

BODIES AS BRIDGES: METAPHORS AND CHARISMATIC PREACHING IN GHANA

Justice Anquandah Arthur

Abstract: *Preaching is a very popular activity in Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, as it is one of the main means by which the Bible is interpreted publicly. In Ghana, most Charismatic preachers have a celebrity status, and are able to gather thousands to their services because of their sermons. The act of preaching in this strand of Christianity is an intense activity that places enormous physical demand on both the preacher and the audience. This paper seeks to examine metaphors that arise out of bodily expressions pervasive in the process of sermon delivery and reception. It is based on a year's ethnographic fieldwork involving three pastors and their churches as well as a collection of their sermons. An examination of these metaphors reveals that Charismatic preaching is inundated with intriguing bodily movements that are metaphorical and informed by the preacher's interpretation of Scripture as well as being culture specific.*

Key Words: Charismatic Preaching, Metaphors, Bodily Language, Pentecostal Interpretation.

Introduction¹

A few years ago, I attended a children's *variety show* with my daughter in Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana and something striking caught my attention. During the pick-and-act session, a boy of about ten years picked a paper that read: "Supposing you are the pastor of a Charismatic church,² could you preach to your congregation for five

¹ A version of this paper was presented at the Society for the Study of Theology (SST) Conference at St. John's College, University of Oxford in January 2014. I extend a heartfelt gratitude to my colleague participants for their invaluable feedback. Also 'Body' as used in this paper refers to the Charismatic movement as a social body as well as bodily language of preachers and the congregation.

² These are neo-Pentecostal churches that appeared on the Ghanaian religious landscape in the late 70s and early 80s, with emphasis on the born-again experience, intense use of new mass communication and media technologies such as radio, television, video as well as literature and "modern business practices as a form of evangelism" Asonzeh Ukah, *The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Nigeria: Local Identities and Global Processes in African Pentecostalism* (Bayreuth: University of Bayreuth Library, 2003), 21. These are the churches referred to

minutes.” I was stunned not simply by the little boy’s choice of words but by his tone, gestures, facial expressions, emotional content and tempo. For a moment, there was no movement in the auditorium as the audience became engrossed in the performance of the boy who demonstrated what in his view constituted Charismatic preaching.

Preaching is central to most Christian traditions but particularly vital and extremely prominent in Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. The subject of preaching enjoys great visibility in urban centres across Ghana as it forms a significant part of the multiplicities of sounds that are alive in cities such as Accra. Amid the hustle and bustle of the metropolis, are the numerous preachers with their loud public address (PA) systems at public spaces such as markets, transport hubs and street corners trying to convince the people about the Word of God. Many of these self-styled street evangelists make a living out of preaching. It is also uncommon to use public transportation without having a preacher of some sort usually promoting traditional medicine under the guise of sermonising. Where there are no street preachers, the airwaves are filled with sermons from Pentecostal-Charismatic preachers. Indeed, Asamoah-Gyadu notes that 90% of all religious programming on Ghanaian television channels are on preaching, mainly from the Charismatic churches.³

Nevertheless, despite its prominence, many people especially from other Christian communities have described Pentecostal-Charismatic preaching as unpredictable, dramatic, unorganised, directionless, preacher-centred and excessively loud.⁴ Additionally, some of the movement’s preachers have been labelled as self-promoting and only interested in manipulating Scripture to entertain their audience.⁵ While these descriptions may be overstretched, and generalised, Pen-

as the ‘charismatic sector’ - Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (Bloomington - Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 24.

³ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, “Anointing through the Screen: Neo-Pentecostalism and televised Christianity in Ghana,” *Studies in World Christianity* 11 (2005), 11.

⁴ Justice Arthur, *The ‘Heart’ of Charismatic Preaching: Literary and Theological Analyses of Some Selected Sermons* (MPhil Thesis, University of Cape Coast, 2011), 2.

