

# NAVIGATING THE SHADES AND NEXUS OF GHANAIAN PENTECOSTALISM(S): A SEARCH FOR AN APPROPRIATE METAPHOR

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**Christian Tsekpoe**

***Abstract:** This paper explores the diversities as well as unifying features of Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity. From an emic point of view as a Ghanaian Pentecostal cleric and a Pentecostal scholar, the author analyses a compendium of scholarly literature of various typologies and nomenclature used to delineate the various shades of Ghanaian Pentecostalism(s). The paper contends that even though there are divergent perspectives and emphases within the movement, Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity is bound together within a nexus of shared elements. The fact is that the movement can be considered from a unified perspective rather than a rambling and disjointed phenomenon. The paper, therefore, finds the use of a wave metaphor in describing the movement more appropriate than the use of descriptive typologies.*

**Key Words:** Christianity, Ghana, Pentecostal-Charismatic, Typology, Wave Metaphor.

## **Introduction**

I begin by describing Pentecostalism as a Holy Spirit-empowered community.<sup>1</sup> This definition immediately evokes some queries: What possible theological justification can there be for such a broad definition? Is the Pentecostal movement monolithic? Are all Holy Spirit-empowered communities Pentecostals? This paper aims to break down the barriers that provide grounds for possible bifurcation of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in Ghana. Although the fact that Pentecostalism is not monolithic is appreciated, we draw attention to elements that connect the diverse forms of manifestations within the movement.

Further, the paper discusses typology in Ghanaian Pentecostalism and proposes using a wave metaphor rather than descriptive adjectives to classify the various expressions of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Ghana. I argue that using the wave metaphor to classify Pentecostalism can reduce the current ambiguity one encounters to adopt a fitting nomenclature. Furthermore, the wave metaphor can serve as a unifying approach to encourage the churches under investigation to

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<sup>1</sup> The paper is an update of part of Chapter One of the author's unpublished PhD thesis submitted to Middlesex University, UK in June 2020.

see themselves as different waves of the same movement as they work together towards the *Missio Dei*.

### **Precursors of Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity**

To discuss the development of Ghanaian Pentecostalism, we should not overlook the fact that the growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic mission in Ghana owes a lot to the Traditional Western Mission Churches (TWMCs). They pioneered Christian mission in the country, few centuries before Pentecostalism emerged.<sup>2</sup> Just as in other parts of Africa, in the south of the Sahara, European Christian missionaries from the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian churches had carried out pioneering mission work for more than four hundred years before Pentecostalism emerged in Ghana.<sup>3</sup>

By the time Pentecostalism began in the early twentieth century, Christianity had been experienced in almost all the regions in Ghana and had contributed significantly to the building of schools, hospitals, and the translation of the Bible and other literature into various vernacular languages.<sup>4</sup> These noteworthy contributions became effective tools that aided the development and growth of the Pentecostal mission in the country. Pentecostalism in Ghana is, therefore, part of the ‘unintended fruit’ of the missionary movements that preceded it.<sup>5</sup> Two of these contributions are discussed below.

#### *Vernacular Translations*

The translation of the Bible and other Christian literature into various vernacular languages is undoubtedly one of the significant

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<sup>2</sup> Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, a Ghanaian scholar, describes the churches established by European Christian missionaries in Ghana as Traditional Western Mission Churches (TWMCs). See J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2005), 15.

<sup>3</sup> Hans Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967), 55, 106; Lamin Sanneh, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1983), 146-51.

<sup>4</sup> Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, 55, 106, 126-29; Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 146-51; Ype Schaaf, *On Their Way Rejoicing: The History and Role of the Bible in Africa*, rev. ed. (Cumbria: Paternoster, 2002), 46-50; Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalizing African Economy* (Bloomington, India: Indiana University, 2004), 21-22; Clifton R. Clarke, *African Christology: Jesus in Post-Missionary African Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2011), 46.

<sup>5</sup> Wilbert R. Shenk, *Changing Frontiers of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 59-60.

achievements of the TWMCs in Ghana and other parts of Africa. For example, as early as 1744, Jacobus Elisa Johannes Capitein (1717-1747), a Ghanaian slave, who became a minister of the Netherlands Reformed Church and served as chaplain at Elmina, a slave castle at Cape Coast in Ghana, translated the ‘Twelve Articles of Faith’ into the Fanti language.<sup>6</sup> The New Testament was translated into the Ga, Twi and Ewe languages in 1859, 1863 and 1877, respectively.<sup>7</sup> Johannes Zimmermann, a Basel missionary, translated the entire Bible into the Ga language and wrote a Ga grammar book by the end of the nineteenth century. Johannes Gottlieb Christaller, also a Basel missionary, translated the entire Bible into the Twi language, developed a Twi Dictionary and Grammar in 1875, and compiled 3,600 Twi proverbs in 1879. By 1915 the German missionaries had produced the entire Ewe Bible. These underscore the fact that we had the whole Bible in Ga, Twi and Ewe, three major Ghanaian languages, by the inception of Pentecostalism.<sup>8</sup>

Lamin Sanneh argues that the missionaries promoted indigenisation or inculturation through Bible translation. He noted that this “helped nurse the sentiments for the national cause, which mother tongue crystallised and incited.”<sup>9</sup> Sanneh contended that “Translatability is the source of the success of Christianity across cultures.”<sup>10</sup> The vernacular translations ignited the spirit of indigenous freedom and spontaneity at the initial stages of the movement. It also promoted the quirkiness of the liturgy in the movement and led to the Africanization of the Gospel.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the availability of vernacular Bibles is among the factors that contributed to the successful spread and growth of Pentecostalism in Ghana's urban and rural towns.

