. Some quotations like David would say "...the Lord is my shepherd and I shall not want..." is a scripture that fundamentally tells us how a Christian is supposed to live. Jesus has become our provider, sustainer, etc., and when David made that declaration, he wanted to get us to the place where our trust in God would become so final that we would not be anxious for anything. Many of the writings of the prophets were for NT people. Joel said in the last days God would pour his spirit on all flesh... and Peter referred to it in one of his early preachings when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. And so many of the things we practice today in the NT have the backing and support of the OT.

*How does the OT address salvation?*

In the OT one still needed faith in God. A man was supposed to obey the law and fulfill all its writings. That is what was handed down to the OT people. The law was actually given to the people of Israel and by so doing, God had already condemned the rest of the world because one could be saved by the law so the nation which did not have the law were ostracized from God. That is why we are so grateful to God for the coming of Jesus Christ because he came for all humanity. So in the OT a man could only be saved by obeying the law and living according to the tenets of the law. Even though I mentioned that it was given to Israel, if anybody decided that he would seek the God of Israel, God allowed the person and so faith then comes in. For instance if anybody decided to keep the Sabbath, he was admitted because all along God did not want to look for any select group of people but rather the heart of humanity. He wanted to save people and have relationship with them. Even with Abraham it was faith which made Abraham become his friend. So even in the OT, God was speaking that a person could get linked to him by faith.

*Is salvation related to Abraham?*

Certainly. Abraham is very relevant because he was the person they spoke of as having being justified by faith. God received him not because of his obedience to any law but rather as a man who responded to what God told him and that is what faith is about. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the word of God. Abraham heard God speak to him and he was willing to adhere to what God told him. The Bible said God credited it to him for righteousness. He was the first person to receive righteousness through faith and the bible declares that God will also acquit everybody and give everybody righteousness who comes to him by the same steps Abraham took so salvation is related to him in the sense that it is his faith that God used to justify him. The same thing applies today. God wants us to believe the gospel that Jesus Christ was sent by him to die for humanity and by believing on his sacrificial work God is willing to let his blood cleanse us so that his life becomes our life. So yes, Abraham is relevant and linked to our salvation because the bible calls him the father of all the faith.

*What is salvation?*

From my context, it is calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord. Jesus Christ died in our place. He took the form of human nature upon himself, he died to pay for the sins of the whole world. He was buried and he was raised. The bible says whosoever confesses the lordship of Jesus Christ and believes that God raised him from the dead shall be saved.

*What do you think of salvation and our life today and life after death?*

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away... ( 2 Cor.5:17). The moment a person gives his life to Christ the person becomes a new creature. His sins are gone, carrier of God's glory and his beauty and his life. The moment you are born again, you come into the kingdom of God and so you have registered for the hereafter because the Bible says that anybody who believes in him shall not be ashamed. Jesus said in John 5: 24 that he who believes in him has passed from death to life. So salvation is what ushers us into the kingdom of God. Salvation is also what gives us the hope for the hereafter, that tomorrow when we die or when Jesus comes we shall be with him. What salvation means for us today also includes prosperity, welfare, wellbeing, healing, deliverance; it means the totality of the provisions of God. And so when we say somebody has received salvation, we are in a sense saying that everything that makes life worth living and good is what God has promised the person, so if somebody is saved today, God is saying that person has been delivered from the power of the enemy. The fact that Jesus Christ paralyzed the devil, he broke the power of the enemy. The Bible says that he destroyed principalities and powers and made a public show of them. And so the power of the devil over anyone who is saved is broken. This is why Jesus Christ is so relevant to everybody today. This is because without him there is no salvation and when he saves you, he saves you to the uttermost and till today when somebody is saved that person can stand on the word of God to claim his healing, claim prosperity for himself, claim God's protection, and everything that is related with a good life because God has planned a good life for us. There is a very powerful scripture in Eph 2: 10. It talks about the fact that God has planned a good life for us to walk in them. God is good and he wants us to have a good life. That is why Jesus came to set us free from the power of sin by paying the supreme price for it. So that we could be free from the effects of sin - sickness, death, etc. So if a Christian really develops his

understanding of what Christ did for him, that person would never be bound by any devil anywhere.

*How does salvation affect a person's life spiritually and physically?*

Spiritually, God has made you a master of the devil. The devil's authority over anybody is broken the moment we confess Jesus as Lord. That person becomes liberated and lives in the kingdom of God.

Physically, it gives the opportunity to live well, and to enjoy the good things of life. When the power of the enemy is broken, sickness loses its power, death is broken. A man can live as he desires. We can live as God wants us to live and enjoy on earth here.

*What is the relationship between salvation and the realization of fullness of life?*

After a person is saved, the realization of fullness of life comes with spiritual development. There are some Christians who suffer the things people of the world suffer. As long as you don't develop the things of God and the knowledge of the things of God is lacking in your life, you may not enjoy Christianity to the fullest. The provisions of God are there for you to discover and take them. The bible says that as long as the heir remains a child he does not differ from slaves. So you may be a Christian but you may still find out that the elements of this world still binds you. Sickness still holds you, Satan tempts you and cause you to do things which are wrong. That is why Christians are called upon to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Spiritual maturity is an injunction for every Christian. That is how we can enjoy life in its fullness.

*What hinders the realization of abundant life by Christians?*

Ignorance. Just as it is in Hosea 4:6. The only reason why a Christian is still sick and sickly, poor, is all because he has not discovered God's provisions for him in Christ. This is what I call discovery for recovery. As long as a person does not know a thing exist, he can never take advantage of it.

*How do we overcome the hindrance?*

The leaders of the church should be teaching the church members. We should avoid the pastor dependency syndrome in our country now. This can bring them to the point of knowing how to use the word of God to get what they need.

*What is your understanding of deliverance?*

Col.1:13 tells us that every Christian has been delivered from the power of Satan. That notwithstanding, ignorance would make anybody bound because as a man thinks in his heart so he remains. If you think you are cursed you will remain cursed. If you think you're bound you'll remain bound. The moment a Christian thinks that Satan's authority still binds him, then he may be looking for someone to deliver him. A Christian can allow himself to be manipulated by a devil. He may be born again but out of ignorance, allow the devil to operate in some aspect of his life. When that happens, all the person needs is to know the truth. At that moment, he can destroy the works of the devil himself. That is what I understand by deliverance. I teach the word of God and people get delivered. Jesus said he had been anointed to preach deliverance to the captives. He didn't say to preach it. This is because it us the word of God that set people free. There are people who may be suffering from the devil's

attacks because of ignorance and immaturity. Such we command the devil to leave them and they get liberated.

*Does a Christian need deliverance?*

A Christian does not need deliverance until he thinks he does. This is because a true Christian is already delivered and deliverance is no more a must for every Christian. However if he finds himself under the attack of the devil and he needs the assistance of mature Christian, that person can do so. But a Christian does not need deliverance. A Christian may call for other Christians to support him in prayer but deliverance is not a need for the Christian. How can somebody be born of God and still remain cursed? They do not go together.

*What is destiny?*

I will move from what it is not to what I think it should be because when people talk about destiny, they think about what God planned for me to be. The truth is that anybody born into this world will come and inherit natural destinies and spiritual destinies. For instance if a person is born in Saudi Arabia, the chances are that you will be a Muslim. If a person is born in Japan, chances are that you'll see Tsunamis and you'll see earthquakes that might even kill you. Those are natural destinies. But there is a destiny in Christ for every believer and until you get to know Jesus Christ, your true spiritual destiny will not start. Your destiny begins with your knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is then that you will know what God has planned for you. The word destiny means your end, your destination, where you are going to. There is natural destiny that make people white or black, etc. but as to beginning a man's destiny in God, it begins with Jesus Christ as Lord over a person's life.

*What is your view about the Christians and destiny?*

I believe that every Christian has been destined by God to become great, and be glorified. The bible says that those he knew, he called them and those he called the justified them and those he justified he glorified them. (Rom. 8: 29, 30). But every Christian is supposed to fulfill his destiny in God. It is a must; and that is what you are going to stand before Jesus and give account of. What he plan for you to do. In other words the Christian will be receiving his reward for what he did for the kingdom and that is what our destiny is about. Decisions are made when one discovers his destiny in Christ. Every Christian ought to discover his purpose for your life and that is what is called destiny. (Refer Luke 9: 62). Just as Paul asked of what the Lord would have him to do during his conversion, so is every Christian called to undertake a certain assignment for the Lord. It is up to the person to discover it before he can live it.

*Is it possible for one's destiny to change?*

If a person is not born again, he is a natural person who is already under the power of Satan. Before a person becomes a Christian he is already under the bondage of the devil right from birth so there is nothing like the devil changing one's destiny.

*Does the Exodus relate to salvation and abundant life in any way?*

It a symbol for today because the Bible talks about they all being under the cloud and being baptized through the sea, etc. The people of Israel were ordinary people not born again but God gave a promise to Abraham that his seed would inherit the land. The promised land God was talking about was not Palestine or Canaan where they went to or any earthly place because God is not physical and so it was not any physical thing God wanted to give to them. Abraham is now not in Palestine but he is

still living in God's place in paradise. Rather it was heaven. Since God is a spirit, his blessings must also be spiritual so God was not promising them any physical land as such. But then these are physical people who had not yet come into the life of God and so God promised them he would give them an inheritance. So the Exodus had nothing to do with spiritual salvation. The only thing is that God had a plan to bring the Messiah to the world and that he needed a nation through which he would bring them. To me God making Israel a nation and giving them a law was to preserve a certain race for the Messiah to come. The Exodus can be seen as salvation to the extent that they were saved from the power of Satan. But that act of God did not register them in the book of life. They were delivered so we may say it was salvation but it was a physical thing. If any Jew was to go heaven, it was based on his faith in God by practicing the law and not because he was brought out of Egypt.

*Are there parallels between the Exodus and deliverance?*

Many people who are involved in the deliverance want to look for things to support it. There can never be any parallel between the Exodus and deliverance for a Christian. This is because in the first place a truly born again Christian does not need deliverance. The Israelites needed deliverance because they were physically present in the kingdom of Pharaoh who was oppressing them and God said they must come out. This was a fulfillment of a promise God had earlier on made with Abraham concerning his descendants. Many Christians think that we are spiritual Israelites and so we also have to fulfill certain conditions like them before we can inherit it. For instance they say that God told them in Deuteronomy 28 to do certain things in order to experience some blessings and we still preach it that it is conditional. But the truth is that the moment you receive Christ, God has already blessed you and the moment you believe it, you will see it working in your life. Until we understand these things, we will limit the value of Christ only to the fact that he has shed his blood for us.

*How can we relate salvation and abundant life to the Exodus?*

Egypt: In a sense is a symbol of the world and God's people were there as sinners in the world.

Pharaoh: As the leader of that world stands as the authority in the world that prevent people from coming out from the world. Just as God brought the Israelites from Egypt out of the power of Pharaoh so God has come into this world through the gospel of Jesus Christ to pull everybody from the clutches of sin and the power of the devil into his kingdom. So today God's arm of mighty works is the gospel message.

The Plagues were a demonstration of the power of God to do what he wants to do. The Egyptians might have seen them as God's anger or bad things God brought upon them. In that context, he needed to do that to deliver his people. In today's context, he brings his word which he has magnified above his names so when you hear the word and you believe it, the power of God enters you and breaks the power of Satan and frees you from all the bondage of the enemy and translate you into the kingdom of God. Yes, there are similarities, but the difference is more remarkable. Whereas it took a long time for the Israelites to be totally liberated from their captivity, the Christian is totally liberated just in a moment through the power and the instrumentality of the word of God.

The Passover: The Passover was God's final judgment on Egypt. This was supposed to be commemorated annually as a reminder of where they were coming from. In Christianity there is no Passover. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ has already passed over from death to life. That is why in Christianity there is no Passover for us.

What we have is Easter when we commemorate the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Crossing the red sea: According to 1 Cor. 10, it was a form of a baptism for the Israelites. We Christians also have to be baptized in water and also in the Holy Spirit.

*Can Christians use the weapons the Israelites used in fighting their enemies?*

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual and mighty (2 Cor. 10:3-5). So we cannot use their physical weapons. But sometimes they also used faith sometimes to fight their enemies. For instance it was faith which was used to bring down the walls of Jericho. So even though they wielded physical weapons, it was the power of God that came down to fight for them. Another instance was their war against the Amelekites where they were conquering as long as Moses' hands were held up high. We cannot say that was physical.

*Do Christians also have a promised land?*

No, but theologically yes. No in the sense that the Promised Land is where we have been brought to. You see a Christian should always see himself in Christ. But when Christ appears, we shall be going home with him so in that sense we have a promised land. But the truth of the matter is that we live there now in the spirit.

*When is a Christian said to have reached his her promised land?*

The Christian reaches his promised land when Christ comes or when the person dies.

*Are there enemies along the way?*

No. The moment you are born again nothing can stand on your way. The Bible says neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God. Definitely we have demonic hosts, rebellious holders of authority, etc. who try to distract and stand in our way, etc. But the Christian is already where God is taking us - to be in Christ so nobody or nothing is going to take us out of that place.

## 2.6 Rev. George Adjei Kwabi<sup>415</sup>

*What does it mean to have "life in fullness"? What is the Biblical basis?*

Life in fullness means one having Christ as the saviour and living a life that is expected of that person, in line with that of Jesus Christ. When we say that one's life is blessed, we mean that the person is living by the blessings of God. He experiences the favour of God, the mercies of God, the goodness of God in his/her life. God's blessing upon a person's life may be expressed in long life, as well as getting the material things one needs. As a Christian, when these things happen, one believes that it God's blessing that has provided those things and not by his own effort.

*What are the hindrances to achieving this "life in fullness"?*

There are a number of factors that may hinder one from achieving these blessings. These may be psychological, social, physical, spiritual, etc. But one's family background can be a hindrance to achieving it. For instance, using myself as an example, my father is a fetish priest. The high Priest of the entire fetish Priests in

---

<sup>415</sup> Rev. Kwabi is the leader of the Emmanuel Deliverance Team and a minister of the Emmanuel Presbyterian Church in Mampong in the Asante Region.



Akwapem. I observed that in my family, nobody could get to any appreciable academic level. The highest academic level one could get to was to end at the elementary level. Every one who married could not go outside the family circle. Nobody could build a house, apart from the family house where we all lived. When I had a revelation on that, I started praying to claim all the blessings that are due me. And now I am married outside the family circle, I have travelled outside Ghana, I have a car and a ministry, and now I am even a minister of the Gospel in the Presbyterian Church Ghana, and I am also thinking of building my own house. But those in the family who have not seen Jesus Christ, who have no relationship with him, are still battling in life. They are not getting to where I am now.

In sum, the hindrance to achieving blessed life/ life in fullness is evil covenants like alters and curses are some of the things that can hinder one from achieving those things. Unless those covenants are destroyed and the curses nullified, one will be hindered. But when these are taken care of in prayer, I think one can achieve the blessed life.

*What makes a person impure? Bible's position?*

In my view, that which makes one impure is when a person lives in sin, that is, when one does not have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

*How does impurity affect the attainment of a blessed life/ life in fullness?*

God is looking for people who are pure to bless them. For instance Job was pure enough for God to bless him. Others were Noah, Enoch, Abraham, etc. They were all pure before God and that helped them to attain the blessings of God, who is expecting that calibre of people with that pure life so they can also receive his blessings. If one is impure, God will never bless him because He is a pure God and He is expecting people who are so pure to come to him for his blessings.

*How does a person get purified?*

To be pure, one has to accept Jesus Christ as the saviour so that he would purify him, because he is the living water. And also after one is saved there is the need to go through deliverance, just like the issue of Lazarus. Lazarus was dead, and those who do not have Christ are also dead. To have life, one must be resurrected. And Jesus commanded Lazarus to come forth and he came forth. Jesus' order to set Lazarus free and go is another aspect of purity. So through deliverance prayer, people are also purified.

What are involved in the act of purification?

One's faith in Christ is one of the things that are involved in purification. Another is one's ability to pray, and the consciousness to live a pure life. Prayer is an act and through prayer, one is able to maintain his purity. As one communicates with God in prayer, one is able to tell God about His weaknesses for God's help. So if one is able to pray it helps him to maintain his purity in Christ. Fasting is also an aspect of it. In the Old Testament, God spoke about acceptable and unacceptable fasting, because they (i.e. the Israelites fasted in a way that did not please God. But other people also fasted and it paved a way for them. So as a person fasts, it gets him closer to God and God reveals himself to people while they fast. When God reveals his presence to a person, he is able to live in purity, and it also creates a desire for one to be in it forever.

In the African Traditional Religion, they talk of purification rites, etc., which involves the use of concoctions and other things to purify people of their wrong doings for

them to be able to approach the deity. But in the Christian set up, I think the blood of Jesus is the only element used in purifying a person.

*What constitutes evil?*

In the African context, we sometimes attribute the difficulties people go through to the sins they might have committed but I hold a different view. I think that evil is when the enemy decides on something about a person and get that thing implemented. That is an aspect of it. Last December, somebody who had been diagnosed of kidney infection came to our prayer centre. He took it as an evil that had come upon him and the whole community also attributed it to supernatural causes. After we prayed with him, he was healed. Another person who had HIV infection came to us for prayers. We take that as an evil which has befallen the person. He also received healing when we prayed. We believe that not all sicknesses are the result of someone's sins. But we believe that God will not let anyone fall sick. God will not inflict on us certain diseases as he said in Exodus. So I do not think if I am sick, it is God's approval. But sometimes one's lifestyle can also bring forth certain sicknesses. Not all sicknesses can be attributed to the devil. Sometimes we can also bring sicknesses upon ourselves.

*How does evil befall a person or a community?*

Yes, evil can befall a community. The whole community can be under bondage because of the sins of their fathers and this is biblical. When one reads the Bible thoroughly, it becomes clear that God tells the people: Because of what you have done, this will come upon you, and your generations to come after you. This was also the result of the sins committed by their forefathers.

There is a village which wanted somebody to be their chief but he told them he would not be observing some of their practices such as pouring of libation, visiting the stools, etc. He also told them he would build his own stool because he was a Christian but the people feared that if he should go ahead with his plans the deities may inflict some evil on the community. Yet he refused to compromise his stance. However he had his way since he was the only one who qualified for the position at the time. Two months after his installation as a chief, there was a cholera outbreak in the whole community which claimed many lives. The people in the community believed that the deities in the community were punishing them for not observing the various rites for them. The chief then visited one of our prayer camps and after praying, the epidemic ceased. He continued ruling based on his Christian principles and handed the community over to the LORD and such things did not occur again.

Even though we are Christians, we believe the enemy can do some of these things and that is why we have Christ as our saviour. When difficult issues like this come, we go to him and he intervenes. By God's intervention, the whole community was saved, and now almost the whole communities have given their life to Jesus Christ as their saviour.

*To what extent can evil affect the life of a person and that of a community?*

Scripture says that because of sin, some people will not enjoy the fruit of their labour that is why sometimes some people work for others to enjoy. Sicknesses also come into people's life as a result of sin. Evil also expresses itself through unfruitfulness in marriage, work, etc. There is also diversion of purpose in life, as well as disappointment. I believe that these occurrences are backed by some force because

from creation till now, there is the influence of evil spirit in the life of people. It happened in the life of Saul, the king of Israel.

*What role does the devil play in bringing about evil and curses upon the life of an individual and the community?*

There are monitoring demons and errand demons around. There are also alters (a structure built for sacrifices for deities). Every altar has the following elements: the priest, the servicing material(s), monitoring and errand demons, etc. This is the role of the devil as far as sins and curses are concerned. The errand demons pick information and send it to the devil for implementation. For instance, when someone pronounces a curse, the errand demons pick it and send it to the altar and minister to the spirit there, to solicit their support for implementation. One family may be cursed and twenty years down the line, the same curse may be there. There is a family with a very wealthy background but they were not having children. So they visited a fetish for a solution to the problem. There was an agreement between the deity and the family to the effect that the family would exchange their wealth for children. The family was asked to submit two cows and some specified amount of Gold. One of the cows was buried with the gold, leaving the other cow. The unburied cow signified the children the family was going to receive after the rituals. Generations that followed were able to produce children but they were very poor. When some of the members of the family visited our prayer camp and we prayed with them it was manifested through the speech of a demon that the family belonged to him, because of the covenant he made with their forefathers.

*How does the devil operate in the life of a Christian?*

The only way the devil can get somebody to destroy is to let the person enter into sin. This will pave a way for the devil to have access into the person's life. This access allows the devil to manipulate the person's life, even though he confesses to be a Christian.