⁵ Arthur, *The ‘Heart’ of Charismatic Preaching*, 2.

tecostal-Charismatic preaching may be loud and emotional, but definitely not unorganized and inconsistent. Clearly, such features as the emotional content, intensity and high decibel measurements prevalent in Charismatic preaching is what makes it distinct from preaching in other Christian traditions.⁶ In contrast to some older Christian traditions, experiencing preaching in the Charismatic context is an intense religious encounter, involving sights, hearing and touch. Shipley captures the essence of preaching in this community when he argues that the preacher's moral authority hinges on public style and performances such as preaching.⁷ In this paper, I examine metaphors that emerge from bodily expressions predominant in Charismatic preaching in Ghana. I argue that these metaphors are culture specific to the Charismatic churches and they arise out of their propensity for literal interpretation of the Bible. This paper is based on a year's ethnographic research in Accra and Bolgatanga.⁸

Conceptual metaphor

This article joins a growing literature that looks at metaphors based on bodily expressions.⁹ It broadly falls under the theory of conceptual metaphors¹⁰, which was first explored by Lakoff and Johnson in their

⁶ Arthur, *The 'Heart' of Charismatic Preaching*, 2.

⁷ Jesse Weaver Shipley, "Comedians, Pastors, and the Miraculous Agency of Charisma in Ghana," *Cultural Anthropology* 24, no. 3 (2009), 523-552.

⁸ I attended church services and collected sermons by three key Charismatic preachers: Samuel Korankye Ankrah, Eastwood Anaba and James Kweku Saah. As a participant observer visiting these churches, I was interested in symbolism and linguistic structures and their implication on biblical interpretation. However, in this paper I have restricted myself to only the aspects related to bodily language. Also, I interviewed all three preachers and some of their members and collected ten sermons from each of the preachers.

⁹ Raymond W Gibbs Jr, Paula Lenz Costa Lima and Edson Francozo, "Metaphor is Grounded in Embodied Experience," *Journal of Pragmatics* 36, no. 7 (2004), 1189-1210.; Zoltan Kövecses, *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Zoltan Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

¹⁰ It is important to note that metaphor has been studied both in the conceptual and semiotic terms. See A. Cienki and C. Müller, *Metaphor and Gesture* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V., 2008). It is defined as the "main mechanism through which we comprehend abstract concepts

work, ‘Metaphors we live by’.¹¹ Metaphors, they argued, are pervasive in everyday life, revealed in language as well as thinking and action. Consequently, the concepts that direct our thoughts are not simply mental; they are also central to routine details like how we relate to, experience and define the world. Lakoff and Johnson state specifically that: “If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor”.¹² Thus, metaphor is a cognitive process that can be realised linguistically and expressed non-linguistically. Typical examples of the non-linguistic expressions of metaphors include but not limited to gestures, movies and acting, cartoons, cultural symbols, social practices, dream interpretation as well as Christian rituals such as the Holy Communion, foot washing and anointing with oil, which are clearly practices that help the Christian communities to understand some spiritual concepts regarding their belief.¹³ In the light of these instances, I infer that conceptual metaphors extend throughout much of our religious, social, cultural and intellectual lives.

Thus, conceptual metaphor includes two domains, in which one is understood in terms of another. This conceptual domain is seen as any coherent organisation of experience. Understanding one concept as another involves establishing a set of correspondences between entities of the two domains, known as ‘mapping’. The domain that provides the elements for the correspondences is called the ‘source domain’ and the domain by means of which the source domain is comprehended is called the ‘target domain’. For instance, in the popular English phrase ‘life is a journey’, ‘life’ is here considered the target domain that is understood in terms of the source domain ‘journey’. In the case of the Holy Communion I alluded to earlier, the physical ‘bread and wine’ are the target domain that is understood in terms of the ‘body and blood of Christ’. The set of correspondences can be

and perform abstract reasoning”. George Lakoff, “The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor,” in *Cognitive Linguistics*, ed. D. Geeraerts (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006), 232.

¹¹ George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors we Live by* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980).