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<sup>6</sup> Schaaf, *On Their Way Rejoicing*, 37.

<sup>7</sup> Schaaf, *On Their Way Rejoicing*, 48-9.

<sup>8</sup> Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, 55-106; Schaaf, *On Their Way Rejoicing*, 37-51; Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Books Orbis, 1989), 123-24.

<sup>9</sup> Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 123.

<sup>10</sup> Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 51.

<sup>11</sup> Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 51; Allan H. Anderson, “A ‘Failure in Love’? Western Missions and the Emergence of African Initiated Churches in the Twentieth Century,” *Missiology* 29, no. 3 (2001): 280–81.

### *Establishment of Formal Educational Systems and Training*

Until the later part of the nineteenth century, when the government began to take more interest in formal education, the TWMCs were largely responsible for building schools in Ghana.<sup>12</sup> The people who could read the Bible and other correspondences in both the vernacular and English languages trained in these schools. Some of them became pioneers of Ghanaian Pentecostalism, whilst others assisted the few white Pentecostal missionaries.

Historical records are unambiguous that apart from a few exceptions, many of the indigenous pioneers of African Pentecostal mission were people who had benefited from either the formal educational system or lay leadership training of the TWMCs. For example, the Liberian William Wade Haris (1865-1929) and his contemporaries in other parts of Africa: Garrick Sokari Braide (c. 1885-1918) of the Niger Delta, Nigeria, and Simon Kimbangu of Congo, who spurred the various spiritual innovations in western and central Africa, were educated and nurtured by mission churches.<sup>13</sup> If Ogbu Kalu's assertion that such people "tilled the soil on which modern Pentecostalism thrives"<sup>14</sup> is true, then it is apposite to contend that the TWMCs provided the tools for the tilling.

In Ghana, indigenous pioneers of Pentecostal churches include: Joseph William Egyanka Appiah (founder of the Musama Disco Christo Church), Prophet Samuel Nyankson (whose healings, miracles and other spiritual activities influenced Egyanka Appiah), Samuel Brako (founder of the Saviour Church), Peter Anim (founder of Christ Apostolic Church), and James Kwaku Gyimah (a key person in the formation of the Church of Pentecost). They were all educated and nurtured in schools founded by mission churches.<sup>15</sup> Regrettably, the

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<sup>12</sup> Sanneh, *West African Christianity*, 146-51; Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (Accra: Centre for Pentecostal And Charismatic Studies, 2001), 18-19.

<sup>13</sup> Christian G. Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana: A Study of 'Spiritual Churches'* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1962), 28-30; Watson A. Omulokoli, "William Wade Harris: Premier African Evangelist," *African Journal of Evangelical Theology* 21, no. 1 (2002): 5; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 19; Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, "Ghana's New Prophetism: Antecedents and Some Characteristic Features," *Australian Pentecostal Studies* 15 (2016): 3-4.

<sup>14</sup> Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008), x.

<sup>15</sup> See Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 28-30, 68-9; Robert W. Wyllie, "Pioneers of Ghanaian Pentecostalism: Peter Anim and James McKeown," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 6, no. 2 (1974): 109-22; Yaw Bredwa-Mensah, "The Church of Pentecost in Retrospect: 1937-1960," in *James*

TWMCs failed to recognise these renewals and spiritual experiences of such people as the fruit of their labour. They, therefore, criticised and condemned such spiritual experiences, setting the tone for the emergence of independent Pentecostal denominations in the country.<sup>16</sup>

### **Origins, Waves and Development of Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity**

Despite the diversities and multiplicities within Pentecostalism, the movement reflects unique features, such as emphasising the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in their meetings, oral liturgy, narrative theology and witness.<sup>17</sup> Emphasis on the practical experience of the Holy Spirit's power provides grounds to group them under the inclusive category as Pentecostals. From the inception of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement in Ghana, the movement has grown in various waves and forms. Asamoah-Gyadu states that it is 'the most cogent, powerful and visible evidence of religious renewal and influence in Ghana'.<sup>18</sup> Although they come in diverse waves, with each wave having a specific emphasis, all the waves emphasise the practical experience of the Holy Spirit's power. Using their historical epochs of emergence and their theological orientations and emphasis, we discuss the different shades of the movement, describing them as waves. Asamoah-Gyadu shows that the emergence of Pentecostal innovations and creativity in Ghana can be viewed historically as waves.<sup>19</sup>

#### *First Wave Pentecostal Movement in Ghana*

The early twentieth century witnessed the emergence of churches usually referred to in the literature as African Indigenous Churches

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*McKeown Memorial Lectures: 50 Years of The Church of Pentecost*, ed. Opoku Onyinah (Accra: The Church of Pentecost, 2004), 9.

<sup>16</sup> Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana*: 35-6; Opoku Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism: Witchcraft and Demonology in Ghana* (Dorchester: Deo Publishing, 2012), 112.

