

UNIVERSITY OF OSLO
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

**ANALYSING PERSPECTIVES ON EVIL, ENEMY AND DIVINATORY
CONSULTATION AMONG PARTICIPANTS IN NEO-PROPHETIC MOVEMENTS
IN PENTECOSTAL GHANA.**



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IN PENTECOSTAL GHANA.**

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BY

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine the concept of enemy evil and divinatory consultation among Ghanaian Neo-prophetic Churches in order to open up these concepts for further scholarly probe. The study employs the purposive sampling of participatory method of qualitative research methodology. The instruments used in data collection and analysis include interviews and participant observation.

The study examines the historical antecedents of the prophetic phenomenon in Ghana and shows its root in the indigenous religion and also its recurrence in Ghanaian Christianity. It focuses on the current wave known as Neo-prophetism in the Neo-Prophetic Churches (NPCs) in Pentecostalism which constitutes Peripheral prophetism which forms the main thrust of the work.

Neo-prophetism demonstrates how the interaction of Ghanaian Pentecostals' biblical understanding and the Akan religio-cultural worldview informs their pursuit for meaning in life. It also reveals how the supernatural causal other undergirds Ghanaian Pentecostals' understanding of evil and suffering. In dealing with the causal other or enemy neo-prophets propose resort to ritualistic symbolisms, known as prophetic rituals or practices. Amidst the challenge it poses to us Neo-prophetism offers hope to Ghanaian Christianity due to its ability to respond to soteriological and pastoral needs. The study in particular, challenges neo-prophets in Ghana to re-examine their spirituality in order to make their faith meaningful to the Ghanaian public life.

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DEDICATION

To my lovely wife and family and all Ghanaian Pentecostal pastors, prophets, churches, ministries and believers who keep alive the Pentecostal fire in Ghana.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction:

Pentecostalism is the fastest growing modality of Christianity globally. As a religious process, Pentecostalism tends to interact with religious and political matters in Africa and beyond. Sometimes the distinction between these matters becomes blurred; just as with the distinction between Pentecostal churches and charismatic spirituality. Some researchers employ *neo-* or *post-*Pentecostal churches for the new trends and patterns that have emerged. However, they have some common characteristics: religious experience, a strong emphasis on the centrality of emotions in religious worship and claims about religious truth. These are ‘experiential spiritualities’, as in the felicitous phrase of Harvey Cox (Stålsett 2006).

In my home country Ghana, the Pentecostal movement continues to be widespread. The Ghanaian theologian Asamoah-Gyadu notes that Pentecostalism represents the most cogent, powerful and visible evidence of religious renewal and influence in Ghana (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 14). The Ghana Statistical Service estimates that 71 percent of the population affiliate with Christianity, followed by 17 percent to Islam, five percent to African traditional religions and less than one percent to other religions. The percentage of those who have no affiliation to any religion is about 5 per cent, while Pentecostal/Charismatic is the largest religious assemblage nationwide, accounting for about 28 per cent of the population (Ghana Statistical Service 2013: 61-63).

Ghanaian scholars of church history, Emmanuel K. Larbi and Abamfo Ofori Atiemo, point out that the advent of Pentecostalism in Ghana was independent of the American Pentecostal revival. They assert that it was initiated by indigenous Ghanaian prophets rather than the Western missionaries. These prophets are said to have been excommunicated from the historic mission denominations for pursuing spiritualities regarded as shameful and occultistic. They include prophets William Wadé Harris who led the Harris Church of Ghana, John Swatson and Sampson Oppong. These prophets appeared on the Ghanaian religious scene at the turn of the nineteenth century. The result of their prophetic evangelism was the establishment of independent churches commonly known as African Initiated Churches (AICs) (Larbi 2001; Quayesi-Amakye 2009; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Omenyo and Atiemo 2006).

Apart from the African Initiated Churches (AICs), the Ghanaian society has seen various modalities of Pentecostal movements. These are categorized as classical Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism or Charismatic movements. The classification of Pentecostals in Ghana may differ depending on the kind of category that one employs; whether historical or theological categories. There is however, a new manifestation of Pentecostalism that is developing and spreading rapidly across the country. Experts in the study of Pentecostalism in Ghana have researched these movements (Omenyo and Atiemo 2006; Larbi 2001; Omenyo 2006). Their findings show that these movements have some features that resemble Pentecostalism. However, these previous works have described the movements under the rubric “Neo-Prophetic” (Omenyo and Atiemo: 2006) or contemporary prophecy.

The Ghanaian theologian Cephaz Omenyo asserts that prophetism is the latest stream of the Pentecostal movement in contemporary African Christianity in Ghana (Omenyo 2011: 30-49). Omenyo relates the “Neo-Prophetic” movement to neo-Pentecostals. Thus, Neo-prophetism is a new manifestation of Pentecostalism with some distinctive characteristics in the country. This kind of prophetism is referred to as peripheral prophetism by Quayesi-Amakye (2013: 27). According to him, peripheral prophetism refers to the prophetic phenomenon in the church of Pentecost prayer centres and Neo-prophetic churches. He so used the term to refer to this kind of prophetism since, they do not belong to the class of official prophets in the ordained pastoral ministry especially in the Church of Pentecost.