*How can one stay away from the attacks of the devil?*

The most important thing is that person's relationship with God. For instance, the enemy could not attack Job until God gave him the chance to do that. This means that when one is under the umbrella of God, he is forever be protected. This is not to suggest that difficulties may not come the way of such a believer. Difficulties may come the way of the person but he will still enjoy God's protection. Jesus made us aware that difficulties are a part of the Christian life, just as He himself experienced it, but he will be with us to help us cope, through the comforter, the Holy Spirit. That means the enemy will fight the believer in order to draw him away from God. And that will give the devil an upper hand over us.

*What role does "giving directions" (or Akwankyere) play in facilitating the attainment of "life in fullness" by an individual? What biblical text(s) informs this view?*

In this Asante area, this trend is so rampant and sometimes people come to me also for *akwankyere* about one thing or another. I do not think it is a bad thing as such but the rate at which people are doing it and the way they go about it is what raises some questions for me. For instance if a married couple who have no mutual respect for each other come to me on how to make their marriage work I think the best solution is to counsel them based on the word of God, and not to "create" any other solution for the situation.

*What role does the anointing oil play in purifying an individual and a community?*

In the Old Testament, God asked Moses to prepare anointing oil to be used in consecrating the people so I believe that when we believe and we pray over it, whoever it touches or wherever it touches, becomes consecrated or set apart for God. One is purified before one could be set apart for God. Again in the OT, the Priest for instance, was touched with oil before he assumed his office. Sometimes he was touched with blood on the ear so that he could hear God speak. When you are touched by the anointing oil, certain burdens will be taken away. God says that by virtue of the anointing, yokes shall be broken. The emphasis is not on the oil but on the prayer that is said on the oil. The prayer invokes the power of God upon the oil for whatever use one is led to use it for. I do not often use the oil even though I sometimes do. I met a woman who had been diagnosed of fibroids and she was to undergo a surgery. We prayed and anointed her stomach with oil and she was healed without the surgery. Someone diagnosed with kidney enlargement was also healed after we prayed and anointed him on the affected part of the body. I have also met people with various spiritual problems in the areas of finance, marriage, academic, etc. After praying and anointing them the situation begins to change. Sometimes we pray for people suffering unfruitfulness and anoint their hands with oil and they begin to receive the blessings of God through the anointing.

*What role does the anointing oil play in driving out the power of the devil in the life of an individual or a community?*

As I said earlier, the efficacy of the oil does not depend on the oil itself, but rather on the prayer said upon the oil. As God instructed that they should pray on the oil and use it to anoint the vessels and the people and sanctify them for him (God), we believe that when we pray over the oil, it becomes spiritually powerful. We believe that as you touch people with the oil, which we see as the symbol of the Holy Spirit, we believe that as we pray, the Spirit of God will overcome the devil, and automatically the devil cannot stand the power of God and it has to give way.

*What is the relationship between the purity status of a person and the efficacy of his/her prayers? What biblical passages could be alluded to?*

I think there is a relationship. Because if you are not pure and you pray to God, I don't think he will answer you. This is because God is pure and he is expecting us to also be pure in his sight. And the word of God says that He is holy and therefore we are also supposed to be holy. If you are holy and you pray to God, he is ready to listen. And the word of God says that God's hands are not short that he cannot deliver, neither is his ear dumb or deaf too hear. But it is our iniquities that hinder us. Therefore if one is pure before God, That will have a direct effect on potency of the person's prayer, because God will not hesitate to visit that person with the fullness of his power.

*What are the causes of curses?*

Curses are evil pronouncements said against people. The number one cause of curses can be personal. One can say something about his own life and it will come to

pass. For instance somebody may say the “As for me, I will not marry ....” There are demons around who can pick on what has been said and use it against a person, by making the statement a reality. A curse may also be invoked on a person from his parents, godly people, God, etc. There are also generational curses, and one’s own sins can also bring some curses upon the person. When a person does what is good, he will definitely receive God’s blessing but when a person does what is bad, he receives a curse from God or from the devil. I think if someone should steal somebody’s property and the person should invoke the name of a deity on the person, definitely the person will suffer the curse pronounced, thus, suffering from his own actions. Therefore lifestyle and attitude also count.

*What are some of the signs of a curse upon the life of an individual or upon a community?*

In our context as Africans, sometimes when a family does not receive good marriage, it is normally seen as a curse upon the family. Other signs include poverty, premature deaths, etc. In the case of a community, when it is observed that the well to do and those who matter do not normally live in that community, even though they come from there, one may see that as a curse upon that community. Sometimes this may be due to the fact that the community is under a curse. Sometimes one sees that people do not see any significant benefits from their work as they should have. When this happens continuously, it may be a sign of a curse. Another sign is rampant premature deaths in the community.

*How can curses be prevented?*

First, when we are able to identify what we are going through as a curse then we seek

spiritual help from God through people of God who are filled with the spirit of God and they pray with us, those things can stop. After one has been prayed for a community has

been prayed for, as long as they live right before God, they will remain free.

*How can curses be reversed?*

From the traditional perspective, people are asked to go to the deity which was used to invoke the curse for it to be revoked but as a Christian, I believe that God answers prayers. God has the ability to deal with every situation so we only have to pray and break it and send it back to the senders and then we will be free.

Sometimes people in the orthodox churches think that these things we are talking about are for the Charismatics only. But I think if you live your life anyhow and you are cursed you are cursed. But the only remedy for it is that we should go to Jesus for him to help us as we pray and also if we want to prevent evil and other things we need to make the conscious effort to be able to live in that. The only thing that can help us live in his purity and his blessing David, Solomon, Abraham all lived in purity and in righteousness before God that is why they were blessed physically and spiritually.

## 2.7 Rev. Dr. Kwabena Opuni Frimpong<sup>416</sup>

*What does it mean to have “life in fullness”? What is the biblical basis?*

We can answer this question from two perspectives: from Christian perspective and from the African context of life. Fullness of life in Christ has something to do with one coming back to his original state, living within the mindset of God or the original plan of God. In that case somebody may be very healthy in terms of health, psychology, etc. But if one is not back to the original state -- being deeply connected to God, we cannot associate fullness of life with that person. If Jesus says that he came that they might have life and have it in fullness, it is when people live within the plan of God for their lives. However if you ask an Akan person the same question it might not start with God. The Akans will say: *obi ye onipa paa (or kann)*. This means the person is leaving within the ideals of society. In this instance not God, but what society considers to be ideal. Therefore while Christianity will start from God, African society will talk about the ideals of society.

*What are the hindrances to achieving this “life in fullness”? Is there any biblical basis for this belief? What are they?*

There are a lot of hindrances to the realisation of life in fullness, whether from the Christian perspective or the African Traditional perspective. Sin is an enemy towards fullness of life in the Bible. From the Christian perspective, the Bible acknowledges Satanic forces, at least the Bible says we are not fighting against flesh and blood. In fact, laziness can also be an enemy to this fullness of life.

---

<sup>416</sup> Rev. Dr. Kwabena Opuni Frimpong is chairperson of the Asante Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The interview was conducted on Dec 24, 2010.

The issue of sin can also be taken from two angles: What I do and what other people do. From the African perspective, I can live a sinful life, they call it *akyiwadee*. If I do the *akyiwadee* (things that society abhors, and the ancestors also abhor), I will not attract their blessings. In that case I cannot live life in fullness. And then what other people also do against me. I may be innocent in a family, but if the family is cursed, or some people are sinning, the effect of that sinful act can hinder, delay, and frustrate attaining fullness of life. It is not different from what we have also in Christianity, where one's own sins as well as other people's sins can affect a person. If you listen to the proverbs, one will know that from the Africa Traditional Religion there are a lot of forces to the attainment of the fullness of life. Eg. *Abayie* (or witches), *abonsamfoo* (or evil spirits), *nipatanfoo* (or human enemies), etc. So there are enemies toward fullness of life.

#### *How does a person get purified?*

Now the concept of atonement, whether it is taken from the Old Testament or from the New Testament, the approaches may differ. How people came out of sin in the Old Testament may be different from the New Testament. The New Testament talks about the blood of Jesus Christ, but the Old Testament is a bout sacrifices, animal sacrifices and all that were done again and again. So in either of the Testaments, the atoning, getting out, deliverance, coming back to original state was unheard but in the New Testament the blood of Jesus responds to the question of atonement for us. So I find it very clear. It is seen in the Old Testament and in the New Testament that the price of sin must be paid. Thank God, in the New Testament Jesus has paid it all.

#### *What constitutes evil?*

Again you can take it from biblical perspective or from the African Traditional Religion's perspective. From the Bible evil is disobedience anything outside God's plan is evil even though you can talk about demons. In the Bible, demons refer to angels who have decided to rebel, to fight the plan of God and also challenge the authority of God (Is.14 and in the Book of Revelation). In that case I will say evil is anything that challenges the authority of God. It could be what I have done against myself or others have done against me or spirits have done but eventually what is evil is whatever fights the will of God or fullness of life; whatever destroys and disrupts is evil. In the African Traditional Religion's perspective it is the same thing: Evil is something that does not make life complete or whole. It can be a person--evil people who are in the family or who are in the society. It can also be spirit. We have the malevolent and the benevolent spirits. While the benevolent spirits would want to do us good, the malevolent spirits are evil and they come in to destroy and they must be checked and stopped.

#### *How does evil befall a person or a community?*

While it is true that there are some people who suffer evil as a result of their own action, there are others who are innocent and yet suffer evil. We must therefore be very careful here not to give the impression that people suffer evil because they are sinful. There are instances where innocent people also suffer evil and it is difficult to explain why, but on the whole people attract evil on themselves by what they do or what other people do. That notwithstanding, we have to be careful not to give an impression that innocent people do not attract evil. Examples of such evil include death during childbirth. Some women who go through hard labour confess that they have cheated on their husband, etc. but there are also women who are innocent,

faithful and sincere and yet die during child birth. There are also untimely deaths of young people and of children which are sometimes so difficult to explain.

*To what extent can evil affect a person or a community?*

Evil does not enhance fullness of life. Evil will come in to destroy. In fact if you take it from the Old Testament, whether we are talking about Moses or Sampson; or people in the New Testament like Judas Iscariot, or Jesus and the people he interacted with, evil will always come to destroy fullness of life whether it is an individual or communities. Tensions in society, frustration, wars, bloodshed, poverty, disease, individual frustration, depression, etc., are all examples of evil occurrences which destroy people and the societies, thus disrupting fullness of life. So evil will always disrupt fullness of life. Jesus tells us the thief comes to steal to kill and to destroy.... Evil in the nutshell will always destroy the essence of the fullness of life.

*What is the relation between evil and the purity status of a person or a community?*

When we are talking morality here then we are saying that can we have a situation where we reduce the power of evil as a result of one being whole/pure/moral? I will agree with you. If individual or society gets back to sound morality, we may not be able to say that will eradicate evil and suffering completely since it is not always the case that people suffer because an individual or society has sinned. But it is also true that people suffer harm or suffering as a result of the mistakes they do or other people do. And so there is an instance where we can reduce the power of evil on society.

*What role does the devil play in bringing about evil in the life of an individual or a community?*

Jesus tells us that the devil always comes to kill and to destroy. In African spirituality, we surrounded by spirits, and we have good spirits and bad spirits. Therefore, the malevolent spirits are always trying to dominate life, and as soon as you give them space, you are doomed. So if one does not stop/check them (through deliverance, healing, etc.), by tapping the power of the super natural, then societies and individuals are in trouble.

*How does the devil operate in the life a Christian?*

In my own ministry, from the stories I have heard and the experiences that I have had, there are people who go through all kinds of difficulties. They go to hospital, they may get the best medication, they go to school and put in their best, and at the same time we realise that they are far away from fullness of life. Sometimes it is difficult to explain. Especially, in some of these instances they go to the hospital with their diseases, difficulty in child birth, etc. They go through all possible medical examinations, and they all prove that they do not have any medical problems. But when we pray with such people those diseases begin to respond to prayer. The only explanation we can give to these is that if one is not able to block the spiritual side (I mean the malevolent spirits), things happen and one just cannot explain. So in my own ministry, I have come to realise that in dealing with evil and its associated issues, if one does not bring in prayer, or the supernatural, people may do their best; one could be making all the effort in child upbringing, business, education, marriage, etc., and yet they would only be struggling. It is difficult to explain some of these things but this is my own observation.

*How can a person stay away from the attacks of the devil?*



We do not negotiate with the devil. It is not possible to stay away from the attacks of the devil. Evil or demonic attacks come unannounced. It is not an issue of “whether you like it or you do not like it” for one to make a choice; or “if you do this they will come and if you do not do this they will not come.” A person may stay pure, whole, well focused, do the best, and they still attack. I am not suggesting, though, that we can be so irresponsible or so passive. We need to do what we have to do because there are people, who instead of working hard they are so lazy, they do not plan and they always accuse the devil. I do not believe that. But I also know of people who are hard working, very principled, focused, etc., but they still experience one form of evil or another. So it is difficult to say one is suffering from evil because of what he has done or what he has not done. One must therefore be careful in drawing conclusions.

#### *Akwankyere and life in fullness?*

I think there are instances of God using men and women to encourage, counsel and give directions, give insights, etc., in the Bible. The prophets of old did that, and Jesus also did

that. But if you come to Africa, years ago, many people would go to shrines to find explanations to their problems (*hwehwe won hyebere mu*) or literally to look into their destiny to know why certain things are happening in their lives. The fetish will then tell the person who was responsible for the evil one may be going through. I believe that God can use his servants to give insights, foretelling and forth telling, etc., but sometimes also the way these things are happening, makes one question whether necromancy is finding its way into the church. For instance, there is this Prophet in Kumasi who announces on radio after his preaching that if one loses a dear one, he can bring an item belonging to the deceased to him. This can be clothings or any other belonging of the deceased. The prophet claims he would be able to tell the cause of the death of the deceased using those materials. If one is familiar with *tigare*<sup>417</sup>, anytime *tigare* wants to function, he will ask the person to bring items like the sand from where somebody stepped; or something from the person. And now it is difficult to draw the line. For example, people are talking with the dead in the name of *akwankyere*. People are sometimes asked to bring pictures of others to be used in praying for them, etc. All these are done in the name of *akwankyere* and sometimes the Bible is completely silent. Prayer is our waiting upon our God in silence. Meditation is silent and that is my worry. One is sometimes tempted to believe that some of the activities that are done in the shrine are finding their way into the church quietly. We must, however, be careful not to give every credit to the enemy. God in his wisdom can give his direction to his people, but we need caution.

#### *What role does the anointing oil play in purifying an individual or a place?*

I believe that the anointing oil plays some role in this direction but the excesses are my worry. The Bible tells us not to touch the anointed one of God. It also talks about the fact that because of the anointing every yoke shall be broken. My understanding of the anointing is that it is a mark of identification that this person or a territory belongs to God. If Jacob anointed Bethel, it means territories can be anointed. So there are instances in the Bible where individuals and places were anointed. But the caution is that the way people are using anointing, it is becoming power in itself and not a symbol as the oil is supposed to be seen. I sent my students to some of these churches to do their project work but this man of God would not give them access.

---

<sup>417</sup> Tigare is one of the popular shrines in Ghana

The students felt that the only way to get closer to the man was to pay some specified amount to enable them get to him. They received a small bottle of oil which does not match the substantial amount they paid. In this instance, what is the power of the anointing oil? For this student, the amount paid was just to give him the chance of speaking to this man of God for his research work. In that case it ceases to be a sacred mark of identity because of the element of manipulation one easily sees in it. But that does not rule out the fact that it is biblical. The Epistle of James recommends it for leaders to use in praying for the sick.

On its role in purification, if one sins, one must confess. But if one falls into the hands of evil, then like the James story, not purification in terms of sin, but in terms of having fallen into the hands of malevolent spirits, then the anointing oil could be used.

*What is the relationship between the purity status of a person and the efficacy of his prayers?*

To think of this also raises the question of the place of grace. The Christian God is holy and he wants us to be holy as his children and as a father he responds to us when we become obedient. Through that we attract his love also. From 1 Peter 5, scripture says that if even there is something wrong between married couples that can hinder prayers. So there are instances where scripture says he will not hear us when we become disobedient. However we must also be careful how we stretch that because of another side of God that we call the unmerited favour—grace. Sometimes he hears us not because we are pure and whole but he does that just by grace, he does that to teach us some lessons. For example he admitted Peter even though he denied Jesus. That was just pure grace.

*What are the causes of curses?*

Here in the Asante area, when a person feels someone is not being sincere to him, and the person want to prove a point, they go to a shrine and perform some ritual to invoke a curse on the offender. Some families are also cursed. Sometimes certain things happen. A person may gain some wealth by committing one crime or the other. If that wealth is used to acquire any property such as a building, for instance, even when the owner dies, the innocent members of the family may suffer a curse that might have been invoked on the entire family as a result of the ill-gotten wealth. This type of curse is generational and one may suffer some of these things without knowing. While people suffer curses as a result of what they have done, there are others who suffer curses as a result of what those who went ahead of them did. Examples include madness, barrenness, premature death, etc. But these things can be broken. There are instances where people have come out of curses.

*To what extent can curses affect an individual, a place or a community?*

If one listens to the testimonies people share, there are families and individuals who are known to live under curses. If it is poverty, it one can really feel poverty there in the entire family. If it is barrenness, one can visibly see it among the families where there is the curse. They may have money but one realizes that the family is going through some kind of extinction. There are families in which people are unable to complete any thing they begin to do. There are also families with difficulty in sustaining their marriages. There are also families with history untimely deaths. This is the most common curse.

Curses can affect towns as well. Here in Asante, history has it that Okomfo Anokye cursed a certain town and since then, there has not been any remarkable progress in the town. It must be noted that these curses can be broken.

## 2.8 Rev. Nana Benyin Arhin<sup>418</sup>

### *How do you see the relevance of the Old Testament?*

I believe that the OT is very important and relevant to today's Christianity. Because Romans 15 there about, it says that all that afar of were for our examples so there are certain things that we can learn from the OT. I believe that the OT is a springboard for our today's practice as Christians. So I believe the OT is very relevant.

I have been using the OT for many sermons. From the book of Genesis 1:1, in the beginning God created, God created, I used the word God as Elohim. I remember my first preaching this year, I said in the beginning God created so we must also create something like God, so that the earth was formed void and darkness was upon the face of the earth so I also encourage the church that this year whatever they want they could create them. If God is a hard working God then they should be hard working. I realized that if you read through the whole scriptures you get to know that we are sons of God and I use this scenario, if God is a God of impossibility, and God of love that means His children must be children of love. If God is a God of faithful then we must also be faithful. If God created the universe by his words, then we can also be creative. From the beginning of the year I used that passage. Depending on the topic I am dealing with, I use different portions of scripture – both the NT and the OT. So I consider the OT to very relevant for our Christian life today.

### *What themes do you normally preach about using the OT?*

I have been dealing with a series dubbed “redeemed to royalty” and I used Genesis Chapt 1: 26 and Rev. 5:10 that says that God has redeemed us from all tribes, all nations, etc. I also used this same verse, Gen 1:26 to also preach on having dominion.

### *How does the OT address salvation?*

You could the experience of the Israelites when they were moving from Egypt, their place of bondage to their promised land. God saved them the bondage of Egypt and brought them into their own land. Egypt was a place of discomfort, a place where they were not happy, because of the situation in which they found themselves. This could be used as a basis to explain salvation.

### *What are similarities of the experience of the Israelites in Egypt to salvation for us?*

Psalm 51 says in sin did my mother conceive me. We believe that all of us were born sinners but the moment we accept Christ by acknowledging the work he did on the cross, you are being moved from that bondage. When you recognize that work he did on the cross for humanity, you are rescued from that sinful nature into a new nature. The scripture says that God translated us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. So I see salvation as being translated from the kingdom of darkness

---

<sup>418</sup> Rev. Nana Benyin Arhin is pastor of Word Miracle Church International, Amasaman Branch. The interview was conducted on June 1, 2012.

into the kingdom of light. So in using the OT scenario, Christ came and redeemed us from the land of Egypt into the Promised Land.

*What is salvation?*

Confessing with the mouth that Jesus is LORD and believing with the heart that God has raised him from the dead is what is meant by salvation.

*What do you think of salvation and our life today and life after death?*

When a person is saved, there is an inner transformation that takes place. For instance before I became a Christian, there were certain bad behaviors I was involved in, but now I find it difficult to get myself involved in those things anymore. Now I love to read the bible, I can easily forgive those who offend me, etc. These are some of the things I had a difficulty in doing before I became a Christian. Salvation also gives the Christian an assurance of being with the LORD in eternity after death.