<sup>17</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, "After Twenty Years of Research on Pentecostalism," *International Review of Mission* LXXV, no. 297 (1986): 5-6; Allan H. Anderson, "African Pentecostals in Mission," *Studies in Missiological Themes* 87, no. 3 (1999): 389-404; Allan H. Anderson, *To the Ends of the Earth: Pentecostalism and the Transformation of World Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013), 46.

<sup>18</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 18.

(AICs).<sup>20</sup> They are generally referred to as *Sunsum Sore* (Spiritual Churches) in Ghana, similar to *Aladura* (Praying) Churches in Nigeria, *Roho* (Spirit) churches in Kenya, *Akurinu* or *Arathi* (Prophet) Churches in East Africa, and Zionist Churches in Southern Africa.<sup>21</sup> In Ghana, the origin of this wave, which I refer to as the first wave of Ghanaian Pentecostalism, can be linked with the missionary activities of the Prophet William Wade Harris, the Grebo Liberian, whose missionary work spanned through the coasts of West Africa and entered Ghana in 1914. Harris' ministry in Ghana attracted many followers and achieved a lot of success in numerical terms.<sup>22</sup> Following Harris was John Swatson and Sampson Oppong, who also laboured as great evangelists in the Methodist church. Although neither Harris and Swatson nor Oppong started an independent church, it was after their ministries that many independent pneumatic churches began in Ghana.

The ground-breaking work of Christian Baëta covers at least five major churches and four smaller ones under this wave in Ghana.<sup>23</sup> The churches are the Twelve Apostles Church (TAC), the African Faith Tabernacle Congregation (AFTC), which started in 1919, the Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) founded in 1922, the Saviour Church (SC) founded in 1924, the Apostolic Revelation Society (ARS), which started in 1945, and the Eternal Sacred Order of Cherubim and Seraphim Society (ESOCSS), which originated from Nigeria and was established in Ghana in 1931.<sup>24</sup>

Many prominent pioneers of this wave were from the Methodist Church tradition. David Burnett identifies several revival experiences within the Methodist Church Ghana (MCG) under the ministries of Thomas Birch Freeman (1809-1890) and Joshua Hayford between 1874 and 1885, which seem to have prepared the spiritual atmosphere

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<sup>20</sup> The acronym AICs also refers to other related terms such as African Initiated Churches, African Independent Churches and African Initiated Churches.

<sup>21</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 18-23; Timothy John Padwick, "The Spirit Alone": Writing the Oral Theology of a Kenyan Independent Church," *Transformation: An International Journal of Holistic Mission Studies* 35, no. 1 (2018): 15-29.

<sup>22</sup> Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 9; Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 56-61; Omulokoli, "William Wade Harris," 5-6; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana*.

<sup>24</sup> Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana*.

for their emergence.<sup>25</sup> These churches grew rapidly in Ghana partly because they introduced indigenous elements into their worship. Besides, the then President, Dr Kwame Nkrumah, a Pan-Africanist, was attracted to the MDCC because the latter's claim to a mission of spiritual liberation of Christianity from Western elements appeared to resonate well with Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party's (CPP) ideology of African Independence.<sup>26</sup>

A major contribution of this wave to Ghanaian Christianity is their emphasis on healing diseases and the exorcism of evil spirits. This was an alternative to idol worship for those who have converted to Christianity and did not want to seek help from traditional shrines for their physical and spiritual problems. Their method of healing, which involves the use of traditional herbs, seems to merge both Pentecostal spirituality and African traditional religiosity, a character that attracted many people to them.<sup>27</sup>

By the 1970s and 1980s, however, a major decline occurred in these churches.<sup>28</sup> Various reasons, including persistent resistance to foreign influence and attempt to preserve, almost entirely, the cultural heritage of Ghana were among the factors that accounted for this decline.

Burnett noted that some of the educated young people of the MDCC, for example, openly raised concerns and expressed dissatisfaction about the Church's traditional practices such as animal sacrifice, traditional chieftaincy structure and ceremonies around the graves of founding leaders.<sup>29</sup> Similar trends seemed to have taken place in other African countries, including some *Roho* Churches in Kenya.<sup>30</sup> Writing from the Kenyan context, John Padwick noted that during a youth convention in one of the churches, one youth referred to the long white gowns (called *kanzu* by its members) as 'sacks', and complained that

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<sup>25</sup> David George Burnett, "Charisma and Community in a Ghanaian Independent Church" (PhD Thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1997), 50-58.

<sup>26</sup> Burnett, "Charisma and Community," 190-95.

<sup>27</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 43.

<sup>28</sup> GEC, "Ghana Evangelism Committee Report National Church Survey: Facing the Unfinished Task of the Church in Ghana" (Accra: Ghana Evangelism Committee, 1993), 32; Burnett, "Charisma and Community," 2, 9, 113; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 29-30.

<sup>29</sup> Burnett, "Charisma and Community," 265-66."