¹² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹³ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 63.

referred to as mapping the metaphor. Mapping or correspondences are mostly used indiscriminately.¹⁴

The selection of the source domain depends on the suitability of the correspondences that can be established for the conceptualisation of specific target domain aspects. This shows that there can be some limitations as far as the correspondences between the domains are concerned. Consequently, Ungerer and Schmid speak of “mapping scope” to express the notion that there exist limitations on the nature of correspondences because of entrenchment in and reflection of human bodily and cultural-specific interactions in the world. The mapping scope of a metaphor exists as the near-universal image schemas grounded in bodily experiences and basic correlations that provide a basis for comprehending certain actions or events. It also helps to understand culture-specific and dependent “evaluation,” which only affects the members of that particular culture.¹⁵ The Charismatic movement for example constitutes a culture-specific group - taken as a social body in this paper - with certain practices and concepts which are only fully appreciated by insiders within the group. These may be universal Christian practices and concepts but the way they are expressed in this movement or by extension, other Christian groups, means the specific adherents have a better understanding of the phenomena than outsiders.

The debate on the universalism and cultural variations is an ongoing one. The general notion that majority of metaphors is universal because they are based on bodily experiences that are biologically and physiologically shared by people around the world is not entirely accurate. Building on Kövecses’ ideas, I argue that metaphors can be a universal means of conceptualisation in thought, but do not essentially surface in every language or culture of the world and accordingly, it is a “potential universalism”.¹⁶ Thus, both primary and complex metaphors can be universal and in both instances the “potentially or par-

¹⁴ Lakoff, *The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor*, 232.

¹⁵ F. Ungerer and Hans-Jörg Schmid, *An Introduction to Cognitive Linguistics* (Harlow: Pearson, 2006), 119-120.

¹⁶ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 35.

tially universal” status of metaphors results from the extent of the embodied experience that has yielded the conceptualisation.¹⁷ There is however, a clear link between metaphors and bodily experiences, many of which are based on cultural factors and cognitive processes of various kinds. It is against this backdrop that I examine some metaphors emerging from embodied experiences that feature prominently in Charismatic preaching in Ghana.

Meeting the preachers

Before proceeding to analyse the selected embodied metaphors, I offer a brief profile of the preachers selected for this paper. I have chosen these three not only because they are prominent Charismatic preachers but also, they reflect the diversities of preaching styles within the Charismatic movement in the country.

First, is Samuel Korankye Ankrah, the founder of the Charismatic Mega church Royalhouse Chapel International (RCI), with over 100 local branches and twenty international mission churches in the UK and the USA. He bears the title ‘Apostle General’ and General Overseer of RCI. Korankye Ankrah serves as the Senior Pastor of *Ahenfie*¹⁸, the headquarters of RCI with a membership of about 10,000.¹⁹ Having completed the University of Ghana with a degree in Public Administration in 1986, he started out as an itinerant preacher until he founded the RCI in June 1991. He is currently one of the two Vice Presidents of the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council. His weekly preaching programme dubbed ‘Power in His Presence’ airs on Ghana Television and Multi TV as well as several other FM radio stations across the country. His sermons stress on the theology of demons and imprecatory prayers, as well as material success and well-being.²⁰

¹⁷ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 4.

¹⁸ Ahenfie is an Akan word meaning a ‘palace’. In recent times, *Ahenfie* has assumed a new name: Oil Dome.

¹⁹ Samuel Korankye Ankrah, *The Rising of the Sun: Shining from Obscurity* (Accra: Combent Impressions, 2010). The 10,000 membership size is a figure supplied by the church. It is however very difficult to verify church membership numbers within the Charismatic movement because different churches use different counting methods, that is not always based on headcount. Accordingly, some of the figures they quote are debatable.

²⁰ Samuel Korankye Ankrah, interview granted the researcher, January 16, 2011.