*What are some of the signs which show that somebody has been saved?*

The saved person must have the attitude of Christ in him. Christ was prayerful so such a person should also be praying, for instance. There will be a general change in the behavior of the person from bad to good.

*How does salvation affect a person's life spiritually and physically/materially?*

Spiritually, the Christian is able to perceive things which is happening spiritually. For instance, recently I was browsing in my office when it dawned on me to begin praying. I actually did not know what I had to pray about but it occurred to me pray for my child. After a few moment, my child sent me a phone text message telling me of a dream she had in which someone had had on her that she had been pushed into the sea by one of her school mates but in the dream someone was pushing her away from the sea. I then realized that my prayer had done something. In this case, my spirit perceived it. Although I was not there, my spirit perceived it although we live at different places.

*What is the relationship between salvation and the realization of fullness of life?*

Jesus Christ did not just come to save the world. Rather the first reason for His coming was to give us life. This life refers to the very life of God. And from the OT, salvation is like a package of many things including wellbeing, good health, deliverance, etc. In other words, when you have that salvation, you are full because every good thing we can think about can be found in Christ.

*What hinders the realization of abundant life by Christians, and how can they be overcome?*

Simply put, I think the major hindrance is when we are not conscious of what we have in Christ.

*What is deliverance?*

There are different schools of thought on the subject of deliverance. One is being taken out of a bad situation or circumstances through prayer. Deliverance can also take place when one listens to the word of God and gets transformed. Quite recently a lady came to me after church and told me that it was as if the sermon was just for her. I believe the word brought some relieve to her. Personally I believe that Christ and darkness cannot live together so once a person becomes a Christian they get delivered from what holds them back in life. I believe that some people come under

the bondage of the enemy because of ignorance of who they are in Christ, and as a result, they allow the enemy to overpower them, although they have the power of God in them. So they are always thinking of the devil and as a result, their lives are controlled so much by the devil but personally, I like to lay more emphasis on God and who He has made me. That makes me believe that darkness (or the enemy) cannot overcome me. It is therefore not my practice to organize deliverance services in my church. This is because I believe that the word of God is powerful enough to deliver. My Presiding Bishop Charles Agyin Asare gives testimony of how he got involved in all sorts of bad habits at a very tender age. But as soon as he became a Christian, he was able to stop all those things without having to go through any deliverance.

*Is there any relationship between salvation and deliverance?*

I think deliverance is contained in salvation.

*What is destiny?*

It is what God wants a person to do or one's assignment on the earth.

*What do you think about the Christian and destiny?*

He uses his own life and that of his siblings to illustrate the point that everybody is destined to do a particular thing in life and that it is only in realizing this that the person gets fulfillment in life.

*What determines a person's destiny – whether it will be good or bad?*

What easily angers a person and what a person likes doing most. Everybody has a good destiny but a lot depends on how a person handles his. This is because even if God gives you gold and you don't work on it (or refine it), you don't benefit from it so it depends on how one works on his destiny that will make it colorful or not.

*Is it possible for one's destiny to change?*

A person can change his destiny by dint of hard work and initiative.

*Does the Exodus relate to salvation and abundant life in any way? If yes how?*

Yes there is a relationship. The Exodus can be taken as a shadow or a type of the salvation Christ brought to the world. The Israelites were working for their task masters against their wish and they wanted to be in a land they could call their own. So God, through Moses, rescued them from that land and brought them into Canaan. In the same way, when we look at salvation, we were born sinners but Christ came to die so that as many as will believe in him, he gives them power to become children of God. This leads to a translation from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light.

Crossing the red sea gives us a good picture of salvation. This is because they were redeemed from the land of Egypt into their own land.

*Are there any parallels between the Exodus and deliverance?*

If you look at the Israelites, they were under their task masters. Moses came in and they had their liberty and their freedom. The task masters of the Israelites were oppressing them and they were free from it. So we can link that to deliverance since they both involve being freed from an unwanted situation.

*How can we relate salvation and abundant life to the events, persons and nations associated with the Exodus?*

Egypt: Signifies bondage.

Pharaoh: Probably that Pharaoh would be likened to Satan.

“Let my people go”: Using the name of Jesus to command an evil spirit to free a person. This can be an example.

The Plagues: No idea.

Crossing the red sea and the Jordan: It might be the transition.

The nations which fought against the Israelites: These represent challenges and they make our Christian life colorful. They help us move forward in life.

Overthrow of the inhabitants of Canaan: Probably they were occupying the wrong places so the rightful owners have come to dethrone them. In the mind of God, sin should not be part of us so when Jesus comes into our lives with his life, it has to replace any sinful ways in our lives.

*What weapons and strategies did the Israelites use in fighting their enemies before they possessed the land?*

The Israelites used Praises to overcome their enemies.

*How is Christianity related to the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land?*

The Exodus is a “type” of salvation as we understand it in Christianity.

*Do Christians also have a promised land?*

Heaven is our promised land. The Lord’s Prayer suggests that we should pray for the Kingdom of God to come on earth. So we could experience heaven on earth. But we experience our Promised Land through deliverance from sin, poverty, death, etc. In other words, we are supposed to live a victorious life here and then we live eternally with God in heaven.

*Are there enemies along the way?*

Yes I think the everyday challenges that we all go through, such as sin, sickness, curses, poverty, death, etc. Apart from that we have physical enemies. These are people who do not believe in Christ and so they persecute Christians in the house or in the office. The joy is that we have the Holy Spirit who comforts us and enables us to excel in the midst of all the troubles the Christian may suffer in the hands of the enemies. There are enemies even in the church.

*What are the weapons the Christian can use to fight their enemies?*

The Israelites were engaged in a physical warfare so they used physical weapons but as Christians, Paul said the weapons of our warfare are not carnal ... so we fight all arguments, all deceptions, all lies, etc. We fight so that we can maintain our stand and also become free. The fight goes on now in a more spiritual way than in the physical. For instance, people are attacked in their dreams

## 2.9 Rev. Gracer Bonsie<sup>419</sup>

---

<sup>419</sup> Rev. Gracer Bonsie is pastor of Action Faith Chapel International. The interview was conducted on June 2, 2012.

*What is the relevance of the Old Testament to Christianity today?*

It is as relevant as it was published or was given to the first recipients. If you check the NT carefully you will realize that many a time the writers make reference to the OT. Paul particularly said that all those things were given to them for our example so that if we go contrary to the word of God as they did it is likely that the repercussions that came upon them may be faced by us. So the OT is as relevant today as it was to the first recipients.

*Which passages in the OT do you consider to be more applicable to Christianity today?*

I will not do that selection but obviously there may be certain portions particularly if you look at the historical accounts, for instance, the building of the temple, its dimensions, etc. they may be pointing to certain times but may not necessarily be relevant depending on the context. I believe that every passage in the scripture has certain message for the Christian today.

*What themes do you normally use the OT to talk about?*

Usually things that will build my relationship with God. If you check through the OT and even in the New Testament, one thing that runs through as far as my understanding is concerned is our dependence on God. Because God demands absolute dependence on Him and that is the theme I see running through Genesis to Revelation. Therefore I usually use any portion of the Bible being it OT or New Testament that talks about how I can build my dependence on God, or help other people to be committed to God and also depend on him. Jeremiah says that curse onto the man who puts his trust in a man. In other words blessed is the man who puts his trust in God so areas that build our relationship with God in terms of our absolute dependence on Him for livelihood, I believe is the principal object in the entirety of the Bible.

*Does the OT talk about salvation?*

Yes. I think the whole story of the Bible, beginning from Genesis points to the fact that God had a plan even before the foundation of the world, I think Peter even speaks about that and then particularly beginning from the call of Abraham and God making an emphatic statement that in him all the people on earth shall be blessed. So I believe that you see the story of salvation throughout the OT.

*You mentioned Abraham. Do you think salvation is related to him in any way?*

Yes. Salvation is tied definitely to Abraham. If you look at the history of salvation critically, looking at it from the theoretical perspective, some argue that it begins with creation; others argue that it begins with the call of Abraham. So no matter how one wants to begin it, you realize that Abraham features prominently in the salvation history and you will see the deliverance issue as far as today's Christianity is concerned, you will see that of Abraham through Isaac, through Jacob, through Israel as a type.

*How?*

For instance, God called Abraham from the heathen world and gave him a promise that if you hear my voice and obey me, I will take you to a promise land when he did not even know where he was going, the bible says he believed in that element of absolute reliance on what God has said and believed that what He has said He will

accomplish - and this is explicit in the calling of Abraham, and that is what defines, in my view, the salvation of every individual on earth. So the bible keeps pointing us to that single element that Abraham demonstrated and if we are the seed of Abraham that is what is being expected of us. That is why Jesus said if Abraham is your father then you will not do these things. If Abraham is your father then you will do that which resembles Abraham. In Genesis 18, it says, for I know Abraham, that he will command his children after him, so that the blessings and the promise that God had given him would come upon them. So you cannot separate Abraham from the whole concept of salvation.

*What is salvation?*

Primarily, salvation talks of the fact that, let us say we are at a point B and that point B is a place of hopelessness, a place is a destitute position. A man finds himself in that place and he cannot find a way out of that situation so God comes in and take man out of that situation to where His plan and purpose for your life can manifest; and your total being is revealed. That is why Jesus says that you must receive life and have it abundantly. So in a nut shell that is the essence of salvation.

*Do you think salvation has anything to do with our life today and life after death?*

Yes. The bible says there is judgment after death. What you do today will determine what comes when you are dead and that is tied surely to your salvation because if you are not saved as the bible prescribes it, it will also affect your life here after. So your salvation today obviously has a telling effect on when you are dead.

*What is salvation when we are alive and when we are dead?*

In Hebrews 9, the bible says that we are now waiting for Christ who will come and bring us salvation. That does not mean we are not saved. The bible says that for by grace are ye saved. That means we are already saved. The bible also says that work out your own salvation with fear and trembling and it also says that Christ is coming to give us salvation unto to those who are waiting for Him so you realize that the whole salvation can be positional and at the same time, it can be progressive. Positional in the sense that in Ephesians, it says we have been saved by grace. It is a gift that God has given to us which we could not do by our own selves. Psalm 49:9ff tells us that you cannot buy salvation for your friend or yourself. It is impossible. Verse 16 says it is God who will do it. It is something that God bestows upon us which I believe it is a reflective of Ephesians scripture (Eph 2). Paul talks about working out your own salvation with fear and trembling, I believe that that is something we do after being saved. It is expected that we lead a certain kind of life that is reflective of what God has done because God takes you from one place and places you in another place where you are expected to lead a life that He had originally created you to live. He has given you that power to be able to do, so you must be able to do that. There is an expected effort. That you have to put in to be able live that kind of life. That is the progressive nature of salvation that I am talking about. Then in the book of Hebrews which says that Christ is coming again to give us salvation that is when He is coming to take us from the hustles and the pains of this earth to our resting place. To me that is how salvation should be looked at in our context.

*What are the signs that show that someone is saved?*

I believe that when a person is saved, it is shown in your manner of life in relation to how you were before. For instance, assuming in the past you used to be somebody



who had so much confidence in you that in everything that you do you believe that it is either by your connections or by your family tree or intelligence and all that. But when the person becomes saved and realizes that it is not him but God, it reflects the way he does his things. I personally do not see supposedly righteous life as the authentic evidence of one's salvation because we have certain people who in reality are not saved. They do not even believe in the salvation message you are talking about but they are probably more righteous than some of us who have been saved. It does not make them saved persons in the context of Christianity but what I want to look at is how did I live my life before Christ and how do I live my life after Christ. That contrast is the evidence that I am saved.

*Does salvation affects a person's life spiritually and materially?*

Yes. Like I have said, from my personal experience, things I used to do, the struggles, the challenges, the pain, the effort that I will have to put in to do something in the past, I believe that it is not the same. I believe that once I am willing to acquire a project and I go on my knees and pray for God's direction, absolutely depending upon His directions and instructions, I believe God leads me through it and the results is always amazing. For instance, I sit here as the registrar of the Dominion University College even though I am an ordained minister of Christian Action Faith Ministry International. This university was actually perceived or envisioned as far back in 1998. There have been certain university renowned professors who had been on this project but could not achieve it. I can see about three different people well qualified as far as academia is concerned, who have been on this project but could not succeed. They had to abandon it somewhere along the line. In 2008, I was given the challenge. I have not worked in academia before. The highest I have gone is a secondary school teacher and then a seminary teacher. But I was given this challenge and I accepted it because I believe that it is not my strength but that God can make a difference. I went to God, prayed about it and I believed that God will guide me. Without understanding, there were many times even people in this establishment, men of God, in their own words, when they saw me moving around carrying papers and moving here and there, they were laughing at me because they know that it will not amount to anything because the professionals could not do it. But I have always told myself that it is not me but I kept on believing God till 2010 when I got affiliation with Cape Coast University and then last year we got the accreditation and I say that this is the handy work of God. People cannot understand how it happened. I have had some of the professionals who had been on the project before coming around to find out how it happen and I tell them it is God. They are now even willing to come on board to help me. This is how I see things now, I believe in the past; probably those people, some of whom were obviously not Christians, were just picked because they are professionals but they believe that they knew how it could be done but for some reasons it could not be done. God has made a statement that it is not the person who wills but it is God that shows mercy. I believe that when one is saved and has that kind of understanding, things can be easier than before.

*So is that the spiritual or physical aspect?*

In all aspects.

*How does the physical show?*

The physical shows in your life in general. I have mentioned that I taught in the Labone Secondary School for six years. My actual background academically, I am a scientist. I majored in chemistry and I thought it for a number of years. When I look at

my colleagues from the secondary school which I left in 1990/91, I still have colleagues teaching there and any time I go there and I see them and see myself, in my own judgment, I think I look better than them, physically, materially and in all things. And I think it is because the burden they carry, physically, it may look like I also carry the same burden but as far as I am concerned, that burden is not my burden. And you know the way a man's stress level can also affect even his physical outlook, and as long as that burden is being borne by Christ, I think I do not allow anything to stress me out because of my convictions and I believe that it is also a reflection of my life physically.

*What is the relationship between salvation and the realization of fullness of life?*

The bible (Romans 5:1), it says that by faith in Christ we have access to God because we have peace with God. The bible also says that in all things by prayer and supplications let your request be made known to God, then the peace of God will cause your heart to be at rest. I think there is a difference in there. Once you become saved like I said, the positional salvation, you have peace with God and you are heaven bound. But you can be in heaven and have the Lazarus story because even though you were saved, there were certain things that you needed to do to be able to have the fullness of your salvation which you did not do and an example is what Jesus calls the act of righteousness: your prayer life, your fasting life, all those things you do as a manifestation of your dependence on God, if you do not do them, you will not have the fullness of salvation or the full benefit of salvation but once you walk in that way, that is how the fullness of salvation comes. I believe that you can be saved, you can be heaven bound but you can also live a life that will not attract anybody because you are not observing the act of righteousness.

*So are the prayers and fasting what you are referring to as acts of righteousness?*

Yes. Prayer, fasting, sharing, and other things that are expected of us to do as Christians.

*So does that not suggest salvation is conditional?*

No, salvation is not conditional. I have said that we have positional salvation and progressive and futuristic as Christ is bringing. The positional is the most important. It is the positional that we cannot do anything about. That is the gift that God bestows on us and there is no human being that can do anything about it and that is where I made reference to Psalm 49. When that is achieved by God, the progressive one is you and that is what Paul talks about, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. In my personal belief, unfortunately, some of my colleagues have interpreted to mean that one can lose his salvation. A view I do not hold. But I hold that you can be saved and make heaven but you will lead a miserable life on earth because you are not living as evidence in your life by salvation and that is what I refer to as the act of righteousness - things that you will do that will be well pleasing in the sight of God will ensure the fullness of you realizing the benefits of salvation.

*What hinders the realization of abundant life by Christians?*

The bible says that God cannot be mocked, and whatever a man sows he will reap. I do not see anywhere in the bible that you can live a sinless life as a Christian - talking about after salvation - but the bible says it should not be a habitual life. One of the evidences of you being saved is that you don't live a habitual life of sin. You don't continue to live that kind of life. Any time you slip, that awareness comes to you. The Holy Spirit convicts you of the act and you immediately make amends or remedy the

situation as Christ has given us in His word. Once you find yourself in that situation and you do not take advantage of the remedy, it can affect you having the realization of the fullness of the benefit of salvation. So life of sin –and here is primarily disobeying the acts and the words of God.

*Are there any hindrances which are beyond a person, like if I sin, I am responsible for it. But are there any hindrances which can be from outside?*

I do not really get you by what you mean from outside but the bible makes it clear that God has given gifts to certain individuals to equip them that they may do the work of the ministry. The work of the ministry could also be part of the act of righteousness because these are some of the things we do that are well pleasing in the sight of God. So ignorance could be part of the situation that can hinder our full participation in what God wants us to do because for lack of knowledge, my people perish so ignorance could also hinder our lives as Christians as far as benefiting what God has done in our lives is concerned.

*What will you say is the meaning of fullness of life or abundant life?*

To me it is more relative. There is no objective way of assessing whether someone is having an abundant life or not. For instance, if I take someone like Bill Gate, you and I may think that He is living an abundant life but in the closet of his home, whether he is living an abundant life or not, he is the only one who knows. If you ask someone like me, I may say I am fine. So I think it is more relative depending upon the worldview of an individual. But I believe that once a person is saved and live his life in accordance to what God has called him to be, the person will live his life in prosperity. And the prosperity here does not mean living in abundance of wealth of as such, but living in a fulfilled life relative to what God has called you to do and I think Psalm 25 talks about that.

*How can we overcome the things which hinder the realization of abundant life?*

Absolute obedience to the word of God. You should trust and obey as in that song, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.

*Do you believe in deliverance?*

Yes I do but it depends on what you mean by deliverance.

*Deliverance as in prayers, trying to cast out demons, trying to stop demonic activities.*

I do. A typical African as I am and a Ghanaian for that matter and an Asante in particular, I do believe in that.

*So how do you understand deliverance?*

My understanding of deliverance, biblically speaking deliverance and salvation seem to be synonymous because if you check carefully, you will realize that they both come from the same word. However in its practical sense particularly from the Pentecostal perspective, when we talk of deliverance we are talking of casting out demons and all that. I believe that a Christian cannot be demonized or cannot be processed by a demon but, the Christian, somehow, can be influence by demons in their daily activities because of ignorance. When a person finds himself in that situation he could be helped through an act of deliverance. The right term to use is the person will be exorcised off such influence.

*I think we will restrict ourselves to deliverance because I think there is a debate on whether they are the same or different.*

I think it is all about nomenclature. We are not looking at the substance. We are just looking at the labels. If we want to look at the substance, you will realize that deliverance, salvation and exorcism are related. Why deliverance, because there are certain things that are limiting your full potentials as a human being. You need salvation because you are under a certain depression and that is limiting the realization of your full potentials so when you are taken out of that limitation or situation into a free zone where you can operate the fullness of your potentials, you have been saved. You have been delivered. That thing that is hindering you has been exorcised from your life. So I think it is more of an issue of nomenclature other than looking at the content or substance of the debate.

*Is it possible that there will be the need for a Christian to go through deliverance or does a Christian need deliverance?*

I don't think it should be habitual but more of conditional. For instance if a Christian realizes that there is this repetition of a certain habit that he seem not to have control over, he should check it again because that bible says that he that thinks he is standing should beware lest he falls. So if you realize that things seem to be repeating in your life, that cyclical thing, you need to check it again and that is where you will probably need deliverance. But I don't think it is something that should be habitual that every month or year you will have to go for. When you do that then you are putting the authenticity of your salvation into question. Because as humans as we are there is the possibility that we may slip. That is why the bible says that when someone is caught up in sin, you who are strong should restore him, but with caution before you find yourself in there too. There are certain things Christians cannot claim and the day I will see any pastor who will say he is sinless, I will praise God for his life. There are certain things that even before you realize, you are in it but it is the realization. When a righteous man falls seven times, he rises seven times. It is the realization, the attitude that brings to bear the strength of your salvation or the strength of your commitment to God. So these things could cause a door to be opened for the devil to come in. You can give a foothold for the devil to come in and misbehave and when you see a sign that is the time that you need probably to check and seek help may be through deliverance or any of such related acts.

*So is deliverance related to salvation in any way?*

Deliverance and salvation all talk about the fact that you are being taken out of certain limitations into your full potential. As it is being used these days, deliverance seems to be subsequent to salvation.