<sup>30</sup> Timothy John Padwick, "Spirit, Desire and the World: Roho Churches of Western Kenya in the Era of Globalization" (PhD Thesis; University of Birmingham, 2003), 191-2.

when worn, one cannot differentiate between men and women.<sup>31</sup> In Ghana, it was in the wake of these dissatisfactions among the younger members of these churches that the second wave (usually referred to as Classical Pentecostals) emerged. Many young people left their denominations and joined this second wave.<sup>32</sup>

### *Second Wave Pentecostal Movement in Ghana*

The emergence of the second wave of Pentecostalism in Ghana may be traced to the local initiatives of a group of young people, who used to meet for prayers in a town called Asamankese Anum in the eastern region of Ghana. Peter Anim, who was originally a Presbyterian, later joined the group from Anum Bosso in 1917 and subsequently emerged as the group leader.<sup>33</sup> Anim knew about the Holy Spirit movement by reading *The Apostolic Faith Magazine*, a publication of the Apostolic Faith Church in the USA.<sup>34</sup> Anim's desire for baptism in the Holy Spirit motivated him and his followers to pray regularly for such an experience. During my fieldwork at Asamankese in 2015, my interviewees clarified that Anim and his group were not the first to experience glossolalia or speaking in tongues in Asamankese. Instead, it was Stephen Owiredu of Brekumasu, a member of the Presbyterian Church, who first experienced it.<sup>35</sup>

Nana Daniel Ntiaku Asihene of Anum-Asamankese, whose father was one of the founding members of Anim's ministry, reveals that Stephen Owiredu was initially not a member of Anim's group as evidence in the story thus:

In 1930, Owiredu's wife gave birth to a set of female twins. Unfortunately, one of the twins died in 1932 and the second one also became ill. Fearing that this child will also die, Owiredu took her to his farm, placed her on an ant hill and began to pray for her healing.

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<sup>31</sup> Padwick, "Spirit, Desire and the World," 192.

<sup>32</sup> Tsekpoe, "'Local Species' in African Soil," 26.

<sup>33</sup> Nana Daniel Ntiaku and Prophet J. A. Okumfo, interviews granted the researcher, Asamankese Anum (ER), April 27, 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Subsequent to Anim's affiliation with the Apostolic Faith Church in the USA, Anim affiliated with the Faith Tabernacle Church also in the USA. This church was not a Pentecostal church but had a very strong teaching on healing without any recourse to medication. See Larbi, *Pentecostalism*; Bredwa-Mensah, "The Church of Pentecost."

<sup>35</sup> Ntiaku, Okumfo, Mercy Owiredu and Brekumasu, interviews granted the researcher at Asamankese, April 27, 2015; Emmanuel Asamoah-Larbi, interviews granted the researcher at Asamankese April 28, 2015.



Whiles praying, he began to speak ‘a strange language,’ which was later described as speaking in tongues; an evidence that he had been baptised in the Holy Spirit. Since the Presbyterian church could not accommodate Owuredu’s experience within their fold, Anim’s group was contacted about the issue. A delegation of four people was sent to Brekumasu, not too far from Asamankese, to bring Owuredu to the place where Anim’s group had gathered to pray. Upon arriving at the village and meeting Owuredu, who was still speaking in tongues, the four delegates also received the Holy Spirit baptism and began to speak in tongues. The four, together with Owuredu walked from Brekumasu back to Anum-Asamankese. Upon entering the room where, expectant brethren were already gathered and praying, some members of the group also received the baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanied by glossolalia. This gave popularity to Anim’s group and people could walk long distances to Asamankese in order to pray for the Holy Spirit baptism.<sup>36</sup>

Directly linked with the experience of Owuredu and Anim’s group in Asamankese is the experience of Kwaku Gyimah in Akroso, about 16km from Asamankese. Prior to Owuredu’s experience in 1932, Kwaku Gyimah, also a Presbyterian in Akroso, read about the Holy Spirit from the same *Apostolic Faith Magazine*, which might have been in circulation in Ghana at the time. Through his desire for the Holy Spirit, he received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. Since his experience could also not be entertained in the Presbyterian Church at Akroso, he began preaching the gospel on the streets. Gyimah, who had also gathered few followers at this time, got into contact with Anim’s group, and both groups began to have periodic interactions.<sup>37</sup>

In 1935, Peter Anim affiliated the Church he was leading with the UK Apostolic Church, which led to the sending of James McKeown in 1937 to the then Gold, Coast now Ghana.<sup>38</sup> Peter Anim’s group and

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<sup>36</sup> Ntiaku, interview granted the researcher, April 27, 2015. This story is also confirmed by other interlocutors, such as prophets J. A. Okumfo and D. K. Owusu, who were leaders of Prophet Stephen Owuredu Memorial Prayer Camp in Brekumasu. I also met 85-year old Mercy Owuredu (popularly known as Maame Yaa Attaa), the little girl Stephen Owuredu was praying for in 1932, when he received the Holy Spirit baptism. She also confirmed the story as was passed on to her by her father.

<sup>37</sup> Apostle J. S. Gyimah (Rtd.), interview granted the researcher at the Pentecost Convention Centre, May 12, 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Prior to the affiliation in 1935, Apostle Peter Anim established contacts with Pastor David Odubanjo, the leader of the Faith Tabernacle Church in Nigeria. Both Anim and Odubanjo subsequently affiliated their churches with the UK Apostolic Church. See J. Kwabena Asamoah-

Kweku Gyimah's group eventually merged into one church under McKeown and the Apostolic Church. Not long after, this group broke into three: the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), the Apostolic Church (AC) and the Church of Pentecost (CoP). Here lies the beginning of the second wave of Pentecostalism in Ghana. The three denominations are direct offshoots of the mission activities of Peter Anim, Kweku Gyimah and James McKeown.<sup>39</sup>