The next is James Kweku Saah, a bishop with the Action Chapel International (ACI), established in 1979. He has been in pastorate for over thirty years and has the designation ‘Senior Bishop’ being the second in command to Archbishop Nicholas Duncan Williams, the founder, for more than twenty years. He was for many years, the resident pastor of the 8,000-member Prayer Cathedral, the headquarters branch of the Church. He trained under the late Nigerian televangelist Benson Idahosa in Benin City, Nigeria. He also holds a postgraduate degree in Governance and Leadership from the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration. James Saah preaches weekly on both Ghana Television and Citi FM, an Accra based FM radio station with nationwide coverage through partner stations. His sermons emphasise prayer, prosperity, and prophecies.²¹

Finally, Eastwood Anaba who is the founder of Fountain Gate Chapel (FGC), which has over 140 branches in Ghana, Germany, The Netherlands, The UK and USA. He was the chairman of the international presbytery from the inception of the church until he handed over to Clement Ancheabah his assistant in April 2009.²² He is currently the senior pastor of FGC Bolgatanga church with a membership of 2500 in attendance. He started out as a Pharmacist trained at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana. He left the pharmacy profession in 1988 to concentrate on building the church and dedicating his life to the work of ministry. Eastwood Anaba is a prolific writer with more than seventy pastoral level books to his credit. His weekly sermons dubbed ‘Love Revolution’ can be heard on 20 FM radio stations across Ghana and watched on Ghana Television as well as on Sky Channel in the UK. The emphases of his sermons are righteousness, love of God, discipline and order and the Holy Spirit.²³

²¹ James Kweku Saah, interview granted the researcher, August 13, 2011.

²² “Fountain Gate Chapel Gets New Leaders,” leading article, *Mirror*, 18 April 18, 2009, 34.

²³ Arthur, *The ‘heart’ of Charismatic Preaching*, 117-120; Eastwood Anaba Ministries. n.d. Biographies. Accessed June 17, 2011. http://www.eastwoodanaba.com/_about/biographies.php; Eastwood Anaba, interview by Justice A Arthur, January 23, 2011.

The preaching process and metaphors

In this paper, I have taken into consideration the entire sermonic process of the three Charismatic pastors. By sermonic process, I refer to the period between when the preacher is invited to the podium till s/he leaves the stage after the sermon. Generally, all the three preachers seem to gravitate towards a common trend, which appears to be the popular and universal style in the movement. The sermons follow a rhetorical organisation that can be classified as introduction, body and conclusion. In the introduction of the sermons, the preachers begin with a song, prayer, Bible reading and the announcement of the title of the sermon, although not always in this exact order, varying from preacher to preacher. The songs serve several functions namely to stimulate the preacher, create a charged atmosphere conducive for the flow of the Holy Spirit and to prepare the congregation for the sermon itself.²⁴ The initial prayer is either corporate or simply an opening prayer by the preacher, which serves the same purpose as the songs.

The Bible reading, which is characteristically in the Authorised King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, is either done by the preacher himself or with the help of an assistant or interpreter while the body of the sermons contained the principles and teachings extracted from the biblical text. It is in the body of the sermon that the preachers reason, argue and defend the ideas drawn out of the Scriptures. Sometimes, the sermon that follows the reading of the biblical text bears little or no relation to the text. Charismatic preachers frequently end their sermons with a summary of the sermon, a song or several of them and a time of prayer and ministration.

The prayer at the end of the sermon is always a collective one involving the entire congregation and led by the preacher with the backing of a prayer team or assisting pastors. The prayers are typically loud, spontaneous and sometimes action-packed. The prayers are used to recap the interpretation of the texts used, and the congregation is normally asked to pray over and assimilate what the preacher considered the meaning of the texts. Meanwhile, the time of ministration involves praying for the sick, breaking curses, exorcism and laying of hands

²⁴ Ankrah, interview, January 16, 2011.

for spiritual impartation by the preacher. Finally, an invitation for non-Christians to accept Christ as their Saviour popularly called “altar call” in Charismatic circles.

Within this sermonic period, there are several embodied experiences that need unpacking in order to understand their metaphoric value. Although there are both linguistic and non-linguistic types, my interest is in the latter category – the bodily movements and actions of the preachers, with the aim of understanding the correspondences between these source domains and the target domains. My choice of the embodied experiences is: (1) based on the frequency of usage in the sermons by the pastors and (2) primarily intuitive in nature.