*Why is it like that?*

I think it is the tradition of the church particularly the Pentecostals/ charismatic move have made it to be that deliverance comes after salvation and in few occasions some people are probably made to go through deliverance before salvation which I do not believe in. I believe that salvation is the first. Because there is no way that you can cause a person to be delivered by your own strength. I think the person should believe in the power of Christ before. So normally deliverance refers to after a person has been saved and going through demonic attacks then the person is taken through deliverance for that purpose. But in all cases it talks about being taken away from certain limitation into the fullness of your potential.

*Does deliverance facilitates the realization of abundant life?*

The context of the practice we see today, it is yes. How? There could be certain act of yours that could impose certain limitations on you. There are certain limitations that are self imposed. Once you impose those things on yourself, you will not realize your full potential and the fullness of the blessings that comes with salvation and abundance of life so once you are taken out of that limitation then you can enjoy it. Surely, deliverance can affect it.

*What is destiny?*

Destiny is what God has called you to be. I believe every individual has one - both Christians and non-Christians, laity and the clergy. Ephesians 1:4 is very clear on that. And then Ephesians 2:13 says we were saved in the way that God has already prepared for you. Each and every individual has a calling, both Christians and non-Christians but you can only come into that calling after salvation.

*What can you say about the Christian and destiny? How does destiny affects a Christian's life?*

If you miss your destiny or calling, your life can be very frustrating. If God has called you to be a lawyer, and you find yourself to be a pastor you will become frustrated in life. If God has called you to become a pastor and you find yourself to be a lawyer, you will become a frustrating lawyer because you have missed the calling of God for your life. Like I said, Ephesians 2:13 is clear on that and Psalm 25:12 I believe is also clear on that. If you miss your calling, life will not be interesting. If you miss your destiny that God has ordained for you, life can be very frustrating and miserable.

*What determines a person's destiny?*

That is man-made. Destiny is what God has ordained for you. The bible says that man can receive nothing unless it is given onto him. It is when you cannot find that, the inability to identify that and walk in it is what creates all these problems for us. So from man's perspective someone's destiny can be good or bad but I do not think God has given anybody a negative destiny but it is our failure as humans to identify where God has placed us that create all these things. A man's limitation or failure to be able to accept responsibility is blamed on God.

*So what determines a person's destiny?*

It is divine. Just as the family you are born into cannot be decided by you, so as you cannot determine your destiny.

*Is it possible for one to change his/her destiny?*

I have heard this argument before and the person made reference to Jabez's prayer and a critical look at Jabez's prayer indicates that somebody has imposed a curse on him. It is more of a curse than a person's destiny. His prayer was that, this is how I have been packaged by man but please let this thing be taken away from me so that I will be brought into my own calling so I do not think anybody can do anything as far as ones destiny is concerned if destiny is truly the calling of God upon an individual.

*To use your example, if Jabez had not prayed, what would have happened?*

As I said earlier on, our failure to observe the acts of righteousness, our dependence on God. Jabez could have insisted that he could do something about it and that could have been boldly done but he saw that the situation he had found himself in, it is only God who can change it.

*Does the exodus relate to salvation and abundant life?*

Yes, I think exodus is a type of salvation. Like we say Egypt typifies the world 'the non Christian life' and Canaan typifies the Christian life in our context so the whole exodus exercise is a type of the salvation process or salvation plan of God.

*You mentioned Egypt and Canaan. Are there particular aspects of this whole Exodus episode that you consider very applicable to salvation?*

In a typical Christian concept, the act of the Passover, in 1 Cor 7:5, it says Christ has become our Passover so the act of Passover is a "type" of salvation itself. The Passover is a type of salvation like Christ shedding His blood for our salvation.

*Are there any parallels between the exodus and deliverance?*

Like I said if you look at the whole Passover act and the crossing of the red sea, all those things are parallels as far as the Christian walk is concerned. Egypt represents your past and Canaan represents your present and the life that is expected of it.

*You have mentioned Egypt and what it represents, what will you say about Pharaoh?*

Pharaoh is more of a hindrance, one of the main obstacles to the realization of our salvation. Today if you bring him to our context, we can look at it in two perspectives. We can look at it in the external and the internal. The external has great influence on the internal. The external has to do with the activities of the devil and the internal has to do with ourselves. The bible says that the spirit is enmity to the flesh and that is internal. So the devil is the external and the flesh represents the Pharaoh in my understanding. These are the two things that can withstand the realization of your salvation.

*"Let my people go" does it have any parallel with present day talk about salvation and deliverance?*

"Let my people go" was in relation to Pharaoh because Pharaoh was a resistance to what God had planned. Let my people go that they may serve me. Many times we are interested in "let my people go" but let my people go to do what? "To serve". So anything that hinders that service, you can talk about the devil or the self. So let my people go is more of the activities that will hinder the realization of that thing. God asked Pharaoh to let His people go that they might be able to do what He wants them to do.

*Can we relate that command to any aspect of our talk about salvation and deliverance today?*

I do not really see that.

*What about the plaque?*

They were all means or tools that God used to demonstrate His power that there is nothing that can stop my plan. If you fight my plan, I God will fight you and these are the elements, tools or weapons I will use to fight you. The plaques are also a lesson for us today that if me Gracer, I am going to be an impediment of God, I am likely to face those plaques. It may not be nuts and those things, it could be any other things and at the end of the day, it could be very unbearable. That is where you can link "let my people go" that as an individual, if I place myself in a position that will restrict the move of God in any individual's life as long as that person is acting in accordance

with the will of God for his life those plaques could come and in that context, that command is directed to me as well.

*How does the Passover relate to your understanding of salvation?*

The bible is very clear about it. Christ has become our pass over. It is one of the prayers I pray. The bible says if Christ has become our Passover, therefore the benefit of the Passover in the days of the Israelites, those benefits are mine and I can claim them on those bases with that understanding.

*What are some of those benefits?*

Soon after the Passover, they had liberty, special favor, God said 'ask them anything you want' and when they did, they gave them everything included, even to the extent that the Egyptians even became plundered. So that special favor that comes with the Passover can be appropriated to our context. If Christ has been my Passover and there has been a sacrifice for me then all that the children of Israel enjoyed and are still enjoying both the Christian and non Christian Jews are still enjoying. My wife just returned from Israel and she cannot believe her eyes what she saw there.

*What about the crossing of the red sea and the Jordan River?*

Paul made it clear that going through the red sea was an act of baptism. The bible says that baptism is an act of a clear conscience towards God so it shows us that we have gone through a different phase to another.

*And the Jordan River?*

I think they have similar significance and the circumcision and all that shows the past against the present.

*What can we say about those nations the Israelites Confronted?*

I believe that even though we have been saved and the abundant of life is ours, it may not necessarily come cheap. There could be certain impediments but in all these it is your absolute reliance on God's strength that you can sail through. So all those confrontations may not be nations in our day but they are expected. So one needs to fortify himself that they will come, and at times, they will come and at times even from within.

*Can you be a bit specific on how they come?*

It can come from within. You can sit on a pastoral board and a position will be given to you but before you realize your immediate supervisor will out of your presence say that he does not think you have the requisite experience for that position and if you ask for an explanation you will realize he has no reason but you see that it is for some personal reason. You will wonder why pastors behave this way so it is possible.

*What does the overthrow of the inhabitants of Canaan signify?*

I think in Numbers where God was drawing the attention of the Israelites. They were people in this land and these are the things that they did that the land vomited them for you to come and inherit so if you do the same, you will also be vomited out. I believe that God has put certain principles in place. You could be His favorite pastor or Christian but if you do not leave your life by these principles and you go against the others, it could affect your life. You could also lose your position to somebody.

God did not get up from the account and whip them out of the land for you to go in there. He told Abraham that he will take his descendants into a certain nation where they will be strangers for a certain number of years because the sins of the people in the land where I am taking you is not yet full. When they are full, the land will vomit them out and that will allow you to come in. I believe that uprooting the people was not just because God wanted to do so but there are certain principles that God has set in place and by His providence, He knows everything so He knows that by tomorrow this is what is going to happen and what is going to happen today. So it is also a lesson to all of us.

*What weapons and strategies did the Israelites used in fighting their enemies?*

When I read that account I see quiet interesting characters. Many times the only remedy or only thing that was to their advantage was the few that relied absolutely on God. They believed in what God has said. So if you ask me, I think the only strategy was their commitment to what God has said. For example, when the twelve were asked to go and spy on the land, ten came to say the land has everything that God has said but there is one thing that God did not tell them - that, the land has giants, and that it eats its own inhabitants. The giants were there but the land has not eaten the giants and therefore we cannot go. But it took these two young men who said that, no, if God has said it then we are capable so let us go. They almost beat Moses and his people and they went back but these two people stood and said that they were capable, and they went and won. So I think their greatest weapon was God and their faith and trust in the ability of God.

*Do Christians have a promise land?*

Yes and it could be seen from two perspectives: What is here and in heaven. That is what Jesus was referring to when he answered the disciples. Peter said, Lord what is in this business for us, for we have left everything to come and follow you and He said, whatever you have left you will earn multiples of it here and also in heaven and amazingly, there is one thing that he did not mention that when we lose it we can get it again. You will lose children, wives and so on but when he was talking about the multiples that we will earn, wives was missing.

*When is a Christian said to have reached his/her promise land?*

It is when the person has a fulfilled life, that is life of contentment. Earlier on I said that this is relative and measuring it could be quite difficult. So a fulfilled life is defined by the individual in question.

*As we travel to the promise land, are there enemies on the way?*

Definitely yes. You can be your own enemy. The flesh, ignorance, your friends, family, non-believers could be your enemies. There are several on our way and we should not take anything for granted. Do not be surprised when your closest friend fights you.

*Can Christians use the same weapon used by the Israelites to overcome their enemies?*

That is exactly what a Christian is expected to do and the only strategy we have is our dependence on God.

*Can you explain?*



Because I am looking at it with reference to the weapon God used on the way on behalf of the Israelites. Can we also use that, for instance when we realize that this problem has a demonic background. The demonstration of your dependence on God is your prayer and that is the weapon I am talking about. That is the weapon of prayer, which is an indicator of your reliance on God. A typical charismatic as I am, we invoke all sorts of things in prayer. You can invoke the finger of God, you can invoke the plagues, you can invoke all sorts of things. It is up to God to answer, though, but these are the things that we use. The greatest weapon we have is prayer and Ephesians 6 is very clear about that. I think 2 Cor 10 also talks about that.

*Is there anything you would like to talk about which did not appear in our conversation?*

The topic is quite exhaustive. I think probably I can summarize by saying that the whole concept of salvation and thereafter is tied to the Christian's understanding or attitude towards God; who God is and what God can do and what is expected of me as a Christian which is all summarized in the song I was trying to sing. Many times we concentrate on the verse 4 and tend to forget about the verse 6 of 2 Cor 10. The bible says that we can only apply it when our obedience is complete but many times we do not read that portion and that is what the Song says. The only way we can be what we are in Christ is to trust and obey.

## 2.10 Pastor John Adelego<sup>420</sup>

*What do you think about the Old Testament and its relevance for today?*

The Old Testament is actually the shadow of the New Testament. The Old Testament is the illustrations that make the New Testament meaningful, so it is still very relevant, without the Old Testament we will not understand the new as we should.

*What themes do you normally preach from the Old Testament?*

Everything, anything we are preaching from the New Testament we draw inferences from the old.

*Specifically how does the Old Testament address salvation?*

What we call salvation in the New Testament is Jesus dying for us all and taking our place. In the Old Testament, if we are to look at the replica of it, the high priest will enter into the holy of holies once every year carrying blood and pouring the blood in God's presence inside the holy of holies and the blood is said to cover the sins of the people, for that year, so we could say the people have God's mercy for that year which could also translate to mean salvation. Salvation is basically acceptance by God, you are saved, you are accepted by God.

*Do you think that salvation is related in any way to Abraham?*

It is related. Abraham, in his case, was a demonstration of what God is doing today through Jesus because the bible says Abraham believed in God and it was taken as righteousness. That is Abraham believed in what God said, when I hear you, you did not know who was speaking, you believed it. The scripture says it was taken as

---

<sup>420</sup> Pastor John Adelego serves at Winner's Chapel International. The interview was conducted on June 4, 2012.

righteousness, that is believe, it is faith, was taken as righteousness. So you could say Abraham was saved - saved by faith.

*Can you relate our salvation to Abraham today?*

Yes in a whole lot of ways. In Galatians 3:13-14, it says clearly in verse 13 that Jesus became a curse on the cross that we may no longer be cursed. And verse 14, it says He did that that *blessing of Abraham* may be ours. One of the reasons Jesus died is to make us sons and daughters of Abraham so that we can have the privilege to enjoy everything God made available through Abraham. So Abraham is still very relevant. If you read Isaiah 51: 1-3, it says look onto your father, Abraham, look onto your mother Sarah. It says for I called him alone and I blessed him. And verse three it says, in the same way I did, I will bless Zion. I will turn her waste places to Eden. So the program God had for Abraham is still what He has for every one of us. So Abraham is still extremely relevant today.

*What can you say in general about salvation?*

Salvation means being saved. Satan has corrupted the world and we live in sin. We breathe sin. All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God. So salvation was a means of escape God made available so that you could still live on this earth that is infested with sin and not be a sinner- a means of being saved from that plaque. That is what salvation is. Salvation and our lives today and our lives to come or our life after death. Salvation also means accepting Jesus as your Lord and savior. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. No one can get to God except through Him. The point is this; no one can get to God by his good works. Good works are never enough. You cannot do enough good works to qualify to God. The only thing that can bring you to God is your faith, your believe in what Jesus did, your identification with what Jesus did that as Jesus overcame sin, lived above sin, got into heaven, the same way you also got there because He took your place to do that. That is the only thing that guarantees us a tomorrow, a future.

*When I am saved, what does it mean for my life today and after death?*

That question is actually loaded because if you say what does it mean for my life today and when I die, you are telling me to talk about the whole bible starting from Genesis to Revelation. Because what it means for my life today can be seen in Genesis, Exodus or every book of the bible. Because the bible is very relevant to today. It is real for today. So if you say what does it mean for my life today it means every one promise that God has made in the bible for people who are alive today. If you say what does it mean for tomorrow, it means every promise that God has made for man for tomorrow. It means the reality of it in my life.

*Are there signs to show that this person is saved?*

Jesus said by their fruit you shall know them. The fruit is usually the best way to judge. Anybody can say he is anything but what he is doing is what makes him who he is.

*How does salvation affects a person's life spiritually and materially?*

You start becoming spiritual when you are saved because according to John chapter 3, if you are not saved, you are like a radio without a transistor. You are there but you cannot get signal from any radio station. That is, your spirit is dead. That is why you see Nicodamus made Jesus in that John chapter 3. Jesus was busy explaining to him that he that is born of the flesh is flesh and he that is born of the spirit is spirit. So

to be saved is to be born of the spirit. That is your spirit that was dead is now alive, made alive by a miracle of the spirit of God. Being made alive is now like a radio that had no transistor before which is now fitted with a transistor. So it has always been a radio with no transistor. It could not hear the radio stations. But now, it is fitted with a transistor - its ability to pick the signals from the radio station. So being saved is being able to hear God. That is, your spirit is now alive. You can now here God.

*Physically or materially?*

So that is spiritually now. That translates to spiritually because God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit. So you cannot worship Him if you are not in spirit. So salvation makes you to be a spirit that qualifies you with the ability to be able to worship and follow God. So anyone who is not saved cannot worship God. He cannot even know God. I wrote something in my note yesterday, the message I shared in church yesterday; you have to be a goat before you can know the taste of grass. As a human being if you put some grass in your mouth, you will spit it out. It will not taste good to you. You will have to be a goat to enjoy grass. When you see a goat eating grass, you can see on its face that it is enjoying it. But to you, it is rubbish. You have to be a goat to enjoy grass. So if you are not born again, born of the spirit, you cannot worship God. So that is how it is translated into spiritual effect. Spiritual effect also translates to physical effect. Ephesians 1:3 says God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. Every one thing God has promised us, they are all spiritual substance. It is given to us as spiritual substance. You will have to be in the spirit to be able to have it. And when you have it, you receive it in the spirit and then it translates into physical in your life. For example the bible says pay your tithe, give offering to the church and according to Malachi 3:8-12, that translates to the opening of heaven. God says I will open the heavens; I will bless you with blessings that the floor will not be able to take. That translates to that. You are giving physical offering and God says He will open the heaven to bless you. He will not rain money from heaven. If He says He will open the heavens to bless you, that means he is now pouring out spiritual quantities that will now translate to physical substance in your life. How does it translate? For example, you pay your tithe, you give offering, and one good thing you will enjoy is His divine ideas. Let us assume you are a business person who is tithing, then God is committed to be giving to you ideas that will multiply your business that will make you do greater things.

*What is the relationship between salvation and the realization of the fullness life as Jesus promised in John 10:10?*

The same. What do you call life? Life is just like what you call life to us and what you call fuel to car. If you say fullness of life then you are saying fullness of tank for a car. When the tank is full, it is ready to go anywhere. So that is our own fuel, our energy to keep going.

*What can hinder us from realizing the abundant life Christ promised?*

Sin.

*What is your understanding of deliverance?*

Deliverance, just as the name implies is to be delivered from maybe certain hindering forces, certain oppressing forces that are oppressing you. To be delivered from their hands. That is what they call deliverance. And the instrument of deliverance is the word of God.

*Does a Christian need deliverance?*

To me, from what the world calls deliverance today, what people call deliverance today, because really there is oppression, there is obsession and possession. That is if somebody is firstly oppressed continually, he becomes obsessed and then possessed. What people call deliverance mostly, they refer to the possessed state of a person. To be possessed means another spirit has taken you over, has filled you. The truth is, a believer, born again can never be possessed. It is not possible because to be born again, means you have the spirit of God already inside you. If a cup is fully filled with water, there will be no space to put any other thing. Pour it, and it will pour over. So the only reason somebody who calls himself a believer may be possessed and need deliverance is if he has lost his salvation. The truth is this; once saved is not always saved. But somebody who is truly saved will have the spirit of God in him. So no other spirit can be there. So he will not need deliverance in today's sense. He may be oppressed but that is on the surface. It may get so bad that he may be obsessed. That is that spirit is in his soul and in his mind. But if the spirit of God is in him, he cannot be possessed.

*Is there any relationship between salvation and deliverance?*

Of course, salvation is deliverance. They are the same. Salvation is to be saved and to be saved is to be delivered. Because that is what Colossians 1:13 tells us. That you are delivered from the power of darkness translated into the kingdom of His dear son.

*Do you not organize deliverance service for church members?*

Every service is deliverance because we are preaching the word and we address specific things so every service is actually deliverance. I do not have to pull my trousers and open my shirt before you know that. So every service is a deliverance session.

*Does deliverance facilitate the realization of abundant life in any way?*

Yes. That is if you are delivered, you are delivered into abundant life.

*How do you understand destiny?*

It is a pre-plan of God for every man created by God. Before you were made, your end was already decided. Your usefulness or your purpose was already decided before you were born. So there is something like destiny for everybody, both Christians and non-Christians. Though not everyone will fulfill it, everyone has it.

*Does that mean God is the one who determines people's destiny?*

Yes. The product does not determine its use. The manufacturer determines the use before the product is made.

*Is it possible for one's destiny to change?*

No, your destiny cannot change. You may decide to go and do something else by yourself but destiny is once. Gifts and callings of God are without repentance. He does not change His mind on that.

*What is the connection between the exodus of the Israelites to the promise land and salvation?*

They are both the same. That is why I said the Old Testament explains the new properly to us. Exodus is like salvation also. It is a graphical illustration of salvation. Also incidentally, He took the blood to get them out. Like the blood of Jesus brought us salvation. So they are two similar things. It is a physical rendition of salvation itself.

*Is there a relationship between the exodus and deliverance?*

Yes. Just like we said, salvation is also deliverance. So could also call Exodus deliverance.

*What does Egypt represent in terms of salvation?*

Egypt is the kingdom of darkness and Pharaoh is Satan.

*And the command of God to Pharaoh to let His people go?*

Let my people go that they may serve me.

*Will you call it the command of God or the motive of God?*

God's real reason for doing what He did. God's real reason for saving us is that we may serve Him.

*And the plaques?*

Yes, that is God fighting for you. You are saying you will serve Him now and they say they will not let you go and God is saying I am going to punish you if you do not let them go.

*You said Pharaoh represents the devil.*

Yes.

*And God used the plaques to fight?*

Yes.