In 1931, the Assemblies of God missionaries had arrived in Ghana and started evangelising from the country's northern territories. They are a direct offshoot of the Azusa street revival that began with the ministries of Charles Parham (1873-1929) and William Seymour (1870-1922) in the USA.<sup>40</sup> The contribution of Lloyd and Shirer (who were the first AoG missionaries in Ghana) to Christian mission can be seen in their ability to plant several churches within the northern part of Ghana at a time when Christian mission in Ghana was mainly centred in the South. The Shirers identified with the indigenous people, learned their languages, and even contributed to translating the Bible into Dagbani, one of the indigenous Ghanaian languages.<sup>41</sup>

### *Third Wave Pentecostal Movement in Ghana*

The third wave comprises mainly of non-denominational Christian fellowships on University campuses and communities. It began already in the early 1960s.<sup>42</sup> Prominent among them are Scripture Union (SU), Town Fellowships (TF), Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical Students (GHAFES), Full Gospel Business Men Fellowship (FGBMF) and Women's Aglow Fellowship (WAF) now known as

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Gyandu, "Born of Water and Spirit": Pentecostal/Charismatic Christianity in Africa," in *African Christianity: An African Story*, ed. Ogbu Kalu (Pretoria: Business Print Center, 2002), 389; Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 103-6.

<sup>39</sup> Bredwa-Mensah, "The Church of Pentecost."

<sup>40</sup> Gary B. McGee, "Assemblies of God Mission Theology: A Historical Perspective," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 10, no. 4 (1986): 166-318; Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 69-70; Paul Frimpong-Manso, *Fire from the North: The Origins, Growth, Development and Influence of Assemblies of God, Ghana* (Tema: DigiBooks Ghana Ltd, 2018), 25.

<sup>41</sup> Frimpong-Manso, *Fire from the North*, 25, 67.

<sup>42</sup> Samuel Brefo Adubofour, "Evangelical Parachurch Movements in Ghanaian Christianity: C. 1950-Early 1990s" (Ph.D thesis; University of Edinburgh, 1994); Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 85-6; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 28.

Aglow International.<sup>43</sup> Some of them later developed into independent churches.

#### *Fourth Wave Pentecostal Movement in Ghana*

The fourth wave, generally referred to as Charismatic Ministries (CMs) in Ghana, emerged in the 1970s. Asamoah-Gyadu describes them as local movements with a global character because of their music and ICT tools in worship. They are most comfortable with the use of English language in their liturgy. In Ghana, they have been growing exponentially, with their membership mainly being the youth. These churches exhibit some characteristics of megachurches found South Korea and elsewhere in the world.<sup>44</sup> They seem to be responding effectively to the religious needs of the youth but neglecting the needs of the older generations and rural communities.

#### *Fifth Wave Pentecostal Churches in Ghana*

The fifth wave of the Pentecostal innovation in Ghana is what Quayesi-Amakye refers to as New Prophetic Churches (NPCs). These churches are similar to what Larbi calls Prophet-healing Churches, and Anderson designates as Pentecostalist Prayer Camps.<sup>45</sup> These churches resemble those of the first wave in their liturgy and emphasis on the existential needs of their followers.<sup>46</sup> The church usually develops around the gift of one key leader provides prophetic directions to the followers. Nonetheless, they differ from the first wave in their Western dress code and their adoption modern technological tools for their liturgy. It is important to indicate that some of the churches that belong to the first wave have innovatively metamorphosed in character to become part of the fifth wave.

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<sup>43</sup> For detailed work on these non-denominational movements and para-church groups, see Adubofour, "Evangelical Parachurch Movements."

<sup>44</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 31.

<sup>45</sup> Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 86; Allan H. Anderson, "Types and Butterflies: African Initiated Churches and European Typologies," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25, no. 3 (2001): 107–13.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph Quayesi-Amakye, "Prophetism in Ghana's New Prophetic Churches," *Journal of European Pentecostal Theological Association* 35, no. 2 (2015), 164.

## The Problem of Typology in Ghanaian Pentecostalism

The Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic scene has been changing constantly from its inception to the extent that many of the typologies used to describe the phenomenon at a particular time, have almost become misnomers by the emergence of another wave of Pentecostal innovation. For this reason Omenyo observes that no single typology can appropriately describe the Pentecostal groups in Ghana.<sup>47</sup> The Church of Pentecost (CoP) in Ghana, for example, has been described variously by scholars as a classical Pentecostal church,<sup>48</sup> an indigenous church,<sup>49</sup> an indigenous classical Pentecostal church,<sup>50</sup> or an indigenous, independent, Classical Pentecostal denomination.<sup>51</sup> These descriptions are due to the general observation that the CoP has taken on an indigenous character<sup>52</sup> that presents a difficulty for describing it merely as a classical Pentecostal church. Meanwhile, in Ghanaian Pentecostalism, scholars have attempted to distinguish between what they consider to be classical Pentecostal churches from those they refer to as African Indigenous Churches (AICs).<sup>53</sup> This makes the various descriptions of the CoP equivocal.

Further, an examination of current developments and innovations within the CoP itself makes the situation more complex. Currently, the CoP has been able to accommodate different waves of Pentecostal innovations such as prayer camps, Pentecost International Worship Centres (PIWCs) and Pentecost Students and Associates (PENSA) alongside its traditional congregations. Prayer centres/camps in the CoP are places of worship that can be considered as congregations of the Church. They are, however, different from the traditional CoP congregations because some of the prayer centres provide accommodation facilities for the sick and the afflicted who sometimes spend days, weeks or even months, seeking spiritual solutions to their

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<sup>47</sup> Cephas N. Omenyo, "The Charismatic Renewal Movement in Ghana," *Pneuma* 16, no. 1 (1994): 175.