The first characteristic observation I made is a consistent raising of hands. It is pervasive in all the churches as the congregation is asked to raise their hands averagely every five minutes. The members lift their hands as the preacher prays and when inspired by a song, usually initiated by the preacher. They also raise their hands accompanied by discourse markers or antiphonal responses such as “you are talking to me,” “you are blessing me,” “I am the one,” “hallelujah, amen” as the sermon gets under way. Occasionally, the preachers will call for the congregation to lift their hand and make a declaration or a confession such as “raise your hand and shout I am a winner” or “lift your hand and shout I am the one.”

The intention here is for the congregation to behave as if they are receiving something tangible from heaven. I also observed that all three pastors typically ask the members to raise their hands for prayer as they conclude their sermons. Korankye-Ankrah explains that raising the hand is an indication of touching the throne of God, from where mercy and good things originate.²⁵ Since the hands point expectantly towards the sky, where God is presumed to live, this seems to me to be based on the metaphor “God is up”. This appears to metaphorically symbolise the connection between God and his believers who worship him in the church, albeit, the lifting of hands is also employed as a technique to ensure the congregation remained attentive and focused on the sermon. In addition, the metaphor “God is up” is realised in

²⁵ Ankrah, interview, January 16, 2011.

Justice Anquandah Arthur

many different forms during the sermonic process including raising hands in prayer, looking up in anticipation of a blessing and clapping above their heads - referred to as a 'clap offering'.

Next, I observed Eastwood Anaba clothed in full military regalia while preaching during the annual spiritual emphasis conference dubbed 'Strategic Ambushment' at the House of Prayer in Bolgatanga, Ghana in December 2011. Members of the choir that ministered before he was invited to preach were also dressed in camouflaged military costumes. Some of the members of the congregation and leaders were similarly spotted in different types of military paraphernalia. The general theme for this annual conference was spiritual warfare, during which the congregation was encouraged to reflect on the combat readiness of Christians. Interestingly, throughout the sermonic procedure, the preacher employed military terminology and gestures to drum his message to the congregation.

This concept of a pastor preaching in military attire is novel in the Charismatic movement in Ghana since this is usually associated with the Salvation Army. Even though, it is obvious that there is literal interpretation of biblical texts involved in this concept of employing military jargons and accoutrements, it is also clear that this connotes the conceptual metaphor "Christians as soldiers" or "the Church as an army". Hence 'Christians' and the 'Church' in the two metaphors are respectively the target domains understood in terms of the corresponding source domains, 'soldiers' and 'army'. The "Christians as soldiers" metaphor is also seen explicitly in the idea of frowned faces exhibited by both the preachers and their congregations during the prayer sessions that accompany the sermonic activity. I submit that they frown because they consider prayer as a battleground where warriors must be battle-ready.

These metaphors become even more pronounced when Eastwood Anaba in a sermon titled, "The Armour of God I," re-enacts how the late Nigerian televangelist, Archbishop Benson Idahosa chased out a band of armed robbers from his house using only a Bible as a physical

weapon.²⁶ The preacher concludes that the armed robbers raided all the neighbouring houses except that of the late Charismatic preacher because he stood as a ‘soldier of the Lord’ with a physical Bible as his object of protection and attack. Moreover, I also observed James Saah using the physical Bible to cast out a supposed malevolent spirit from a lady through exorcism, as part of a sermon, he titled, “Witchcraft”.²⁷ These instances do not only correspond to the metaphor “Christians as soldiers” but also “the Bible as a weapon”, in which case the Bible as a target domain corresponds to the source domain, ‘weapon’.

Sam Korankye Ankrah confirms that the physical Bible could be used to combat one’s enemies.²⁸ The ‘church’ can therefore be considered as comprising of armies that correspond to the generals (pastors), the weapons used by the army are the Bible, prayer and ideas espoused from preaching. Also, the incessant use of the phrase ‘the Bible says’ by the preachers coupled with its associated gestures by the preachers also confirms the presence of the conceptual metaphor: “inanimate objects are people”. In this example, the Bible, which is an object, is personified and structured conceptually in terms of the above metaphor.