*So can we use the plaques during our spiritual warfare?*

To use the plaque as weapon. It depends. The truth is this; there are actually those who should die for you to live. It is a hard truth but the truth because there are those who have vowed you will not live, you will not go forward, and you will not make it. And if you will make it, it is over their dead body. Such a person will not take an appeal or a plea. They will have to be executed that you may go on if you really want to go on with your life. So sometimes that is needed.

*And the Passover?*

That is like a type of the death of Jesus.

*Crossing the red sea and the Jordan?*

The red sea and the Jordan has always been there. To my mind, it represents the renewal of the mind. After you are saved, the immediate miracle or salvation is the rebirth of your spirit. But your soul that houses your mind and your body still remains the same. They do not change. But it is now that you need to renew your mind that is why Romans 12:2 says that renew your mind in the word of God. You now need to renew your mind with the word of God because Satan who sees that our spirit is alive now will seek to fight you. And what best weapon does he have than the things you used to do before? So he will use those things against you. So to my mind, they typify the old ways. The old barrier that has always been there.

*What about the nations which fought the Israelites?*

It is still the same thing. It is in the same category with the red sea and Jordan. But they have always been there. Now you claim to be delivered and they are rising to put you back into captivity.

*The overthrow of the inhabitants of Canaan?*

It is similar to what goes on today. Everything God has, are for His children. This earth will experience a strange transfer of wealth this end time. And when people get saved, they experience wealth transfer. There are various types of prophecies in the scriptures that are revealed to us in this end time. God is operating a program that will make those who do not believe in Him suffer. They will lose the things they have and those who believe in Him will possess them. So it is the same thing.

*Do Christians have a promise land?*

Yes, they have. But as a Christian, that promise land is not a place. It is a life time.

*When is a Christian said to have reached his/her promise land?*

When your life has changed and you notice that the possession of the promise land was an ongoing thing which did not have an end. The bible has never said that one time they possess everything.

*Are there enemies as we travel to our promise land?*

Of course there will always be enemies as long as Satan is there.

*Are we going to have only spiritual enemies?*

Yes. Every physical enemy is an offshoot of the spiritual one.

*What weapons can we use to overcome them?*

The weapons are many. You pray, you fast, and you use the word of God. They are many.

*Any further comment?*

I only want to reemphasize that it is not possible to make sense of the New Testament without the old. It is not possible. As a matter of fact, yesterday morning God was saying something similar to my heart while I was getting ready for the service; that the Old Testament is an illustration that makes the New Testament meaningful. You cannot fully grab what the New Testament is saying if you do not grab what the Old Testament says.

2.11 Pastor Enoch Ghartey<sup>421</sup>

*What is the relevance of OT for Christianity today?*

The Old Testament is full of covenants that God made. Reference is particularly made, when we talk of the Old Testament, to the 5 books of Moses. But the Old Testament, all inclusive from Genesis to Malachi, is relevant. It represents the first pack of revelations God made and the codes and rules and regulations and the

---

<sup>421</sup> Pastor Enoch Ghartey is assistant pastor at Winners Chapel International in Accra. The interview was conducted on June 4, 2012.

standards God has for His people. It also reveals God's plan for eternity for the New Testament. So you can still make reference to the Old Testament and still see God move. The OT is relevant. You can preach a word from the OT and you will still see the power of God at work. Meaning God still upholds the OT. The New Testament confirms the OT. The New Testament builds upon the Old Testament although there are certain very basic modifications. That is why the bible says it is a better covenant (Hebrew 8:6) based on better promises. The bible also tells us that even the ministration of death, referring to the OT, was glorious but how much more shall the ministration of life in the NT excel that in glory of the OT. So the OT is relevant. Jesus did not come abolish it but he came to fulfill it.

*Which passages in the OT do you use quite regularly?*

We speak about Genesis when we want to talk about the original blessings of God. Man was blessed, empowered, there was a fall and Jesus came to restore man to the original position. So we cannot do without the creative power of God in Genesis as we see it. It shows God's word is creative. If you look at the covenant God made with His people and the covenant of service for instance Exodus 23:25, it says thy shall serve your Lord your God and He will bless your bread and water. These are things that still apply to us that still apply to us. That if you still serve God, He still blesses your bread and water. So the Old Testament is very relevant. Christ came in the New Testament to take away the sacrifices that were being made and He did it once and for all for us. So we do not do those blood sacrifices and statues. The Old Testament was a shadow of those yet to come. And Christ came and died once and for all for us so He removed certain portions of the Old Testament that we no longer practice.

*How does the OT address salvation today?*

If you look at it from the garden where God was angry and he pronounced a curse on the devil, man and Eve, He made a promise that the seed of the woman shall come to crush the head of the serpent. That was a promise of salvation that one day the seed of a woman shall rise up and save humanity from satanic oppression. Salvation was a promise. Even in Christ was a promise. Many times you find Isaiah talking about it - a son shall be given. There will be a virgin birth. Moses spoke about another prophet coming like him that we should obey him. The Old Testament has a word for salvation. The Old Testament salvation is not really the salvation of the soul as in the New Testament. It is the word that encapsulates all the redemptive works of God. For instance, when David said I will see the salvation of the Lord, he was talking about seeing the deliverance, protection of the LORD, I will see the vengeance of the LORD upon my enemies, I will see the supplies of God as Moses said, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord and God will save you from your enemies. The Old Testament word for salvation, that Hebrew word is a little different from the New Testament word for salvation.

*Is the salvation in the OT related to Abraham in any way?*

Yes it relates to Abraham because God promised Abraham that He will bless him and in his seed shall all the families on earth be blessed. God was saying, I will bring a seed through your generation and He will save all the earth and all the families of the earth shall be saved. So salvation was promised through the seed of Abraham.

*What do you understand by salvation?*

In general terms, there are two words that define salvation. The New Testament word for salvation is *soteria*. Soteria is not just salvation as per being delivered from the kingdom of the devil and translated into the kingdom of His dear son or having a right to heaven and escaping hell, saved from the wrath of God, or having eternal life or being saved from eternal damnation. But then it also embodies, encapsulates all the redemptive works of God. In Romans 1:6, Paul said, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God into salvation to everyone that believes, first to the Hebrews and second, to the Greeks. Everybody can be saved but it goes further than that because in some cases you will find the same root word used for salvation, for healing. For instance, in a sentence like: he was saved and he was saved from his sicknesses, it is the same word for salvation which is used to refer to the salvation of souls, or accepting Christ, and then becoming citizens of the kingdom of God.

*What do you think of salvation and our life today and our life to come?*

Salvation is very important. When man was cursed, God told Adam that the day he will eat the fruit he will die and then death on Adam will rule to all his generations. The bible also tells us we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We need to be saved because no amount of good works can save a man from his sins. It is through salvation that our sins are forgiven, wiped and blotted out. It is through salvation that God's wrath is removed. It is through salvation that the original curse on man is removed. So there is no escape from hell when there is no salvation. When a man is not saved, he still has his sins and any man that has his sins goes to hell when he dies. It is only through salvation that we can become sons of God. It is only through salvation that we can become citizens of the kingdom of God. It is only after salvation that we can receive the Holy Ghost. Revelations 12:9, the angel said now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of God and the power of His Christ. Salvation is what reunite or reconcile us to God. Paul said I've received the ministry of reconciliation so also have you received that God through Christ was reconciling the world to Himself. So salvation is very important. Paul said how can we escape if we neglect something as great as salvation. We cannot escape. So salvation is that which grants us escape from hell; escape from the wrath of God and satanic domination. So salvation is so crucial. Without salvation, no man can enter into the kingdom of God. You must be born again, Jesus said. Your soul must be saved. Except you are born again, you will not enter and you will not receive the things that accompanies salvation. It is the ushering in or the initiation into the kingdom. We do not join the kingdom. We are born again into the kingdom. So unless you are born again, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Let me add this one: How can a man be saved? The works of a man cannot save him. The bible says by grace are we saved through faith. We are saved in this era by grace through faith; the mercy of God through faith. Faith in what? Faith in the finished work of Christ, faith in the fact that it is only through Jesus that a man ought to be saved. Faith in the fact that Jesus died in our place and that when we believe in Him, what He did for us becomes our own. So we need to believe in Him. The bible says in Romans 9 and 10 that if you believe in your heart, you will be saved. The bible says you must confess him as your Lord and savior for with the heart a man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Until that act of faith - believe in Christ, and the confession of him as Lord, a person will not be saved. Let me give you an example. You live in Germany now, if you are never arrested, does it make you a German citizen automatically? No. you apply for citizenship. You even swear an oath. In the same way, the good works of a man cannot save him. Or the good works of man cannot take away his sins. Nobody can do any good work in the arm of



the flesh. You must be empowered by the Holy Ghost. That is why we need the help of God. That is why the Old Testament did not profit them, because they could not fulfill the terms of the Old Testament. They were not empowered by the Holy Ghost to fulfill them. So salvation is crucial.

*What about salvation for our life right now?*

If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and confess Him as your Lord and savior, you are saved. The bible also says that we have been bought with a price, but Christ will come for us when He appears on the last day. It means that once saved is not forever saved. One needs to endure. There is the need to endure to the end so that you will be saved. He that endures to the end shall be saved. It means that after being saved, you need to endure. You need to live by the standard of the kingdom. You need to do what God expects of you so that when Christ comes we will not be ashamed of Him but we will be caught up with Him and be raptured. A man can now receive Christ and then be called to glory even before Christ come. So once saved is not forever saved. That is the deception in the body of Christ. They think once saved is forever saved. No, you can be saved and be in the kingdom but the code of conduct of the kingdom is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. If a man ceases to walk by the code of conduct, he can lose his right to the kingdom.

*What are the signs of a saved person?*

When a man gets saved, the bible says when someone is in Christ, he is a new creature. All things have passed away. All things have become new. What really becomes new is the spirit man that is born again. The bible says there is a recreation. Not like the original man before he was born again. But then, there is the need for a renewal of the mind. The mind must also be saved. The spirit has been saved and so does the mind needs to be saved which is a process and the body will also be totally saved when Christ appears.

Jesus said one time that if you call Abraham your father, you should bear the fruit of your father. So there is the need for the fruit of Christ who has come to live in us. Now we become sons of God when we receive Him. In John 1:12, it says as many as received Him, He gave them power to become sons of God, even to them that believed in His name. So we must portray Christ-like virtues. The fruit of the spirit must manifest in our lives - Love, joy, peace, etc and all those fruits must manifest in our lives so that people will see those fruit in us and say that we are indeed born again. But you will see Christians who get born again and do not take time to cultivate and develop these fruits. So sometimes it is very difficult to tell a Christian from the non Christian because they do not stick to the code of conduct of the kingdom, righteousness, obedience of God's word, obedience of walking by the standards of the kingdom. So when a man gets born again, he must know that although he is in the world, he is not of this world. He now belongs to a new kingdom. His lord has changed and he must obey Him. Jesus said, if you call me Lord, and then do what I tell you. We must do what the Lord tells us, and then will the world see. One striking virtue that Jesus said distinguish us is the virtue of love. He said if you love one another then will it be known that you belong to me. A Christian must walk in love. Love is the totality of the law. Love is the summary of the law. One man asked Jesus what the greatest commandment is. Jesus said he should love the Father. The second is to love man. So when you walk in love, you will obey the ones in line with God and the ones in line with men. So love should be the overriding character that should be seen in a believer's life.

*How does salvation affects a person's spiritual and physical life?*

It is very deep. Traditionally, we did not know that. We thought you just get saved. Maybe you do not have any earthly relevance. You just wait for Jesus to come. But church history tells us Jesus was not coming. So people now begun to search, 'is that all to it? No there is more to it. If you look at 3<sup>rd</sup> John: 2, it says I wish above all things that thou may prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospers. So after being saved, God wants your soul to prosper. God wants you to prosper financially until He comes for you. Spiritually, salvation repositions you. You are no longer under the kingdom of the devil. Colossians 1:13, it says, spiritually, He has delivered us from the power or darkness. So spiritually, you are delivered from the power of darkness. Let me just go to the basics. When you are born again, you are born of the Spirit of God. Now your spirit - man comes alive. The spirit man that died in Adam now comes alive and has Jesus on the inside of the spirit man. So you become alive to the things of God. It makes you a supernatural being. According to John 3, what is born of the spirit is spirit and what is born of the flesh is flesh. You become a supernatural being when you are born again. Then the things that accompany salvation can now be your portion. For instance, then can a person receive the Holy Ghost. Jesus said in John 7:37-39 that this spoke ye of the Holy Ghost, which they that believe on him should receive. So then it takes you to another level of empowerment by the spirit of God. You can now receive the Holy Ghost and be empowered. Having God Himself live inside of you, it changes you spiritually. Then also, in Ephesians 1: 20, 17-22 and then 2: 6, it tells us that we a seated together with Him in the heavenly places. After quickening .us in new birth, He now changes our position. We now sit together with Christ in the heavenly places far above principalities and powers and the rulers of darkness. So it means that positionally, authority wise, we are higher than the devil. When you are saved, you are repositioned and you are empowered to rule. The bible tells us that greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world, 1 John 4:4. So salvation empowers you to live an absolute with of dominion in Christ. That is why I said in Revelations ... now is come power for the kingdom of our Lord Jesus is now with men. So salvation is a union with God. Salvation brings you to union with God. The virtues of God begin to manifest in your life because you become a child of God. And you are expected to live like a child of God. Salvation will only affect your material life will only affect your material life by knowledge and understanding. Psalm 82:5 says they walked on in darkness because they know not, neither do they understand. So lack of knowledge of many Christians is the reason why they still live as if nothing has happened inside of them. Jesus said I give onto you the keys of the kingdom. There are keys to everything we need on earth. There are keys to financial prosperity and divine health. There is a provision to everything on earth for a believer. So we need to discover these things that God has put in the bible. That is why they are called covenant. They are inheritances, God' will for us, and then find out what to do to enjoy those things. So we need knowledge, insight we need to know what to do to enjoy everything God has promise for us. So even you can see Christians who are poor because they do not know the covenant of financial prosperity. You can see Christians who are sick because they do not know God's plan for divine health and many other areas. You can see Christians who are still oppressed of the devil. You see Christians who die early and go to heaven because of the lack of knowledge. So the bible says for lack of knowledge my people perish. You know what the bible says in Hosea. So we need an in-depth knowledge of the word of God.

*What is the relationship between salvation and fullness of life?*

Salvation is the gate way. It is the door way. It is the foundation. If a man is not saved, he cannot have the abundant life. Jesus said I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly. So we need Christ in our lives through salvation to enjoy the abundant life. To enjoy eternal life. Eternal life manifest whiles on earth by abundant life and then after here it continues with eternal life. So we must have abundant life here on earth to the fullest. Living life to the fullest. As I said, the basics is the knowledge of the provision of the things God has made for us, of the inheritance in the Old Testament which is the “will” of God to us. We need an understanding on how to access them. Other than that, all though it is God’s will, we do not step into them.

*How do you explain abundant life? Who will you say has an abundant life?*

The basics of a person who has an abundant life is that he has received eternal life. But it must show in all areas of human endeavor. Paul said to Timothy, I know, from your childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, it is able to make you wise unto salvation. So not just salvation as to being saved in all areas of our lives. So the word of God makes us wise. We need the word of God. Know the truth and the truth will make you free. Free from poverty. Free from sickness. Free from satanic oppression. So basically we access faith through the Word, and then through faith we access our inheritances from God. So we need the word of God to access faith to our faith and then to receive the word of God. Without faith we cannot please God and receive from Him. So the bases of faith and abundance of life is the word of God and faith. It is to everyone according to his faith. Remember also, faith without works is dead. So what you do with the word of God is also crucial in enjoying the fullness of what we have in Christ Jesus.

*Does the fullness of life shows in physical way also?*

It must show because if your soul is saved and you appropriate God’s word, it must show in your health, outlook and character. The fruit of the spirit must show. It must show in wealth and in abundance. All the Old Testament saints who walked with God were blessed. So it must show in the blessings. Jesus said if you do these things, you will be blessed. Deuteronomy 28, all these blessings shall follow you. So it must show that you are really connected with heaven, God is with you and you have a relationship with the father, and you are doing what God expect from you and the blessings will follow. It must show.

*What hinders the realization of abundant life?*

One is a lack of knowledge that is available. That is God’s will for us. For instance, if you do not know that He Himself took our infirmities, you will think you have the right to sickness. Why? Doctors have studied traditional human beings and the come up with their verdict but when you become born again, you are no longer traditional you are supernatural. So there is what doctors will tell you. So we must know our rights. The new creation relative rights for every child of God. If you do not know them and do not know how to access them, you will still live like a natural man and still suffer the consequences of a natural man. And salvation will not even reflect in your life. Number two is sin. Sin demotes a man to the plain of an unsafe person. That is what sin does. So lack of knowledge, sin and ignorance are the basic things.

*How do you overcome them?*

There is no amount of fasting that can overcome ignorance. We must acquire the knowledge of the word of God to know. God has made provision for us to live in

holiness. And He helps us. No one can be holy in the arm of the flesh. You need the word of God. David said thy word have I hidden in my heart that I may not sin against you. The word of God immunizes a man to sin. John Bunyan made a statement that, this book, the bible, will keep you away from sin. That sin will also keep you away from the bible. So the word of God washes us according to Ephesians 5:26. It washes you. It cleanses you and it removes the propensity for sin from you. It empowers you to live above sin. So you need a daily intake and a daily bath of God's word to stay away from sin. It sanctifies you. And the Holy Ghost also empowers you to obey the commandment. Somewhere in Ezekiel 36, I think God said, I will put my spirit in you, I will give you a new heart so that you will be able to follow and do my statutes. So the Holy Ghost is the spirit of holiness that helps us to live a holy life to please the Lord. That is very important. And fellowship with other believers is also important. Prayer is also important. We are empowered on the prayer altar. If you check through history, the holy men of God have been men of prayer - always coming boldly before the throne of grace to obtain mercy and to find grace to help in time of need. Through prayer, the study of the word, fellowship, sharing of the word and doing what God has asked us to do. We are enabled to stay from sin. We must study. Paul told Timothy, study to show yourself approved unto God, a work man who needs not to be ashamed. We must read Christian literature. We must study our bible - our basic text. So we must read. We must study. Thank God there is abundance of knowledge. You put on your satellite TV, there are programs going on everywhere. On the internet, ipad, etc. Technology has helped us to bring God's word to our homes. So no Christian has any excuse in these last days. And then sitting under the five-fold ministry in church is also vital. There is no one who can be a strong Christian without church. Church is crucial. I think you will never discover yourself until you come to church. Church is crucial to lead a healthy Christian life.

*What is your understanding of deliverance?*

Jesus said the prince of the world is coming, and he has nothing in me. Deliverance as in the context of satanic oppression is being freed from satanic oppression. Deliverance takes place when you are born again or your right to total deliverance. You access it when you are born again (Colossians 1:13). He delivers you from satanic oppression and harassment when you are born again so that you are no longer in Satan's kingdom. He cannot afflict you. Satan has a mandate to steal, kill and destroy. So when you are born again, you are separated, relocated, and deployed from his kingdom into the kingdom of God, so he has no right to touch you. But as John said, if you keep yourself, the enemy will not touch you. Jesus also said he had been sent and one of his mandates is to preach deliverance to the captives - those who are bound, captured, harassed and oppressed by the devil - preach deliverance to them. Therefore, deliverance is basically preached. A man has to know his right to liberty in Christ before it can really take place. Jesus was casting out devils. One of the things He told His disciples to cast out devils. He gave them power to cast out devils. Luke 10:19, says I give you power to trample over scorpions ... and so casting out devils is one of the assignments of the believer. These signs shall follow them that believe (Mark 16:18-20), in my name they shall cast out devils and heal the sick. So casting out devils is one of the mandates of a Christian. Every Christian has the power to cast out devils. Somebody may ask, can Christians be demonized? Yes it is possible. A Christian can have a demon. A Christian can be oppressed. But a Christian cannot be possessed. Possess means total takeover of a Christian's spirit, soul and body. So a Christian can be oppressed, harassed, and can have a demon.

*Is there any relationship between salvation and deliverance?*

Yes. Salvation is deliverance from the kingdom of the devil, from the powers of the devil and from their hold and dominion. Their right to dominate you is broken when you are saved. Adam sinned and from the curse, Satan took advantage to molest humanity. So from the time of Adam until Christ, man was under the crunch of the enemy. Salvation delivers man from satanic domination; from the power of the devil into the power of the kingdom of His dear son. So salvation is an escape from satanic domination. It is very important.