<sup>48</sup> Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 67.

<sup>49</sup> D. K. Arman, "Introduction," in *A History of The Church of Pentecost*, ed. Opoku Onyinah (Accra: The Church of Pentecost, 2005), I: xii–xiv.

<sup>50</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, "Pentecostalism in Africa and the Changing Face of Christian Mission: Pentecostal/ Charismatic Renewal in Ghana," *Mission Studies* 19 (2002): 24.

<sup>51</sup> Amos Jimmy Markin, *Transmitting the Spirit in Missions: The History and Growth of the Church of Pentecost* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2019), 129.

<sup>52</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 88.

<sup>53</sup> Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 66-7; Onyinah, *Pentecostal Exorcism*, 113, 123.

predicaments. In August 2017, there were 42 recognised prayer centres in CoP in Ghana.<sup>54</sup>

Some practices and teachings that take place in these prayer centres, such as emphasis on healing, deliverance and prophetic directions, are similar to such practices in churches described either as Prophet-healing or New Prophetic churches.<sup>55</sup> What distinguishes the CoP prayer centres from the other Prophet-healing churches in Ghana is that the CoP prayer centres have been absorbed into the established structures of the Church. This makes the leaders of the centres accountable to the leadership of the CoP. This also provides an opportunity for the Church to organise annual seminars for all leaders of prayer centres and training for them on how to handle some spiritual, ethical and other related challenges associated with the healing and deliverance ministry. Thus, spurious manifestations and manipulations are mitigated to the barest minimum.<sup>56</sup>

Pentecost International Worship Centres (PIWCs) are urban-type model congregations that developed within the CoP in 1993. The rationale behind the establishment of the PIWCs is to provide a well-organised, cross-cultural church for the emerging generation of Ghanaians, who prefer to worship in English language or a multi-cultural environment. It is also to provide a place of worship for people of non-Ghanaian cultural backgrounds, who reside in Ghana and may want a place of worship. Right from inception, the PIWCs do not adhere to some of the traditional practices of the CoP, such as gender segregation in church and the practice of head covering by women.<sup>57</sup> These congregations are much closer in outlook to the churches normally referred to as Charismatic Ministries (CMs) in Ghana, especially in their ability to incorporate global influences into their liturgy and thereby attract a youthful membership. What distinguishes the CoP's PIWCs from the churches called CMs is the latter's over-dependence

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<sup>54</sup> The Church of Pentecost, "Update on Prayer Centres as at August 2017" (Accra: The Church of Pentecost Headquarters, 2017).

<sup>55</sup> Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 87; Anderson, "Types and Butterflies," 108; Quayesi-Amakye, "Prophetism," 162.

<sup>56</sup> Tsekpoe, "'Local Species' in African Soil," 16.

<sup>57</sup> Kwadwo N. Opoku Onyinah, "Address by the International Missions Director, at a Meeting with the Presbyters of the English Language Assemblies of The Church of Pentecost, Greater Accra Region," Held at the ATTC Kokomlemlé - Accra, on 22 July 1992; Kwadwo N. Opoku Onyinah, "Address by the International Missions Director," Accra, on 4 August 1992; Kwadwo N. Opoku Onyinah, "Address by the International Missions Director," Accra, on 6 May 1993.

on the founder-leader, whilst the former operates under centralised administrative structure.

Pentecost Students and Associates (PENSA) is the student wing of the Youth Ministry of the CoP. This comprises CoP and non-CoP students on senior high schools and tertiary institutions, who come together in fellowship and worship. PENSA is similar to non-denominational student groups, such as the Scripture Union (SU) and the Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical Students (GHAFES) on university campuses in Ghana and elsewhere.<sup>58</sup> The word ‘Associates’ in the acronym ‘PENSA,’ for example, makes room for students who are not CoP members but want to fellowship or ‘associate’ with the group whilst on campus.

The ability to accommodate these different waves of Pentecostal innovation within the fold of CoP makes it difficult to just describe the CoP as a classical Pentecostal church. Such nomenclature may not be able to take care of the historical and socio-cultural innovations that have taken place within the denomination. The emergence of English Assemblies, campus ministries and prayer camps in other Pentecostal denominations in Ghana is a pointer to similar difficulties in classification of these churches.

As Hollenweger indicates, the “Problems of establishing the extent and character of the charismatic renewal are almost insurmountable because, first, the scene is changing all the time; second, there is no accepted definition of the charismatic renewal; and third, it is almost impossible to get accurate statistics and descriptions.”<sup>59</sup>

The first two problems are the challenges one is likely to encounter in exploring typologies in Ghanaian Pentecostalism. Despite these difficulties, some Ghanaian scholars have attempted some classifications based on historical, cultural and theological

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<sup>58</sup> Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 196-200; Cephas N. Omenyo, “Charismatic Churches in Ghana and Contextualization,” *Exchange* 31, no. 3 (2002): 252–77; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 107-110.