Furthermore, it is evidently clear in this movement that preachers normally give much attention to emotions than the explanation of the text. Shouting and spontaneous preaching are equated with the presence of the Spirit on a preacher. The higher the pitch of the preacher’s voice and speaking rapidly without leaving any room to take a breath between sentences is considered a sign or manifestation of the Holy Spirit.²⁹ Though the members are obviously exposed to higher noise levels they seem to appreciate it because higher noise levels are considered part of a lively church and obviously perceived as stimulating the presence of the Spirit.³⁰ The tendency for the preachers to equate anointed preaching to running up and down the aisle, jumping from

²⁶ Eastwood Anaba, “The Armour of God I.” Sermon, FGC Church Service, Bolgatanga, December 22, 2011.

²⁷ James Kweku Saah. “Witchcraft.” Sermon, ACI Church Service, Accra, June 12, 2011.

²⁸ Ankrah, interview, January 16, 2011.

²⁹ The modern PA systems fitted in the Cathedrals enable the pastors to emit noise levels beyond the national permitted levels.

³⁰ Ankrah, interview, January 16, 2011; Saah, interview, August 13, 2011.

the platform or even sitting or standing on the pulpit, as in the case of Eastwood Anaba, is apparent in all the three churches. To put it differently, it is a sort of “if you have not felt it, you have not got anything.” In one instance Rev. Anaba was extremely charged, to the extent that he jumped on to the preaching stand to continue his sermon. There are instances where the preachers could be seen sweating profusely and calling for extra towels to clean their perspiring faces. The loud shouts, the extreme physicality of the preachers as well as the energy exerted in the sermonic process suggests a correspondence to three conceptual metaphors namely “intensity is heat”, “unction is noise” and “significant is big”.

Kövecses affirms that the concept of metaphor in the body can be likened to physical activities such as chopping wood, running or a physiological state of being.³¹ Naturally, after some time of partaking in these activities, one begins to develop heat, feels hot and perhaps begins to sweat, which increases body heat. This correspondence between the intense nature of activities undertaken by the preachers and the body heat produced constitutes the basis for the conceptual metaphor: “intensity is heat”. Nevertheless, Kövecses argues that the connection between intensity and body heat is at the level of the body, and in this instance metaphor is to a degree in the body, as it is in language or thought.³² The conceptual metaphor: “unction is noise” is also realised from the link between noise levels and presence of the Holy Spirit, hence the presence of God is understood in terms of loudness and noise levels. Moreover, the conceptual metaphor “significant is big” is shown by how big the pulpits in these churches are, to the extent that pastors can jump on it or sit comfortably on it to present their sermons. A correspondence between the significance of the preacher and the size of their preaching stand is pervasive in the Charismatic churches in Ghana. All the three pastors have enormously large pulpits that are tailored to their needs; the size of the pulpit indicating their levels of influence in the Charismatic community. On the other hand, their assistants and young pastors use smaller preaching stands, which captures the notion that, in these churches, the significance of the preacher is perceived in terms of size. This is further

³¹ Kövecses, *Metaphor in Culture*, 18.

³² *Ibid.*, 18.

proved by the recurrent practice of making international preachers and popular senior pastors appear bigger in size than the respective local and associate ministers on event advertising boards and leaflets.

Additionally, in order to build the mood and spirit of the congregation and invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit, the preachers rely on a set of memorised verses of the Bible as well as certain phrases common to Charismatic Christians. James Saah particularly uses phrases like “God will catapult you into greatness” or “God will embarrass you with uncommon blessing” indiscriminately.³³ The verses of the Bible are either recited verbatim or paraphrased and the amount of verses committed into memory is seen as related to the depth of a preacher’s anointing. Eastwood Anaba is endowed with exceptional mental capacity having memorised countless biblical texts, which are employed during the sermonic activity. He recites the Scriptures with an enthusiastic and sonorous voice and gradually increases the tempo to either build the sermon to an emotional climax or develop a new point in the process. He literally shakes his chin, stringing words together, speaking quickly without leaving any breathing space in between sentences or verses.