*So how does it relate to deliverance?*

Salvation qualifies you for deliverance. Salvation breaks the hold of the enemy over your life. You are delivered by Jesus when you are born again. You become His own when you are born again and Satan has no right to molest, afflict or oppress you again. You are delivered from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, His marvelous light when you are born again. So it takes place spiritually and it is effected by the power of God. We are redeemed, bought again and bought back to by the blood of His redemption when we are saved. Anyone who is saved has a right to total liberty in Christ. Because then are you no longer in Satan's possession but the possession of the Lord. You belong to God.

*Does deliverance help people to experience abundant life especially in the physical?*

It is very important because when the enemy has a hold in a believer's life, it tends to rob him of the true liberty he must have. And Satan's works must be destroyed for the person to be truly free. So when the enemy is present in a man's life, he oppresses and an oppressed man cannot enjoy abundant life. Remember Jesus met this woman who was bound for 18 years and Jesus said ought not this daughter of Abraham who Satan has bound all these 18 years be loosed from her infirmities? The bible says Jesus came to heal all that were oppressed of the devil. Without health a person cannot enjoy abundant life. Can you imagine someone who is bed-ridden enjoying abundant life? So in satanic oppression, deliverance is a must if a man must enjoy abundant life.

The preaching of the word of God also ensures deliverance. The word of God carries the power of God and the light of God. The word is the sword of God. Jesus cast out devils by His words. So the preaching of the word of God also ensures deliverance.

*What is destiny? Do you believe in destiny?*

Yes I believe in destiny. Destiny is the pre-ordained plan of God for man. A pre-ordained destination of God for a man even before he is born. What I mean is God has a destiny for every for every child of God. And that destiny is even determined before a person a born. Destiny is decided before creation. God told Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1:5, says, before I formed you in your mother's womb, I knew you... So before you were conceived I knew you. I sent you here. You were born for a reason. So every child of God is born for a reason. God has a purpose for every child of God. God is a God of purpose. So our destinations in Christ are determined before we are born. Our responsibility is to discover that destiny and walk in it.

*What determines the kind of destiny a person has?*

Destiny is determined by God. We all have glorious destinies in Christ. If you look at Romans 8:28-29, it says that everyone's destiny is glorious. There is no cheap destiny. Everyone's calling is a high calling. So what determines the extent of the

manifestation of destiny is a man's knowledge of the destiny. A man's knowledge on of the vision God has for him, application of himself to that vision and to see its fulfillment. So you can know your destiny and still fulfill just about 5%, 2% or 3% based on how you give yourself to the ambition or destiny for your life.

*So does it mean that there is nothing like this person has a good destiny or a bad destiny?*

You think all destinies are good. Yes, all destinies are good in Christ. The bible says all things work together for good for them that love God.

*Do you see the Exodus to be talking about salvation?*

Exodus is a type of salvation in Christ in the Old Testament. It is a type that God's people are saved and they make a match to the Promised Land. So they were delivered from Egypt but they had to find their way to the Promised Land. So exodus is really a picture of salvation in Christ. They were saved, delivered from Egypt with salvation. But the ultimate salvation was getting to the Promised Land, which can be a type of heaven.

*In which aspects of the exodus do you consider very applicable?*

Every aspect of it. I see the need for their obedience after being saved to inherit the Promised Land. I see the manifestation of the power of God in saving them from Egypt. I see how each time they disobeyed God they allowed the enemy to come in, so we need to look at the Exodus and pick the lessons from there. They are very relevant to us.

*Do you see any parallels between the exodus and deliverance?*

Yes. There are many parallels. Every truth has a parallel. Spiritual truth has natural parallels. Natural truth has spiritual parallels. For instance, their deliverance from Egypt, all they had to do was to believe the word of God the prophet brought to them and they also had to do something. There was something they had to do in their final night. They partook of the Passover lamb and then the declaration by sprinkling the blood. Salvation is by faith in Christ and by confessing Him and they were delivered. The Lord did the rest. Now, bringing them out, there were few challenges it does not mean. It does not mean there were no tribulations. Jesus said in this world there are tribulations but being of good cheer, for I have overcome them. So if I am with you, I have overcome them. So we need knowledge of the word of God and what He expects of us. You could see God keeps on giving us instructions. Christianity is a life of obeying instructions - obedience to the word of God. Each time they sinned, each time they turned away from God, they were sold into captivity again. Many Christians find themselves in captivity because they disobey God blatantly. God always sent somebody to deliver them. You see prophets in this our time, we have the five-fold ministry, they had the tabernacle in the Old Testament which represents the presence of God. And thank God we are not the temple of Christ but the temples of the Holy Ghost. He lives inside of us. So there are many parallels.

I want to narrow it down to some examples. For instance Egypt. Egypt is a type of the world we have now. So the believer is in the world, is worldly, he is carnal. When he gets born again, he becomes spiritual.

*What about pharaoh?*

Pharaoh is a type of the devil. He kept God's people in oppression, keeping them in the kingdom of darkness.

*Gods command to Pharaoh to "let my people go"?*

The price of the believer has been paid and Satan has no right but to let the person go. But there are many people that are saved but still suffer some form of oppression but the devil has no right to oppress them. They were covenant children. They were not slaves. Satan enslaved them.

*And the plaques?*

The troubles that God sent were vengeance upon the people of Egypt so that they will let the Israelites go. Power is the only language the devil understands. Until power is displayed, until pain is inflicted, judgment is inflicted, the devil will not let go. That is why Jesus cast out demons by the power of the Holy Ghost. So there was a manifestation of the power of God. So judgment or pain was inflicted and the devil let them go.

*Jesus did not inflict them of any pain or?*

When Jesus came, do you remember one demon possessed person said have you come to destroy us before time? The power of God is destructive with the devil. They could not stand Him. And He cast them out by the Holy Ghost by the finger of God.

*And the Passover?*

The passover is Christ. The bible says even Christ our pass over is sacrifice for us. So we enjoy the pass over to be free. So from now on, every evil passes. From now on we have escaped satanic domination. So the pass over is a type of Christ. Even the lamb had specifications. It was not any kind of lamb. It was a pointer to Christ without blemish.

*Crossing the red sea and the Jordan River?*

Crossing the red sea is leaving a transition. Being delivered from the kingdom of darkness and then translated into the kingdom of his dear son. Jordan could be said to be place of baptism of power. Jesus was baptized in Jordan so there is the need for everyone to have the Jordan experience, to be baptized in the Holy Ghost.

*What about the nations which fought the Israelites on the way?*

All the nations that fought the Israelites on the way can be seen as vices that Christians must fight. The Canaanites, the Perizites, the Hivites, were all worshipers of certain kinds of gods and therefore were manifesting certain attributes which were vices contrary to God's standards. That is why God destroyed them. Every Christian will have to fight those vices to be able to walk onto God's will. For instance, lies, fornication, idolatry. These are the things that will tend to fight every Christian who wants to stand for God. And there is the need to fight them and overcome them. It is a fight. We have to be condemned for our salvation. So these things stand for the kinds of challenges or vices we will have to fight if we will truly fulfill our destiny with God.

*What weapons did Israelites used in fighting the enemies on the way?*

The weapons were many. One of the weapons was praise in Jericho. Jericho was totally brought down by praise. It was an impossible case for them. But when they praised God, God came down and fought for them. There were times they had to really fight with weapons like arrows and swords. But there were times they had to

depend on divine direction. Many times you see God come through. There was intercession at the background. Moses lifted up his hands. Aaron and Joshua held the hands of Moses. Prayer was one of the weapons at the background. They prayed for divine intervention and there were military men on the ground who also fought physical battle as well. But basically the New Testament Christian fights spiritual warfare. We do not war against the flesh again. We fight forces of darkness, spiritual weakness in heavenly places. Our warfare is now against spirits. The weapons of our warfare are no longer physical or carnal, but they are mighty through God.

*How is Christianity today related to the exodus of the Israelites?*

Christianity is related in the sense that, one is delivered, one is saved but the ultimate redemption of our bodies takes place when Christ comes. And then we are saved, we have been prepared on our way to heaven, to our promised land.

*That is my next question. We have a promise land?*

Yes. And it is in heaven. It is in heaven.

*Is that all that we have?*

No, that is not all we have. There is a promise of life on earth also, an abundant life on earth and a promised land in heaven. After heaven, we will be on earth again. So that is not all we have. God wants us to enjoy life now. If you look at God, He is a God of pleasure. He wants man to have pleasure that is why He gave him Eden. So when you are saved God wants you to have pleasure on earth. Enjoy earth before you go to heaven.

*When can a Christian be said he has reached his or her promise land?*

It is how you see it. I believe for instance when our destinies are fulfilled; we have, in a way, gotten to our promised land. Your destiny is a promise destination. When you are saved, it is an initiation to that Promised Land. And then also, when you pass on before Christ comes, to be absent of the body is to be with Christ you then get into the Promised Land. Or else for those who are still alive when Christ appears will be caught up and will be found in our promised land. So fulfillment of God's ordained dreams for a person can be said to be entrance to the Promised Land. So when the Israelites were trying to get to the promise land, they encountered enemies.

*Do Christians also encounter enemies?*

The enemy is here. The devil is here. His agents are here. Demons are here. When the Israelites were on their way to the Promised Land, they had to overthrow giants. There were giants on the way. In the same way, there are obstacles. Satanic hindrances. Paul mentioned some, to our promise land. There is the need to war. There is the need to fight. So a Christian is born into warfare the moment he is saved - Spiritual warfare, not physical warfare and there are weapons available. God has full garment, regalia for us. Total sort of helmet of salvation breastplate of righteousness, etc. (Ephesians 6). Everything available for us to win the battle, we just need the word of God, it's there, we just need to know how to fight, victory is guaranteed (2 Cor.2:14). Thanks be to God who causes us to triumph, to have victory. We have the partnership with God, whatever we bind on earth is bound in heaven, whatever you bind on earth, heaven will back you. The weapons are mighty through God, we have God's partnership in the battle, we are not alone in the battle.



*Is there anything you want to say?*

What makes the total of a Christian life worth living are basically a walk with God. And you cannot walk with God well until you agree with Him and knowledge of the word of God and then a fellowship with the Holy Ghost. Foundationally, to make meaning on earth one needs to know God's vision for his life; one needs to know God's purpose for his life. There is a missing link in many Christians lives, so they struggle to find meaning to life. Discovery of God's purpose for your life gives you a meaning to live. It gives life meaning. As a matter of fact, purpose is the reason for time. Then you live in eternity, God says I have a purpose for you. He sends you down and gives you time to come and fulfill the purpose. So purpose is a reason for time or else we will live in eternity. So without the discovery of purpose, life becomes like a burden. It becomes boring.

2.12 Bishop Joseph Nyarko Antwi<sup>422</sup>

*What do you think about the OT – is it relevant for Christianity today?*

All scripture is God breathed so the OT being part of scripture remains relevant for our use today.

*Do you think that the OT talks about salvation?*

The OT does not directly talk about salvation but it points to Jesus Christ who is the savior. In the OT people believed and also feared God (cf. 1 Cor. 10:1-3). We can see that they did not see Christ but they knew God and God was in Christ reconciling the whole world to himself.

*Is salvation related to Abraham in any way?*

Salvation is not about Abraham. Jesus is the savior.

*Does salvation have both spiritual and physical benefits?*

Yes it has. This is because we are saved from something into something. We are saved from our family ties which are not in line with the word of God. This is because every family has what they believe in. If we consider the call of Abraham for instance, God told him to come out of his country and his kindred. Spiritually is what Jesus told Nicodemus that unless he is born again he cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. In being born again, the person becomes new in Christ.

*What are some of the new things that happens to a person when he becomes a Christian?*

The perspective of the person changes. He begins to understand life differently from as he did before. He also behaves differently from before.

*What is your understanding of deliverance?*

Everybody born into this life has one issue or the other that borders on ancestral, generational or familiar. Some have some behavior or character which does not match with the word of God. So when a person is converted, there is the need to go through deliverance to get rid of all these attitude and characters which has become

---

<sup>422</sup> Bishop Joseph Nyarko Antwi is the director of International Prayer. The interview was conducted on June 4, 2012.

a kind of habit and then we keep our faith in Christ and we grow and we develop and we become like him. So deliverance is very necessary, even for the Christian. This is because of the background of the person. Perhaps he was an idol worshipper or he might have been involved in other things which call for cleansing. Practically, we see born again Christians who even speak in tongues and yet when we pray with them evil spirits manifest in them. This is because there may be some things that need to be taken out of the person through the teaching of the word, through prayer of faith and their lives are transformed into the image of Christ.

*How does deliverance facilitate the realization of abundant life?*

Deliverance helps because sometimes, many people don't know why they behave in a certain way. They don't know how they easily get angry and do all kinds of things. When they come to that realization, deliverance helps them to control themselves so that they do not continue to involve themselves in those acts anymore and so they overcome it.

*Do you believe in destiny?*

I believe in destiny, but we know that our destiny is in Christ. God has called us to conform to the image of Christ so our destiny is in Christ. When he appears we shall be like him.

*Does the Exodus relate to salvation and abundant life in any way? If yes, how?*

Everything God did in the past is a shadow of what he is doing now. The Exodus is like deliverance from bondage into liberty. The Israelites were in bondage in Egypt as slaves and God brought them into the Promised Land. In the same way the Christian is delivered from some things into liberty in Christ. So the Exodus is a "type" or a shadow of what God is doing today - deliverance from the past, deliverance from ancestral, generational, familiar curses into Christ.

*How can we relate salvation and abundant life to the events, persons and nations associated with the Exodus?*

Egypt: Egypt is like a type of the world or bondage from which we must be delivered. God does not intend for us to remain in bondage. He wants us to be delivered from every bondage and take us to our promised land.

Pharaoh: Pharaoh is a type of the devil, a very wicked master. As a matter of fact, in those days, Egypt was an empire and Pharaoh was like a god and the children of Israel had to be delivered out of his hands.

The plagues: The elements God used to bring plagues on the Egyptians were somehow connected to their idols, which were also connected to their first born god. That is why God finally had to kill the firstborns.

The Passover: It is also a type of Christ Passover. Just as blood was used as a mark to prevent the angel of death from killing the Israelites, so has Christ become our Passover so that those who believe in him will not die the second death. That is why Christians only die physical death and not second death.

*Do Christians also have a promised land?*

Yes we have a promised land here, and also in heaven. We saved from sin, sicknesses, infirmities, diseases, curses, poverty, death, etc. Everything Christ became, we become. Adam put us into bondage so we accept Christ, then we identify with Christ. In 2 Cor. 5:21, Paul said he who knew no sin became sin that we might become righteousness in Christ. So in the here and now, our promised land

can be seen in deliverance from sin, sickness, curse, poverty, death, etc. In other words, we live a victorious life here and then we will also live eternally with God in heaven.

*Are there enemies along the way?*

Yes we also have enemies. These include the sicknesses, sin, curses, poverty, death, etc. Apart from that we also have physical enemies. These are people who not Christians. So when they persecute Christians in the office, at home, etc. There are enemies even in the church sometimes. They say bad things about Christians, etc. But the joy is that we the Holy Spirit who comforts the Christian so that in the midst of all that the Christian prevails and excel. Sometimes such people get converted and change from the bad treatment they give to Christians but some also do not change.

*What weapons can we use to fight our enemies?*

At that time their warfare was physical and so they applied physical weapons. But as a Christian, Paul said the weapons of our warfare are not carnal... So that is the way we fight. We fight all arguments, deceptions, lies, etc. So we also fight but now the difference is that our fight is more spiritual than physical. For instance there are stories of people who experience different forms of attacks even in their dreams. To fight in the spirit, one has to gain knowledge and also rely on the Holy Spirit. So by the word of God, prayer of faith the Christian can fight and free himself.

1.13 Rev. Michael Ankomah<sup>423</sup>

*What do you think about the relevance of the OT for today's Christianity?*

I think the OT is very relevant because every doctrine we teach in church finds its roots in the OT.

*Are there passages in the OT which you consider to be more applicable to Christianity of our time?*

Apart from the aspects of the OT dealing with ceremonial laws, I think that everything in the OT is relevant to Christianity today. Even if these laws, the principles behind them still applies. For example the principle behind the Sabbath is still applicable - once a week rest and serve the LORD. It's still applicable.

*How does the OT address salvation?*

At least Isaiah 53 talks about salvation. Although Isaiah might not have been conscious of what he was talking about, he was talking about Jesus dying for our sins. Salvation is also preached in the OT, except that it was a shadow in the sense that the people even did not know what they were talking about.

Apart from the prophecies about Jesus Christ in the OT, we can also make reference to the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt as a shadow of salvation from the perspective of the OT. Here we can make a particular reference to the Passover - the killing of the lamb, smearing the blood of the lamb on the lintels to prevent being smitten by the angel of death, etc. is "a type". This is because that blood was a type of Jesus' blood and even today when talk about applying the blood we still refer to that because God told the Israelites that when I see the blood, I will pass over you.

---

<sup>423</sup> Rev. Michael Ankomah is associate pastor of the Word Miracle Church International Headquarters. The interview was conducted on June 5, 2012.

Today, even in this NT time people can plead the blood upon their lives, houses, cars, etc. and the effect is still the same - the enemy cannot touch them. We can therefore say that the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt as a whole is a "type" of salvation, and also the Passover itself taken as an event is also a type. We can therefore look at it (salvation) from the perspective of the Passover; we can also look at it from the perspective of the Exodus in its totality as a type of salvation.

*Do you think salvation is related in any way to Abraham?*

One of the things God told Abraham in the Abrahamic covenant was that all the nations on the earth would be blessed in Him, and we can say that Jesus was a seed of Abraham. SO when God told Abraham that all the nations of the world would be blessed through Abraham, he was actually talking about when Jesus Christ would come and save the world, both Jews and gentiles alike. I can therefore say that salvation is the total fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. In today's parlance we'll say salvation is coming to know Jesus Christ as LORD and personal savior.

*What are the implications of salvation for our life today and life after death?*

When God created humanity, we had fellowship with him but when Adam sinned, the fellowship was broken. That is why Jesus had to die because being a righteous God, he had to punish our sins and Jesus paid for our punishment for us. So when we believe in Jesus, we become born again because our spirit that was dead because of sins becomes alive again. This eventually affects the life of the person. It affects our behavior, etc. I mean it must be evident in people's life. People who hitherto were involved in all kinds of evil deeds live a transformed life. For example, armed robbers, prostitutes, etc. get their lives transformed and sometimes if they don't tell you, it's difficult to know the kind of behavior they were in. Conversion leads to peace, ability to overcome sin, etc. When we talk about the implications of salvation for life after death, we can say that it gives the believer the assurance of going to heaven when he dies. In simple terms, we can say that when you give your life to Christ, your eternal destiny changes from going to hell to going to heaven.

*How does salvation affects a person's life spiritually, physically/materially?*

When a person gives his life to Christ, his spirit-man which was dead and could not contact God; which was involved in sin, comes to realize that what he has been doing is not right. The conscience of the person is awakened to evil behavior so spiritually the relationship with God is restored. He gains spiritual insight into the Bible. The Bible ceases to be an ordinary book. The physical effect of salvation on a person depends on how the person applies the results of salvation. For example as a person reads the bible, his whole worldview changes and that affects him physically too. Financially, depending on how one looks at it, if the person believes in the principle of sowing and reaping and applies it, his finances also improve.

*What is the relationship between salvation and the realization of fullness of life/abundant life?*

The abundant life Jesus talks about here is salvation in its fullness. In other words, salvation is a total package. When the package is intact, then we can say that we have abundant life. That is life in its totality – socially, spiritually, economically, etc. Being born again marks the beginning of abundant life. The abundant life is realized when the Christian applies the principles of salvation to his life. This expresses itself in good marriage, obedient children, peace at home, good ministry for pastors, good

business for business people, etc. Salvation is a total package: it is not just accepting Christ as LORD and personal savior.

*What can hinder the realization of abundant life?*

Hosea says that people perish for lack of knowledge. After being born again, there is the need to delve deeper into the things of God by studying the word, praying, and fellowshiping with other Christians, etc. If one refuses to do these things, he stands the risk of losing a lot of things on this earth even though he may inherit heaven after death. Therefore lack of knowledge will be a hindrance to having life in fullness. In the light of this your church can be a hindrance because what you hear determines who you become. Lack of commitment can also be a hindrance; even the group of people you move along with can also be a hindrance since bad company corrupt good morals. Denominational barriers also hinder people a lot. There are a lot of people who could have been very great but they were hindered by traditions of their church. Not all of us can belong to the same church tradition but we can benefit from the insights that have come from the other side.