<sup>59</sup> Walter J. Hollenweger, “Charismatic Renewal in the Third World : Implications for Mission,” *Occasional Bulletin* 4, no. 2 (1980): 68–73.

categories.<sup>60</sup> Three of these typologies are discussed as shown in the diagram below:

*Three different typologies of Ghanaian Pentecostalism by three Ghanaian scholars of Pentecostalism*

<b>Cephas Omenyo</b>	AICs/ Spiritual Churches	Classical Pentecostal Churches	Charismatic Inter-denominational fellowships	Charismatic Renewal in the Mainline Churches	Independent Charismatic Ministries	
<b>Kingsley Larbi</b>	AICs/ Spiritual Churches	Classical Pentecostal Churches	Para-Church Movements	Charismatic Movements in the Mainline Churches	Neo-Pentecostal Movements	Pentecostalist Prayer Camps/ Prophet-Healing Prayer Camps
<b>Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu</b>	<i>Sunsum Sore</i>	Western Mission Related Pentecostal Denominations	Neo-Pentecostal Movement/ Charismatic Churches			

Using Bittlinger's three-fold typology as a starting point, Dovo makes three broad classifications of Pentecostalism in Ghana. Omenyo, however, dismisses the use of Bittlinger's typology, arguing that it "is not very fitting for the Ghanaian religious scene [because] it conspicuously excludes the Independent Churches, while the Pentecostal movement which began in 1901 is included." Omenyo, therefore, builds on Dovo's typology and proposes a five-fold typology as follows: First, Independent or Spiritual Churches; second, classical Pentecostal movement; third, neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic interdenominational fellowships; fourth, Charismatic renewal groups in the mainline churches and fifth, independent Charismatic churches and ministries.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Elom Dovo, "A Comparative Overview of Independent Churches and Charismatic Ministries in Ghana," *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology* 2 (1992); Cephas N. Omenyo, "The Charismatic Renewal," *Pneuma* 16, no. 1 (1994): 169-85; Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 66-87; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 18-29.

<sup>61</sup> Omenyo, "The Charismatic Renewal," 174-75.

On his part, Larbi proposes a six-fold typology for Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Ghana. In his classification, Larbi identifies Omenyo's neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic interdenominational fellowships as 'para-church movement.' He then divides Omenyo's independent charismatic churches and ministries into two. He names them 'neo-Pentecostal movement' and 'Pentecostalist prayer camps'. Larbi, however, maintains Omenyo's typology for 'spiritual churches', classical Pentecostals and 'charismatic renewal in the mainline churches.'<sup>62</sup>

Using the metaphor of waves, Asamoah-Gyadu returns to a three-fold typology. He proposes that "This metaphor [of waves] is apposite, for, like waves on the seashore; various forms of Pentecostal movement have swept through the Ghanaian religious scene during the past century."<sup>63</sup> Like Turner<sup>64</sup> and Meyer,<sup>65</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu argues that current developments in African Christianity have rendered the use of such designations as African independent churches, African initiated churches, African indigenous churches or African instituted churches ambiguous in describing the first wave of the Pentecostal movement in Ghana. He argues that "Innovations keep occurring within African Christianity, which, although led by African, prefers to define themselves in terms of first-century Christianity and the international networks to which they belong. Moreover, these new churches initiated by Africans are also independent in the same sense as the AICs."<sup>66</sup>

Appealing to many reasons, including popular vernacular expression for these churches, Asamoah-Gyadu uses the Akan term *sunsum sɔre*<sup>67</sup> to describe this first wave. He then describes the second wave as "Western Mission-Related Pentecostal Denominations." These are the same as what earlier scholars have labelled as 'classical Pentecostals.'<sup>68</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu calls the third wave 'Neo-Pentecostal Movement'. In this third wave, he includes three categories: First is

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<sup>62</sup> Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 66-87.

<sup>63</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 18.

<sup>64</sup> Harold W. Turner, "A Typology for African Religious Movements," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 1, no. 1 (1967): 1-34.

<sup>65</sup> Birgit Meyer, "From African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 447-74.

<sup>66</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 20.

<sup>67</sup> An Akan word, which means spiritual churches.

<sup>68</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 23; Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 67; Omenyo, "The Charismatic Renewal," 175.



‘autochthonous charismatic ministries’, which falls within Larbi’s ‘neo-Pentecostal movement’ and Omenyo’s ‘independent Charismatic churches’. Second, is ‘trans-denominational’ or ‘denominational’ fellowships. These fall within Larbi’s ‘para-church renewal movement’ and Omenyo’s ‘neo-Pentecostal charismatic interdenominational fellowships.’ Third is ‘renewal prayer groups’. This seems to bring together two of Larbi’s typologies; ‘charismatic movements in the mainline churches’ and ‘Pentecostalist prayer camps’ as well as Omenyo’s ‘charismatic renewal groups in the mainline churches.’<sup>69</sup>

It is evident at this point that the various typologies have been proposed from divergent viewpoints. This is likely to continue as long as Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Ghana continues to be dynamic and more scholars attempt to explore typologies. These divergent typologies confirm Omenyo’s observation that no one typology can appropriately describe the various Pentecostal renewals in Ghana.