The speech rhythms of all three preachers, the resonance of their voice, the pitch, the passion with which they deliver certain phrases or sentences and even the emphasis they put on particular words such as power, Holy Ghost, Jesus, anointing etc. are key points in the sermonic process.³⁴ This characteristic is widespread and in vogue in Charismatic circles, not only related to the three pastors under consideration. Once again, I suggest that at least there are two conceptual metaphors at play here: “intelligence is eloquence” and “unction is fluency”. In this particular case, ‘intelligence’ is mapped to ‘eloquence’ and ‘unction’ corresponds to ‘fluency’. It shows that one action can yield two or more conceptual metaphors. This is in line with Kövecses’ view that a particular bodily language can be represented

³³ James Kweku Saah, “Bloody little Girl,” Sermon, ACI Church Service, Accra, June 19, 2011.

³⁴ Samuel Korankye Ankrah, “Sound from Heaven I.” Sermon, RCI Church Service, Accra, September 11, 2011; Eastwood Anaba, “Letters to the Seven Churches (Ephesians): When your best is not enough.” Sermon, FGC Church Service, Bolgatanga, December 4, 2011; Eastwood Anaba, “Letters to the Seven Churches (Pergamum): When some contaminates all.” Sermon, FGC Church Service, Bolgatanga, December 17, 2011.

by one or several conceptual models that are typical to that embodied experience.³⁵

Also, illustrations of biblical narratives through preacher performances are a frequently explored strategy of communicating Scriptural texts in this group of churches. These are done through the use of audio-visuals and re-enactment of biblical stories through drama. On several occasions, I observed Korankye Ankrah passionately perform biblical stories such as the blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52; Lk 18:35-43), Joseph in Potiphar's house (Gen 39:1-11), Samson and Delilah (Jdgs 16) as part of his sermons. This act of staging events was taken to another level following an illustration on the acquisition of the group of warehouses that have now become *Ahenfie*, the headquarters of the RCI. Preaching on the sermon titled, 'Breaking Satan's Pride'.³⁶ He narrated and acted out how they used to meet in an old warehouse in the outskirts of Accra until the church purchased this new property, which is centrally located. He revealed that on the day of relocation to the new settlement, the entire membership of the church marched for about six kilometres from the old place to the new property, akin to the movement of the 'Jews from Egypt to the Promised Land.' He continued by demonstrating how he personally led the walk to 'the Promised Land like Moses in case of the Jews'.³⁷ After the relocation to the 'Promised Land', the church's name was changed from International Bible Worship Centre to Royalhouse Chapel International and the new headquarters was named *Ahenfie*. Interestingly, this whole staged episode through preaching is conceptualised in the metaphor: "the relocation of Royalhouse Chapel is the movement of the Jews from Egypt to the promised land". Also, the presence of the metaphor: "Church as a palace" in which instance 'Church' is understood with reference to a 'palace' and church members are mapped to royalty; the pastor corresponds to the king and church staff maps to palace staff.

³⁵ Zoltan Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 4-5.

³⁶ Samuel Korankye Ankrah, "Breaking Satan's Pride." Sermon, RCI Church Service, Accra, September 25, 2011

³⁷ Justice Arthur, "From 'Egypt' to 'Ahenfie': The Sacralisation of Space in a Ghanaian Charismatic Church," in *Religion and Space: Perspectives from African Experiences*, eds. S. B. Debele and J. A. Arthur (Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies Working Papers 15, 2016), 117-130; Ankrah, interview, January 16, 2011.