*How do we overcome those hindrances?*

It is a personal choice. Christianity is made up of choices. For instance, you can make a decision that I don't want to be poor again because God, my father, is a rich God so you study the word of God on prosperity and apply the principles of God to your life and you will be rich. You can be sick and declare that your sickness is for the glory of God and die for the glory of God. Another person can also be sick and say that by the stripes of Jesus he is healed and so the sickness will not kill him and believe God and be healed. Both of them will go to heaven but their choices on earth affected their life experiences here on earth.

*What is your understanding of deliverance?*

Deliverance is in various forms. Basically deliverance is even part of salvation, because the Bible says you have been delivered from darkness into the kingdom of God (Col.1:3). So that is deliverance. But nowadays we also use deliverance to refer to being set free from anything that used to bind a person when he was not a Christian.

*Does a Christian need deliverance?*

Yes and no. No because, for example, Kenneth Coppeland is one of the faith preachers. His father was a Christian, his daughter is also in the ministry, and his grand children are also in ministry. If there was something wrong in the family line, it might have been broken by the fore fathers already so if any member of the family became a Christian later there will be no need for deliverance. On the other hand, if a person comes from a background with covenants with idols and he gets born again, such a person definitely needs to be delivered. The experiences such persons go through are enough pointers to them that they need to go through deliverance for their total freedom in Christ. There are even Pastors who continue to struggle in certain areas of their life, and so need deliverance. This does not mean that they don't pray or they don't have faith but it is the result of the background from which they are coming. Another instance is the lifestyle of the person before he became a Christian can also serve as a platform for demonic attacks on the person. There are instances where people are totally liberated when they are born again. But there are

also instances which call for the assistance of an expert on deliverance. I believe that as an African Christian, it is necessary to be delivered because the background from which we come.

*Is there any relationship between salvation and deliverance?*

Deliverance begins with salvation. There are people who use to worship idols before they got born again. They actually got involved with demons, went under the sea, etc. When they got born again nobody invited them for any deliverance but in the night they would dream and some things would be leaving them and that's how they got delivered. They realized that all the demons they contacted started to leave them. That was God's sovereign way of delivering them. But I am a witness that for some of them, they get themselves into one trouble or another in their career. There are even Pastors who get themselves involved in certain behaviors and one wonders why they got themselves into such things. One can also mention some of the divorces of Pastors. I know of a popular Pastor who spoke about the blood line and he was saying that his in his family, every marriage begun to face challenges when the couple grow after fifty years. As soon as he got to fifty years, he also started having challenges in his marriage and God told him to break that curse in the family, otherwise his marriage was not going to survive. They prayed and prayed but finally the marriage broke. So deliverance begins with salvation and then depending on the background of the person and the grace of God, the church the person attends, etc. come into play to determine a person's understanding of deliverance and whether he will avail himself for it or not.

*Does deliverance facilitate the realization of abundant life?*

Certainly yes. Obadiah 17 says on Mt Zion there shall be deliverance and holiness.... and the sons of Jacob shall possess their possession. Certain things become bondage unless you get delivered from them. There are ladies who are born again but because of their background, they know that fornication is sinful, but when the men come they find it difficult to resist them. But through deliverance, some of them are set free. So deliverance has a relationship with abundant life. There are people who have got challenges in their marriage and sometimes such instances are attributable to a spiritual marriage which took place through a place they visited for some kind of spiritual assistance in the past. Such spiritual marriages are usually expressed in sexual affairs in their dreams. The effect is that sometimes they face challenges with marriage. Either they find it difficult to get a spouse, or they experience bad marriages or they have difficulties with child bearing. After the spiritual marriage is broken through deliverance, the challenges in the real marriages stop. They would have died and go to heaven but they would not have enjoyed the benefit of having a family.

*What is destiny?*

Basically destiny is about the understanding that what is supposed to be will happen. God told Jeremiah that before he was born he knew him and what he would be doing in his life. This implies that people are born with different assignments. God has a plan for the life of people. For instance I am not a subordinate to Bishop Agyen Asare because he is any special then but the difference is that was called to start a ministry but I was not called for the same purpose. SO God has a purpose for every body's life but our personal choices can also affect what will happen in their lives. It is therefore not necessarily that what will happen. No. Jesus remarked about the Pharisees that they did not recognize their time of visitation. When King Saul messed

up, God indicated to him he (God) would have done some things if Saul had behaved differently. This means that there was a change in God's intended plan because of what Saul did. Saul played a role in the failure. Solomon also contributed to the division of the Kingdom under his son. Therefore we can say that the plan of God is there but people also have a role to play to for the fulfillment of the plan.

*What determines the nature of a person's destiny?*

A person's destiny is determined by God's original plan for a person's life, as well as the choices the person makes. God has an assignment for everybody and that plan does not change as such. It is therefore important that each person discovers it. Until it is discovered through making the right choices, the person's destiny cannot be fulfilled.

*How does the Exodus relate to salvation and abundant life?*

I believe that Egypt was a "type" of the world or sin. Going to the Promised Land is a "type" of the Christian life. People have taught the Promised Land is a type of heaven. But I think that there is a difference which does not allow for that direct comparison because in heaven there will be no war but in the Promised Land they had to fight. God had told them that they were being sent into a land flowing with milk and honey but when they went there the land was occupied so they had to fight and I think it was in the time of David that they could conquer all the lands God had promised to Abraham.

*How can we relate salvation and abundant life to Exodus?*

Egypt: The world.

Pharaoh: The devil, who does not want people to get born again. This is because Pharaoh was preventing them from leaving Egypt so whatever r was preventing them from leaving Egypt is Pharaoh. In that sense we can even relate Pharaoh to friends who do not want you to get born again or anything or a behavior that does not want you to get born again.

The plagues: My understanding about the plagues is that it was a manifestation of God's power. In fact all the 10 plagues brought judgment upon the gods of Egypt because the elements associated with the plagues also had to do with the gods that were in Egypt. Therefore God was demonstrating his power over those deities.

The Passover: It can be related to the day of one's conversion since that was the day the Israelites left Egypt.

The nations which fought the Israelites on the way: They are all the problems and temptations which seek to draw a person back after giving his life too Christ. For instance we relate the Amalekites, who were the first people ,to the flesh because when you get born again you still have to battle with the flesh. This can also represent all the things we need to fight as Christians such as the temptations, etc.

*What strategies and weapons did the Israelites use in fighting their enemies before they possessed the land?*

The greatest strategy they use was obedience to God. Did you realize that anytime the Israelites obeyed God no nation fought them? So it was obedience to God and following his directions. For instance, with Amalekites, it was God who fought for them, Look at how they took Jericho. It was purely by God's directions. On the contrary they were not able to conquer Ai because Akan sinned. So their greatest weapon was obedience to God and following God's directions. This is because when they disobeyed God there was nothing they could use to win their battles.

*So what do you mean by “Abrahamic Covenant”?*

When God called Abraham, he was to obey God and get circumcised. Then when they came to Mt Sinai, God gave them the 10 commandments, which I consider to be an extension of the Abrahamic covenant. As long as they obeyed those things the n they could win their battles.

*Do Christians also have a promised land?*

Our promised land is the fullness of life or the abundant life. When you are living an abundant life, you are in your promised land. We don’t need to get to heaven before we get to the Promised Land.

Heaven can be perceived as the ultimate abundant life. We have always taught that heaven should be our promised land but if you look at it critically I think it begins here and ends in heaven.

*When is a Christian said to have reached his promised land?*

It is relative because here the Promised Land is related to what God has called you to do. For instance, as I am working here, I know that is God’s perfect plan for my life. I don’t have 10 buildings on Accra but I am happy because I am doing what God called me to do, and my family is also doing well. This means I am enjoying my promised land. What is important is to be able to do what God has called me to do and normally when you are doing that God makes provision for you in peace. So when a person is in the perfect will of God I his life, accompanied by peace, good family, ability to take care of himself and have enough to help other people and having a fulfillment in life. Somebody may be very rich but he may not be in his promised land. If a person has so much money and he is so sick that he cannot even eat, can we say such a person is in his promised land? If a person has money but his children are wayward, he is in a bad marriage, etc., it cannot be said of the person that he is in his promised land.

*Do Christians also have enemies on the way as the Israelites did?*

Surely, Christians also have enemies on their way to their promised land. Paul summarizes it that we wrestle not against flesh and blood ... in the letter to the Ephesians. Primarily that is our enemy. All the other enemies are manifestations of what happens in the spirit. They can manifest in various ways. This can be through people who do not like you, as well through different forms of challenges; but primarily we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers of darkness are our real enemies we have in our Christian life.

*How do Christians overcome these enemies?*

The way to overcome is how the Israelites won their battles. Firstly you must know God and know his assignment for your life; obey him on day to day basis. A lot of Charismatics believe in binding and destroying the works of the devil, etc. But the truth of the matter is that if you in where God wants you to be, doing what he wants you to do, and obeying him in your day to day activities of your life, challenges will come but it is not a big deal if you have a good foundation in God. This comes about through prayer, studying and applying the word of God, fellowshiping with other believers, you will surely overcome the enemies.



1.14 Mrs. Rita Korankye Ankra<sup>424</sup>

*What do you think about the relevance of the OT for Christianity today?*

For me, both the OT and the NT makes the Bible complete so we cannot take anything out of it. The Bible says that we shouldn't add to it or take out anything from it. So for me the OT is still relevant in our time today.

*Are there any passages in the OT which you consider to be particularly applicable to Christianity today?*

I won't quote a particular passage. But when you look at the Bible, you realize that everything about the OT was a shadow of what was supposed to come in the NT. You look at Moses and Moses is a type of Jesus Christ. Solomon is a type of Jesus Christ. Elijah is a type of Jesus Christ. You look at the prophet David... you know there are things about them that paint a picture about them that let us know about the Messiah who was to come. So I won't quote a particular scripture but every scripture in the OT confirms that the NT is part of the OT.

*Are there any particular themes or topics you use the OT to address or talk about? How does the OT addresses salvation?*

I see salvation as accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and personal savior. Let's consider the feasts of the Israelites. Most of the time when we talk about them, we think that they were peculiar to the Jews or the Israelites but you'll realize that in our current day God still wants us to go by those feasts. These include the feast of the Sabbath. Today we see the feast of the Sabbath as our Sunday. We also look at the feast of the first fruit. When you go to certain churches and you talk about this feast they may think that you are blaspheming. But this feast is about the first salary to the LORD. In this feast what is the LORD saying? The LORD is saying that if you give me your first, I will take care of the subsequent. So when we talk about salvation in the OT, we see it being played in the feasts in the Bible. For instance there is the feast of the tabernacle, the feast of Pentecost, etc. When you look at the NT, Jesus talks about he going back to heaven and his promise of sending a comforter to his followers. Fifty after his departure the comforter comes. We can say that is the feast of Pentecost. Therefore we see the feast of Pentecost being played in the NT and the OT. So one can say that salvation is being played in all these feasts. In the feast of the atonement, of the two lambs that are picked, words are spoken over one of them before it is sent into the wilderness. I see that lamb as the devil so the devil is sent out into the wilderness. And then there is another lamb that is sacrificed for us. And according to the Bible that lamb is sacrificed for the priest, for his children and for the children of Israel for their atonement and we see that Jesus Christ was sacrificed as a lamb as an atonement for us and today through him we are saved. So we see salvation being played in the OT in this particular incident.

*Is salvation related in any way to Abraham?*

Certainly salvation is related to Abraham. This is because Christianity actually started from Abraham and continued with his generations so we cannot talk about salvation without relating it to Abraham.

---

<sup>424</sup> Mrs. Rita Korankye Ankra is Director of Social Services, Head of Counseling and Marriage department, and President of Women's ministry. The interview was conducted on June 13, 2012.

*What is salvation?*

Salvation is accepting Jesus Christ as your LORD and personal savior. It looks so simple so it becomes difficult for people to grasp and to accept the concept of salvation.

*What is the relationship between salvation and abundance of life or fullness of life?*

Anyone who receives Jesus Christ as his personal savior receives abundance of life. This is not just limited to prosperity as some think. It is life in its totality. In other words you receive life even after your death.

*What do you think of salvation and our life today and our life after death?*

I would like to use myself as an example. Before I accepted Jesus Christ, I didn't have any understanding of salvation. All I knew was going to church, baptism, confirmation, first and second communion, etc. But accepting Jesus Christ as my LORD and my savior I can see that certain things have changed in my life. Now I have control over sin. Secondly, it's difficult to explain now but before I became a Christian, I used to dream that I was going to hell. Somehow, immediately I accepted Jesus Christ as my savior, that dream seized. Now I have the assurance of salvation that today if I should die I will be going to heaven. So now I have the assurance of salvation. And I believe that when I die, heaven will be mine.

*How does salvation affect a person's life physically and spiritually?*

Physically, if the Bible says this is sin, I should not do it. And as much as I can, let me not do it. This is my life after being born again. Salvation also requires of me not to go certain places. For instance there is no way I would like to go to a club, for example. There's no way I would want to drink. There's no way I would want to commit adultery as a married woman. For me these are some of the physical changes associated with salvation. Spiritually, I can say that now I can pray better than before. Now I can read the Bible with understanding. I can now go before God, pray and I can hear him speak to me. These are the things which have happened to me after I became born again.

*What hinders the realization of abundance of life by Christians and how are they overcome?*

Sin is the main hindrance. By sin I mean not loving your neighbor as yourself. Secondly, the Bible talks about we fellowshiping. We are supposed to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Therefore after being saved, we need to go to church and fellowship with other Christians. Sin also hinders from getting prosperous but it must be noted that prosperity is more than money, even though it is inclusive. For me, prosperity also includes good marriage; having well trained children, good health, and peace of mind, joy etc. I believe that if you lead a sinful life, you might not prosper in these areas. Sin can affect your marriage. It can also affect your children spiritually. The children watch whatever we do. So if we sin the children see it and it affects them. The prosperity they are supposed to enjoy as children of a saved person, you miss out on all these things.

*What is your understanding of deliverance?*

There are different schools of thought about deliverance. There are those who think that once you are saved, there is total deliverance or automatic deliverance. But I believe that just as the Bible says that work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, in the same vein, after you have been born again it's not enough. There

are things you must do to receive deliverance. One of them is prayer. In the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, Jesus instructed his disciples to untie the donkey. I believe that this can be related to deliverance. It could be that the person was born again but somehow there is something about the person that needs to be dealt with.

*So what is deliverance?*

It is untying the person. In other words, the person could be born again but he is still very sick or still living in sin or he could be having series of attacks, or accidents or still living with a bad habit without any power to overcome those habits. I believe that as we take such people through deliverance, they become free from these things which bind them. So deliverance refers to liberating such people from some form of attack or spiritual bondage. The Bible says that we fight not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers. There are things that fight against us that we don't see. So as we take people through deliverance we set them free, we untie them.

*Does a Christian need deliverance?*

Yes but not every Christian. It depends on the individual. For people of our generation, when we became born again, there was nothing like deliverance in the system. What I mean is there was nothing like going to see another pastor for him to pray for you. We did our own self deliverance. We did this through fasting and prayers and self denial of certain things.

*What is the relationship between salvation and deliverance?*

Salvation is accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and personal savior and deliverance is being liberated from satanic attacks. Jesus once went into the temple where they were buying and selling. This means that in the realms of the spirit, there is also buying and selling. There is always a struggle and if you want that struggle to cease then there must be deliverance. So salvation comes and then deliverance. In this instance, the deliverance is Jesus Christ moving into the temple, whipping the people and saying that there must be order in the temple. The Bible now talks about us being the temple of the Holy Spirit. So I believe that in our temple today there is always buying and selling, there is always negotiation going on in the realms of the spirit between the Holy Spirit and the demons and principalities. So now at every given time, just as Jesus went into the temple, whipped out those buying and selling, and asked them to go out, in the same way in our lives, everyday must be a day of deliverance where you can still call Jesus Christ into your life and say every buying and selling on in your life, every struggle that is going on in your life must cease.

*Does Deliverance facilitate the realization of abundant life?*

I will say yes and no. Yes for certain people. For instance some people get born again and the salvation is enough for them. Others will have to go through deliverance after being born again. This is because they still struggle in their life. For instance, by age 23 I was married. If there is a pretty young lady who lives a holy life, pays her tithe, lives a good Christian life and prays as well and yet remains unmarried after age 30 and beyond, it means there is a hindrance and therefore such a person needs deliverance in order for her to experience fullness of life. I will therefore say that for some people, deliverance is essential for the realization of fullness of life.

*What is destiny?*

Destiny refers to a person's future.

*What determines a person's destiny?*

I believe a person's destiny is determined by the LORD. It is also determined by how prayerful I am, how prayerful I am, how worthy I am. For instance, destiny is about your future. It is about who you marry. If you wait upon the LORD and you meet the right the person, something within you tells you this is the right person. On the other hand, somebody who is not spiritual might see the same person and say no this is a poor person, or give some other reason. So you could miss your destiny, you could miss your future when you are not spiritual enough.

*Is it possible for one's destiny to change? If yes, how?*

Certainly yes. A person's destiny can change even through deliverance. A person might be earmarked to have an accident but if such a person visits a prayer meeting where the spirit of death is dealt with, through the prayers, that destiny of death could be changed.

In the same way, evil forces can change a person's destiny. This can happen to a Christian as well. Let's take the Jesus Christ the son of God as an example. He was born through prophecy. When he was born, his star appears, Wisemen go in search of that star, make the mistake and ask about him from Herod who instructs them to bring him word when they see him, so that he could also go and worship him. I believe that evil forces could have caused Herod to have gone and kill baby Jesus. This is an example of evil forces at play trying to change the destiny of Jesus. Another example is Moses. He is born and just around that time, a decree is made that all males must be killed. Can you imagine the destinies that were killed? Somehow, God was just with Moses. Otherwise, there could have been a force which could have ensured that Moses was also killed. So I believe that evil forces can fight against your destiny.

*Does the Exodus relate to salvation and abundant life in any way? If yes, how?*

I believe that on the Passover day where the angel of death passed through the land [of Egypt] and God asked them to kill a lamb and smear the blood on their doorposts, I believe that what happened that night was salvation in the OT. That brings us back to some of the occurrences in the OT. A lamb was killed and its blood smeared on their doorposts. The Bible talks about Jesus Christ being the lamb and the shedding of blood on that day gives us salvation. We can therefore relate salvation in Jesus Christ to that of the night of Passover.

*Are there any parallels between the Exodus and deliverance?*

Why not? Here was a group chasing another group to kill them. They go through the red sea. The division of the red sea for the Israelites to go through was deliverance. Another form of deliverance was that the enemies who were attacking them also go through the same red sea and they were killed. Still on the red sea incident, I believe that being the children of God, the children of Israel could be said to have been saved. The bible talks about life after death. As they went through the red sea, I believe it was death unto them but they went through the red sea and had life. In other words, as believers, when we go through salvation, because we are saved, when we die, though physically dead, we get saved by moving into heaven.

*How can we relate salvation and abundant life to the events, persons and nations associated with the Exodus?*

Egypt: The people of can be related to the people of the world. Those who have not accepted Jesus Christ as their LORD and personal savior. They are those who go through the red sea and they die. The red sea can be related to hell at that point for them. I believe Egypt represents darkness. It represents our life before salvation. I will say my life before I got born again was my Egypt.

Pharaoh: We will call Pharaoh the devil, or Satan, our accuser,

“Let my people go”: If I’m seeing Pharaoh as the devil the devil, then I’ll see Moses as Jesus Christ. Where Moses goes to Pharaoh and says let my people go, I’m seeing Jesus Christ after his resurrection, the Bible says that he first went into hell, collected the keys from Satan. I believe that at that point, Jesus Christ was telling the devil: Let my people go. Now I have shed my blood for them to be free. Now I have come to take back the life of my people from you. So I see that statement as salvation and also as deliverance for the people who are saved.

Joshua can also be seen as Jesus Christ. As he led the Israelites into the Promised Land, so does Jesus Christ lead us to heaven through being born again.

Overthrow of the inhabitants of Canaan:

I see this as deliverance and also relate it to salvation. Our Canaan could be our salvation. So after we became saved, we overthrew the demons, the principalities, the forces in our lives. Canaan can also be seen as our heaven. Before we get to heaven we must overthrow certain things such as sin, bad habits, etc. In other words, some things have to be overthrown before you get to heaven.

*Do Christians also have a promised land?*

Certainly yes.

*When can one said to have reached his or her promised land?*

There is a period of rest for every Christian. This refers to a period when we can say that the Christian has fought and he has won. Then you know you have reached your promised land. Assuming I am fighting against a particular sin in my life. After I’ve been able to overcome that sin, I can say I have reached my promised land. In this case, my promised land is my holiness. If at the age of 30 I’m single and I pray to God and I fight against the spirit of singleness and I get married, I can say that I’ve reached my promised land. Marriage now becomes my promised land. If I got married and for five years, ten years no children are coming and I fight, I pray and fast , go through deliverance and now God blesses me with a child, I will say that now I have reached my promised land. So at every point in time, your promised land can be your miracle.