Disagreements in the use of typologies is, however, not peculiar to Ghanaian Pentecostalism. For more than five decades, scholars have struggled to identify appropriate typology for describing the Holy Spirit empowered movements in Africa. In his *A typology for African Religious Movements*, Turner surveyed various terminologies that have been debated and tried in various ways. He noted that terms such as prophet churches, native churches, indigenous churches, syncretic churches, spiritual churches, separatist churches were all found inappropriate for various reasons.<sup>70</sup> Even though he is aware that some scholars, including Welbourn, have rejected the term ‘independent’ as appropriate typology,<sup>71</sup> Turner settles on this term with much reservation and hoped that ‘greater clarity in our understanding of the typology of modern African Christian movements will lead to greater confidence in its use’.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, the use of such terms, as ‘African Initiated Churches’, ‘African Indigenous Churches’ and ‘African Independent Churches’ (with the

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<sup>69</sup> Larbi, *Pentecostalism*, 66-87; Omenyo, “The Charismatic Renewal” 174-176; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 26-9.

<sup>70</sup> Turner, “A Typology for African Religious Movements,” 1-34.

<sup>71</sup> F. B. Welbourn, *East African Rebels: A Study of Some Independent Churches* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1961), 165-83.

<sup>72</sup> Turner, “A Typology for African Religious Movements,” 17.

acronym ‘AICs’) have persisted over the years and sometimes used interchangeably to designate these churches.

Historically and theologically, the word *sunsum sore* was very relevant within the Ghanaian context at the time it was used to describe the first wave because it was the first pneumatic Christian movement to employ such spiritual characteristics, as speaking in tongues, seeing visions, casting out demons and giving prophecies. According to Baëta, the term ‘spiritual churches’ has been adopted because, “It is intended to signify that, in their worship, the groups concerned engage in various activities which (by their own assertion) are either meant to invoke the Holy Spirit of God or are to be interpreted as signs of his descent upon the worshippers.”<sup>73</sup> On his part, Asamoah-Gyadu argues that the use of the Spiritual churches to describe them is intended to highlight their pneumatic orientation.<sup>74</sup> It must be admitted that the emergence of new waves on the Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic scene has rendered the *sunsum sore* typology used to describe this first wave, less meaningful because other waves of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Ghana are equally pneumatic.

To avoid the complications of using such descriptive adjectives for classification, this paper recommends the wave metaphor, which has already been used by Larbi and Asamoah-Gyadu.<sup>75</sup> Hence, the study refers to the various Pentecostal innovations in Ghana as first wave, second wave, third wave, etc. Admittedly, the Pentecostals themselves speak of the movement as continuing in waves.<sup>76</sup>

### *Significance of the Wave Metaphor*

The significance of the wave metaphor includes: first, reducing the ambiguity that characterise the use of descriptive classifications. After all, waves overlap and, in that sense, it will be easy to identify some of the waves of Pentecostal-Charismatic innovation in Ghana freely overlapping each other. This is especially when we clearly see

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<sup>73</sup> Baëta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, 1.

<sup>74</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 22.

<sup>75</sup> Larbi, “African Pentecostalism in the Context of Global Pentecostal Ecumenical Fraternity: Challenges and Opportunities” *Pneuma* 24, no. 2 (2002): 140, 143; Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 18-19.

<sup>76</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics*, 18-19.

different waves in one single denomination, as in the case of the CoP. For example, instead of applying typologies like ‘classical Pentecostal,’ ‘indigenous classical Pentecostal’ or ‘indigenous, independent, Classical Pentecostal’ for the CoP, we can comfortably recognise four waves of Pentecostal innovations in operation within the denomination.

Second, enhancing unity, where Pentecostal-Charismatics in Ghana can see themselves as different waves of the same movement. Those who see themselves as classical Pentecostals and charismatic churches do not accept the so-called *sunsum sɔre* as Pentecostals.<sup>77</sup> They also do not see the renewal groups in the historic mainline churches as Pentecostals. If the descriptive typologies are removed, the barriers that promote division may also diminish gradually.

Third, using the wave metaphor makes it easier to describe each wave in its historical, theological and socio-cultural categories. The historical period of the emergence of the various waves can be identified whilst acknowledging their theological unity and diversities without overlooking the apparent socio-cultural innovations that shape the outlook of the movement. Although the movement is variegated, there are shared characteristics that bind them to give it a common identity as ‘Pentecostals.’

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed the emergence of the various waves of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity in Ghana. Further, the various difficulties one encounters using descriptive typologies to define Ghanaian Pentecostalism have been analysed, and a wave metaphor for classifying the movements recommended. This wave metaphor, I argued, can obviate the current ambiguity in the use of nomenclature and reduce the difficulties of describing the situation where one denomination can accommodate different waves within its fold. I also contend that the wave metaphor can enhance unity in Ghanaian Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity, enabling the movement to unite against abuses and manipulations that have the potential to discredit

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<sup>77</sup> Larbi, “African Pentecostalism in the Context,” 146.

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the movement whilst working towards strengthening the bond of unity among the different waves.

It should be recognised that the current Pentecostalization of historic mission churches, the incessant attempt by some of the earlier Holy Spirit-empowered churches to transform some of their practices as well as the continuous dynamism and innovations in Ghanaian Pentecostalism are attempts by the various traditions of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity to provide reciprocal influence on each other. Therefore, there is the need for further dialogue among the various waves of Pentecostal renewal in Ghana to respond to excesses within the phenomenon whilst sustaining the waves of revitalisation currently being experienced.

*Christian Tsekpoe*

ctsekpoe@pentvas.edu.gh  
School of Theology, Mission and Leadership  
Pentecost University