Lastly, as we have observed from the foregoing, congregational participation is central to Charismatic preaching in Ghana. The audience gets involved through handclaps, prayer, songs, and dance in addition to other call-and-response techniques employed by the preachers. These elements are occasionally spontaneous but are mostly demanded by the preachers. Handclapping is a recurring practice adopted by all the preachers to actively engage the congregation. While Sam Korankye Ankrah and James Saah generally request handclaps countless number of times, in Eastwood Anaba's case they are mostly done spontaneously. The preachers continuously solicit handclaps from the congregation by shouting, "give the Lord a hand," "put those hands together" or "give the Lord a clap offering."³⁸ Crawford has highlighted that these responses from the congregation help the preacher to determine his/her effectiveness in communication.³⁹

They also aid the preacher to discover whether the audience understand the message. While it is difficult to use these responses as a gauge to determine whether or not the congregation understands the sermon, it is clear that it gives the preacher an immediate feedback. Charismatic preaching is therefore, a group activity, albeit, the preacher has the floor. However, Korankye Ankrah argues that handclap and other antiphonal responses, frequent in Charismatic preaching are marks of 'a living church', which indicate the responsiveness of a congregation.⁴⁰ This view expressed by the preacher seems to be the widely accepted one within the Charismatic movement. Consequently, I propose the presence of the conceptual metaphor: "inanimate objects are people", where the church maps to a living entity that has breath and responds to stimuli. Moreover, praying and clapping simultaneously, a recurrent feature, which I observed on several occasions in the ACI and the RCI appear to be pervasive in these churches. James Saah claims to have introduced the phenomenon into

³⁸ Samuel Korankye Ankrah, "Sound from Heaven II." Sermon, RCI Church Service, Accra, September 18, 2011; Eastwood Anaba, "Letters to the Seven Churches (Smyrna): When your worst is not the worst." Sermon, FGC Church Service, Bolgatanga, December 11, 2011; James Kweku Saah, "New wine in New Wine Skin." Sermon, ACI Church Service, Accra, June 5, 2011.

³⁹ E. E. Crawford, *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995).

⁴⁰ Ankrah, interview, January 16, 2011.

Ghanaian Charismatic Christianity through his Jericho Hour prayer meetings. He argues that the concept of praying and clapping concurrently is a spiritual weapon employed to combat the devil.⁴¹ While it will be difficult to confirm the origin of the concept, I can infer here that the conceptual metaphor: “handclapping as a spiritual weapon” is present in the practice.

Concluding remarks

In this paper, I have attempted to evaluate Charismatic preaching in Ghana by considering features of bodily language and their corresponding metaphors during the sermonic process. I have argued that Charismatic preaching is rife with non-linguistic metaphors – and these become conduits through which not only spiritual concepts, but also the preachers’ thoughts and feelings are communicated. The body therefore becomes a bridge through which what is believed to be spiritual is conceptualised. It is also clear that majority of the symbolism and metaphors considered in this paper are embedded in cultural perspectives as well as in the preachers’ proclivity for literal interpretation of biblical texts. First, some of the metaphors and their correspondences might operate on a universal level and therefore not limited to any strand of Christianity or even the Ghanaian context. Nevertheless, when the entire mapping scheme is taken into consideration, we see that it is characterised by culture specific instances related specifically to Charismatic Christianity in Ghana. Moreover, although the metaphors grounded in bodily experiences such as “God is up” is realised in diverse forms, these varying realisations do not even allow for attributing them with universal status - they are partially universal. Secondly, preaching can be considered as a form of public reading of the Bible, which can aid in showing how interpretation is done in a Christian community.⁴² With this perspective of preaching as a way of interpreting the Scriptures, it can be argued that there is a clear liking for literal interpretation in Charismatic churches, based on the metaphors discussed in this paper. Nevertheless, this is to be expected as many pastors in this movement including the three covered in this

⁴¹ Saah, interview, August 13, 2011.

⁴² Hillary B. Mijoga, “Interpreting the Bible in African Sermons,” in *Interpreting the New Testament in Africa*, eds. M Getui, T Maluleke and J Ukpong (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2001).

paper, are untrained in scientific methods of reading the Scriptures and consequently the tendency to read the Bible as ordinary readers.

Dr. Justice Anquandah Arthur

Faculty of Theology and Mission
Pentecost University College
Sowutoum, GA (Ghana)