*Are there enemies along the way to our promised land?*

Our enemies are the negative things that confront us in life. These include sin, sicknesses, unemployment, etc.

*What weapons can be used in overcoming these enemies?*

The bible talks about the weapons we use. These include the blood of Jesus, prayer, fasting, fellowshiping with other believers, etc. Tithe and giving in general is another weapon of the Christian.

## 2.15 Pastor Ransford Obeng<sup>425</sup>

*What do you think about the OT and its relevance for Christianity today?*

I think as the bible clearly says, there are principles in the OT that can be really applied in the NT. The bible tells us that everything that happened to the Israelites were examples for us so that we would know what was good that God wanted them to continue, and we would also learn from what was bad and do what is right.

*What themes do you normally preach from the OT?*

One of the things I do is that I take a book of the Bible and we study it on Sundays. We use both the NT and the OT alternatively over the years.

*How does the OT address salvation?*

Salvation as we understand it in the NT is completely captured in the OT. In the OT salvation is more on works. But in the NT it is so much on works but rather based on what Christ has done for us and our faith in the finished work of Christ.

*Is salvation related to Abraham in any way?*

Yes. According to the NT he is the father of faith, and he believed in God and it was counted to him as righteousness. The same thing is required of us in the NT to have faith in the finished work of Christ so there is a relationship to Abraham.

*How does salvation affect a person's life spiritually and physically?*

If somebody says he knows Christ, first of all he has an inner witness within himself and he develops a personal relationship with his God and that personal relationship with his God will be evident in his personal life because it will affect his belief and the way he or she does things because of the relationship he has with his God.

*What is the relationship between salvation and the realization of fullness of life?*

The bible's definition of life is different from that of the dictionary and the bible makes it clear to us that life is in Jesus Christ and he who has Jesus has life. If you don't have Jesus, you don't have life. John's gospel makes it clear that to know Christ is to have life. So you can only experience the full life which is eternal life and both physical and spiritual because man is made up of body soul and spirit. The body is what we see but the spirit is what communicates with God. If you have not given your life to Christ, you'll not experience the fullness of life that Jesus brings, which he said I came that they might have life and have more abundantly. This comes through believing Jesus Christ.

*What is your understanding of this abundant life?*

The fullness of life or abundant life is knowing Jesus as your LORD and savior and then living to please him and then knowing that today if I die, that is not the end of my life. There is life after death, and I also going to enjoy with God in eternity.

*What do you think of salvation and our life today and life after death?*

---

<sup>425</sup> Pastor Ransford Obeng is Head Pastor of Calvary Charismatic Centre, Kumasi. The interview was conducted on June 19, 2012.

According to the bible, if you believe in Jesus today and you die, you are going to be with the LORD. If you don't know Jesus and you die, there is a different place you are going and that place is a place of torture and torment. But those of us who Christ, when we die we are going to a place where we are even going to live a better life. And that's why we think real life is in Jesus and not outside Jesus.

*What hinders the realization of abundant life?*

The things of this world are more attractive, and if you are not careful, those will prevent you sacrificing and following Jesus because when you give your life to Christ, we are commanded in the scriptures to live the life of Christ and imitating somebody is difficult. It means you have to put your own life and ideas aside in order to absorb that of Christ. And that is where the challenge is. And many people are not willing to do that. Beside the individual, there are also forces of darkness that will fight against us because the devil will not allow you to live the life that Jesus came to show us.

*What is your understanding of deliverance?*

I believe that when a person is born again, he is translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Deliverance takes place but there are many spheres of deliverance. It depends on the lifestyle of the person he came to know Christ. Some people were involved in all kinds of activities that open the door for demonic spirits to inhabit them. Such a person is not only saying that I give my life to Christ and that is the end. Yes, he is giving his life to Christ but there is the need for prayer and renunciation of all those things so that he could be fully liberated from the forces of darkness which he himself allowed to come into his life because he did not know Christ.

*Does it mean that becoming a Christian does not necessarily free a person from what may call for deliverance?*

That depends on the life person led before he became a Christian. Some people don't need to go through any deliverance after they give their life to Christ because even though they didn't know the LORD, they lived a very good moral life so after their conversion they don't any difficulties in their life. But there are other people who were idol worshippers, etc. Such people need special deliverance. There are others whose family backgrounds makes it necessary for them to also go through deliverance when they become Christians. Using myself as an example, I come after twins and in our custom, the next child after twins is taken through some rituals so I was taken through it too. When I gave my life to Christ, I didn't go for any special deliverance but I was totally committed to God and I was delivered.

*Does deliverance facilitate the realization of abundant life?*

Yes, because if you have not been delivered from the powers of darkness, you cannot enjoy the real life that Jesus talks about, the abundance of life so every one of us must be delivered and I must say it again that deliverance is in so many stages depending on one's previous lifestyle.

*What is destiny?*

I believe God has a plan for everybody. When you give your life to Christ, it is not automatic that you'll discover your destiny. You need to seek God and through that the LORD will help you to understand what he has for you. Once you realize what God has for you, you do everything to fulfill it.

*What determines a person's destiny?*

We have a part to play in our destiny. God has a good destiny for everybody on this earth. This is because He is a good God who has good plans for us as he told Jeremiah. God has a better future for everybody, better than what we are experiencing now. But this comes about as we co-operate with him. This is because the Bible says we are laborers together with God. So based on the cooperation we give to God through the Holy Spirit who helps us to realize our destiny and fulfill our destiny. If not, you can miss what God has for you, you can miss your destiny.

*Is it possible for one's destiny to change?*

Yes it is possible but one of the things I want us to understand is that God is the God of a second chance. Like he sent to the potter's house and when the potter was using the clay to make the vessel. It got marred in his hands, and yet he changed it to another thing. And that is the same thing with God. Because he is the master planner, even when we make mistakes, even when we have missed our destiny and we come back to present our life to him, he is able to bring the broken pieces together and make something good out of what seems a mess.

*Are there any parallels between the Exodus and salvation?*

Yes, I think it is a picture of what Jesus came to do for us on the cross. Before they were delivered from Egypt, you know the last plague was the death of the first born of the Egyptians. And the blood of the lamb that was applied on the doorposts that saved the Israelites. The Bible says that Jesus is the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world so it was a picture of what Christ came to do on the cross. Another thing is that not all the Israelites in Egypt were willing to leave. Some didn't leave so those who didn't leave died. Some of the Egyptians also left with the Israelites and so were saved. So salvation is there for everybody but it is not automatic.

*Are there parallels between the Exodus and deliverance?*

Yes we can draw some parallels. As I mentioned earlier on, deliverance is in so many stages. You realize that the Israelites were in Egypt. After they left Egypt and came to the wilderness, they still had struggles and a lot of things to deal with. This is because Egypt was in them. Although they had physically left Egypt, Egypt had not left them. They were finding it difficult to be let go of their past life and be accustomed to their new life. They needed to go through a process where Egypt would completely go out of them. And that is what happens when a person comes to Christ. When you give your life to Christ, you must understand that there are so many things you allowed to come into your life before you became a Christian and therefore there is the need for you to be taken through a process where you will be completely delivered of those things completely.

Egypt: Represents the world. It can also represent the life a person led before he became a Christian.

Pharaoh: Represents somebody who does not know God nor is prepared to serve God. These are people who do not want to have anything to do with God. Such people become annoyed even when they hear that somebody is a Christian. These are Pharaohs in our world today.

"Let my people go": Here God was speaking to the Pharaoh of that time. God was saying to him these are my people. Leave them and let them go. I think it talks about what God would do for every Christian when you put your faith in Christ. When we trust Jesus Christ, there are a lot of things God will do for us that we won't be able to



do for ourselves. Here the people wanted to go, but until God worked a miracle, there was no way Pharaoh would let them go. And so once we give our life to Christ, he would do the impossible for us.

The Plagues: A careful study will show that all the plagues that came on them were a judgment on the various gods they were worshipping in Egypt. This is because each of the plagues represents a deity in Egypt. Heathen people don't have one god. Rather they have different deities who are believed to provide different needs of people. For instance, there is a god of fertility so if a person wants protection and he goes to the god of fertility; he cannot receive what he wants. They have a god for prosperity, etc. But our God is one in all.

The Passover: The Passover is really a picture of Jesus Christ dying to deliver us from death and so Jesus becomes our Passover and that is why we link it with our communion service.

#### *How is Christianity today related to the Exodus?*

We remember what happened to the Israelites and it serves as a picture and an encouragement to us and also let people understand the work that God has done in the life of every Christian before you came to know him. It took the mighty hand of God to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt. This is because a Pharaoh didn't want to allow them to go so God had to do all kinds of miracles so that his people would be allowed to go and that helps us to understand that Christ a lot in order to free us from the hands of the enemy.

#### *Do Christians also have a promised land?*

Yes. Christians also have a promised land because Christ told us in John 14 that he is going to prepare a place for us and when he finish he will come and take us to that place. That is the Promised Land we are all looking forward to go to heaven where God has prepared for each one of us who believed in him. Our promised land can also refer to a place where we have full rest, and there is no end and that is where we are looking forward to, when God takes us to heaven. When somebody put something before him and he is able to accomplish it, he can say figuratively that I have reached my promised land.

#### *Are there any enemies on the way to "the promised land"?*

In fact, if you go through a lot of the things the Israelites went through on their journey to the Promised Land, it is similar to all the things that we'll go through till we are able to make it to heaven. There were times that they were disappointed because what they were expecting was not coming. In the same way, Christians are also disappointed. There are times you realize that you pray for something and it is as if God has not heard your prayers. But the reality is that he has heard it, but we see the results in his own time. So there are a lot of obstacles but some of them are engineered by the devil to discourage you that you give up, saying to yourself that the LORD has nothing good to offer you so you'll go back to Egypt like the Israelites who wanted to go back to Egypt constantly.

#### *What weapons did the Israelites use to conquer their enemies? Are those weapons applicable for us today?*

Well, they used more of physical weapons. But today, our weapons are not carnal, as the Bible says. Our weapons are more spiritual than physical and so they had to do physical combat, but we have to do spiritual combat.

*Do you have extra comments?*

What I want to say is that as we grow in the Lord, our understanding about spiritual things deepens and we begin to appreciate all the more, what the Bible tells us and one of the things I believe is that when a person gives his life to Christ that is not the end. We must strive to know God as Paul said "...that I may know him..." This does not mean Paul did not know God. He knew him but he was referring to a closer walk with God and that is what I am talking about that as we know him more and more, anything that bind us gets loosed because deliverance is not a onetime affair. There are so many things we need to be delivered from, as we give our life to Christ. In other words, the level of our deliverance progresses as we progress in our spiritual growth.

2.16 Rev. John Abu Baidoo<sup>426</sup>

*What do you think about the OT and its relevance for Christianity today?*

The OT is still the word of God. My understanding is that the word of God does not pass away. There are still certain things that we can still rely on. It is even said that the OT is the NT concealed so in it, we can even get some aspects of the NT. Jesus also said he came to fulfill and not to abolish the law and the prophets. In the OT, we have a type or a shadow of the things that are revealed in the NT. It is the Mosaic covenant that has been replaced by the new covenant but when we talk about the OT as scripture, from Genesis to Malachi, it is still relevant.

*How does the OT address salvation?*

In relation to the prophets, there are a whole lot of prophecies that are revealed in the OT on the coming of the Christ who would save humanity from sin. This gives some kind of information that humanity was not in right standing with God so some would come to reconcile humanity and God. Then also we have atonement for sin in OT as a "type". This was something that was being done on yearly basis for the forgiveness of sins. When it came to Jesus' time he said he made a sacrifice once and for all. So in that way we have an idea of how salvation was expressed in the OT.

*Is salvation related to Abraham in any way?*

Yes. This is because God picked Abraham and separated him and told him that he was going to make his descendants great. It was these descendants of Abraham God used when they had to be in bondage and were released, and through that lineage also the Messiah was born. So in a way we could say salvation is related to Abraham.

*What do you think about salvation and our life today and life after death?*

Jesus Christ said that he came to seek and to save those who were lost and salvation, and salvation is primarily you being born again. With the new birth, you have been translated from the kingdom of darkness into that of light. You are no more under that rule of Satan, you are under a new regime that is the regime of God, and so the word of God becomes your rule. So as regards now, that what we have to be doing. That is why the bible says we should out our salvation with fear and trembling. While we're here we need to renew our minds, study the word of God,

---

<sup>426</sup> Rev. John Abu Baidoo is pastor der International Central Gospel Church, Trinity Temple, Kumasi. The interview was conducted on June 25, 2012.

etc. With life after death, the bible makes us understand that when a saved person departs from this earth, he is going to be in a different place – that is, to be with the LORD, as opposed to those who are not saved and so will not get that opportunity to be there.

*How does salvation affect a person's life spiritually and materially?*

Spiritually salvation leads to reconciliation between humanity and God. Now it becomes possible to be connected to the creator who is the source of everything. When a person is saved, physically there is really no difference. But then, when the Christian continues to search the word of God and practice it, he gets a lot of benefits physically and materially. Then you begin to see that God is not just interested in our spiritual wellbeing only but he is also interested in our physical well being as well. He said he is the provider. He said I give you the power to make wealth. So once you are reconciled to him, you have a right standing with him, all the promises he has made concerning our physical and material well being becomes yours and you can take it.

*What is the relationship between salvation and the realization of fullness of life?*

Definitely there is a relationship. The Bible says whatever we have is given to us from above. Every gift and every perfect gift is given to us from above. The bible also says that if God did not withhold his son from us but gave him to us, what else will he withhold from us? So when you are saved, these other promises are your and I don't think there is any limit. As far as God has declared it .... You can look at the life of Abraham, he was blessed abundantly. This will even help you to understand why you are even here on this earth - your duties, your privileges and the promises God has given you, etc. and you can lead that life and live it to the fullest.

*Are there any hindrances to the realization of the fullness of life?*

There are hindrances and I will put it at the doorsteps of that individual. This is because promises are like a will. If something has been bequeathed to you and you don't take the necessary steps to possess it, it will only remain on paper. The basic or major hindrance is a person who is not ready to move on to get whatever has been promised. So if the person is not willing to do what God wants him to do in order to realize these things, then that is a major hindrance to the realization of whatever has been promised.

*What is your understanding of deliverance?*

Deliverance refers to being taken out of something that is evil. By evil, I refer to anything that is immoral, anything that will not inure to your benefit, oppression, etc.

*Does the Christian need deliverance?*

Yes and no. Yes because salvation itself is a form of deliverance. You are delivered from the power and the effect of sin. Then also we have situations where people are oppressed, even though they are saved. In such a case, the person is taken out of that situation through deliverance. No in the sense that when you are saved you are delivered and so ordinarily, you don't need deliverance. But if the Christian still experiences some oppression, then I will say yes, that Christian needs deliverance from that kind of oppression. That means, yes, there is deliverance but it is not everybody who needs to go through it.

*Is it possible that a Christian may not suffer any demonic oppression?*

Yes it is possible for a Christian not to suffer from demonic oppression.

*Does deliverance facilitate the realization of abundant life in the life of a person?*

Sure. If there is a hindrance to the realization, then once it is cleared through deliverance, the person can experience abundant life.

*What is destiny?*

Sometimes we may have some English words which may have some relationship with some issues but the way it is understood may be different from the perspective of the scripture. For instance, the word “saint” may have different dictionary meaning from what it means in the bible. So when we talk about destiny, basically people think that it is something destined for you to achieve in life. I think this understanding is not different from the view of the bible on destiny, even though it is not explicitly stated there. An instance is God’s statement about his knowledge of Jeremiah even before he was born. So whoever comes into this world has an assignment from God to do so in that sense I will say the bible says almost the same thing.

*What/who determines the nature of a person’s destiny?*

It is God. God has a plan a purpose for each one of us. So I always tell parents when they come to dedicate their children that you don’t have to make any plan for the child, since God already has one for him/her. What you need to do is to prayerfully observe the child. There are certain inborn talents that can give you a clue... It is God who gives it and you have to make sure that you get it yourself.

*Is it possible for a destiny to change?*

I wouldn’t say it will change. Because I think in Rom 11:22? It says that the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable. What I will rather say is that the person could not fulfill that. If somebody is not able to fulfill what is God’s plan and purpose for his life it does not mean it has changed just that he could not fulfill it.

*Does the Exodus relate to salvation and abundant life in any way?*

Yes. I was saying that the OT is a type or shadow of things to come. The Israelites were in bondage and they were delivered from their task masters the Egyptians. So in a way, we can relate it like men having sinned, being in bondage of their task master (here being Satan), and God sending Jesus Christ down to this earth to die to take us out of that domain. So they are related.

*What parallels do you see between the following and salvation?*

Egypt: Egypt was a kingdom so we can relate it to the kingdom of Satan. So God brought them out to bring them in. That is what God told Moses. So you are translated out of that kingdom into another kingdom. So Egypt maybe is a type of the kingdom of Satan.

Pharaoh: Since the Pharaoh at that time was the head of that kingdom, we can see him as a type of the ruler of the kingdom of darkness.

“Let my people go”: In a way, yes because God planned that humanity gets reconciled to him so by that statement, God is telling Satan to let his people go. You realize that Pharaoh did not just give in and that is how the enemy also wants to hold on to people who are in his kingdom. He wouldn’t want to release them so that’s why the bible says that there is some kind of a war – God wanting to get his people out by what Jesus did and Satan also wanting to hold on to the people, but Jesus saying come unto me all ye that labor is in a way saying: release my people, let them go.

The plagues: The plagues were very significant, especially the last one—the killing of the first born of humans and animals.

The Passover was done so that we could have an understanding of what Jesus Christ came to do. The blood that was smeared was a kind of protection for the people.

The nations that fought the Israelites on their way to the Promised Land: Jesus did not promise us a trouble-free world but he promised us victory. If you become a Christian it doesn't mean that everything is going to be smooth and rosy. There are challenges in this world. So Jesus said in this world you will have tribulations, trials, etc. but be of good cheer because I have overcome the world. It means that the Christian must put in some effort. So the fact that you have been born again/saved does not mean that things are going to be rosy for you because Jesus said we are in the world and this world is being ruled by Satan and he doesn't have any good things so challenges will come, difficulties will come, but as God saw them through, it means that once you depend on him, he will see you through.

*Do Christians also have a “promised land”?*

Personally I will say yes. Because there is a destination. If you give your life to Christ, you are saved and ultimately there will be a place you'll be. The same applies to those who are not saved. There is a place for them also. Once Jesus promised us of going to prepare a place for us, we can say that there is a “promised land” for us. So our promise land is to be with the LORD as he promised us. In our physical life now, if Jesus has said that we will have abundant life, then that's a promise that when you are saved, you can also enjoy so in a way

*Are there enemies along the way to the Promised Land?*

Yes we have enemies. In our discourse we talk about Satan and the bible says he is crafty, and as God uses humans to do his work, sometimes the Satan also uses humans to achieve his ends so sometimes you can even see a human being as an enemy. Definitely he doesn't want us to achieve what God wants for us. He will fight us. The bible says that we war not against flesh and blood. The only thing we must know is the he can use human beings to fight us. When even that happens, we must see the devil as our real enemy.

*What weapons can be used to overcome these enemies?*

The bible says that our warfare is not carnal. So we cannot use carnal weapons. So Eph. 6 urges us to put on the whole armor of God. So that is our weapon we can use to fight our enemy. The Israelites were mostly engaged in physical warfare. What we have now is spiritual so our weapons are also spiritual.

*Do you have any extra comments?*

The word of God is still relevant. What is important now is the interpretation and above all we need the Holy Spirit' guidance. This is because if somebody writes a letter to you and you think you are not very clear about it, the best person to go for explanation is the author of the letter. So a person may know the rules governing the interpretation of scripture and what have you but the most important thing is the Holy Spirit giving you understanding. Once that is done, you'll realize that the Bible is very relevant.

The other thing I also want to say is that everything written in scriptures has been truly recorded but not everything is true. In the sense that God caused it to be written as it is. It does not mean that he approves of all that is written. The bible says some

of the scriptures are examples to us so that we'll learn not to follow the wrong things that others did. The fact that something is in the Bible does not mean we should imitate it by all means. The other thing is also that, whatever Jesus has committed on in the bible, if it goes against anything in the bible that of Jesus must be taken. This is because he is the word himself