According to Omenyo and Atiemo (2006), contemporary prophecy emerged on the Ghanaian religious scene in the 1990s specifically in Kumasi before it spread across the country. Another scholar, Paul Gifford (2004: 91) also traces the pioneers of Neo-prophetism in Ghana to the late Prophet Francis Akwesi Amoako who surfaced on the Ghanaian religious scene in the early 1980s (cf. Atiemo and Omenyo: 2006: 59, 60). Cephaz N. Omenyo and Abamfo Ofori Atiemo also noted that at the turn of the twentieth century, Christianity in Ghana have been characterised by waves of prophetism. Prophetic ministries have recently become more or less a normal religious phenomenon. From my native experience in Ghana, I found prophets in Classical Pentecostal churches, Neo-Pentecostal churches and Neo-Prophetic Movements or churches.

Onyinah (2012: 1: cf. Gyekye 1995: 65) posits that in a broad range of religious worldviews in Africa one supposes that good and evil spirits are at work. There is the belief in a Supreme Being who created all things and manifests his power through a pantheon of gods who can be evil or good. Also, the principal evil is attributed to witchcraft, since it is held that all the evil forces can be in league with witches to effect an evil act. Again there are the ever-present spirits of the ancestors whose constant contact with the living (family), through ceremonies performed by the elders, safeguard social stability and prevent the interruption of socio-cosmic harmony by spirits of evil intent.

Many scholars are of the view that the first mission was a failure (Agbeti 1986: 3-112; Clarke 1986: 7-26, 41-12, 57-62). The first missionary efforts did not produce the expected results of converts or changed attitude among the targeted groups of evangelizing, with regards to their worldviews. In the 1800s Christianity was re-planted among the West African people by another set of European missionaries. According to these scholars, the missionaries at the time taught the West Africans that the belief in the spirit-forces, such as the gods and witchcraft was superstitious.

However, the missionaries translated the devil and demons as the power behind these spirit-forces (cf. Meyer 1999: xvii-xxiii). Also, it is documented that in Ghana the missionaries successfully opposed all the features of Ghanaian customs and religion without giving them much deliberation (cf. Bartels 1965; Smith 1966; and Mobbley 1970). Consequently, the introduction of a personalised devil and the association of the gods with demons (Meyer 1999: xvii-xxiii) by the missionaries rather strengthened the belief in the gods and witchcraft. The images of the devil, according to scholars such as E. Evans-Pritchard (1937) and Debrunner (1961) are held by Africans to be life-threatening forces. But, the missionaries failed to provide for needs such as protection, healing and deliverance of the indigenous people.

The history of Christianity in West Africa shows that the failure to provide the above mentioned needs of the African by the European missionaries led to the advent of some charismatic figures known as “African Prophets” as mentioned above in the early part of the twentieth century. I suspect that the African prophets seem to have understood the African worldview better than the Europeans and therefore attempted to provide for these needs successfully. The prophets seem to understand that in the worldview of the African, to achieve the expected abundant life which is expressed in terms of increase in children, crops and goods, good health and long life;

ethnic groups, clans, families and individuals often come under the tutelage of powerful gods or consult “spiritually powerful persons,” such as traditional priests and “sorcerers,” for spiritual guidance.

The “powerful persons” often reveal the wishes of the ancestors and/or hindrances to progress in people’s life or the enemy behind a person’s problem. They also recommend the right type of solution, such as protection through the giving of amulets or rituals needed in the situations. In this regard according to Omenyo (2011: 35) the African Prophets replaced the traditional priests and provided the pastoral care and guidance which the Western missionaries were unable to provide. Thus, it is these African prophets who first bridged the gap between the traditional or primal spirituality and Christianity in Africa, as they assumed the important functions of the traditional priests in a Christian mode. Hence, according to Omenyo (2011: 30) there is continuity between of the practice of prophetism from the indigenous religion to the current renewal movements. He defines prophetism as the practice of seeking the cause of evil occurrences, power to deal with it or ward off any future re-occurrence and search for one’s destiny through divination.

The African prophets with their traditional background attempted to engage the worldviews of the indigenes with elements from the gospel. This led to the contextualization of the Christian faith into the African culture. Thereby they offered their adherents something similar to the traditional priests. Following a prediction made by Baeta (2004: 6-7), prophetism seems to appear and re-appear in diverse forms in African Christianity. Thereby a confirmation of this prediction seems to be seen in the emergence of what scholars Omenyo and Atiemo (2006) refer to as “Neo-prophetism”. Neo-prophetism is the new movement of the Pentecostal type which emerged in Ghana since the 1990s which lays more emphasis on the prophetic gift or activities of prophets. The prefix neo- does not suggest that prophetism is a new phenomenon in the history of Christianity in Ghana. But, the emergence of the prophetism phenomenon seems to be more common in Ghanaian Christianity today, than it was in the times of Baeta (1962/2004).

Today in Ghana it seems that as soon as one of the Neo-prophetic churches expends itself then another of a similar type springs up with a larger number of followers.

The rise of prophets in Ghana seems to be unstoppable as Baeta (2004: 6-7) has predicted. Today, it appears that failure of a Pentecostal church to have a prophet who believes that the powers in the spiritual realm are real and can also reveal secrets will simply mean losing members to the Neo-prophetic churches. It can also be a sign that such a church is less “powerful”. Hence, there must be prophets who believe in the spiritual forces and can reveal hidden things to people and also help find solutions to social and economic problems. The phenomenon can be seen in the African initiated churches, the classical Pentecostal churches, neo-pentecostal or charismatic churches, but it is more prevalent among the Neo-prophetic churches. The aim of this master’s thesis is to examine the concepts of evil, *Ɔtamfo*, ‘enemy’ and *akwankyerɛ*, and *abisa*, ‘divinatory consultation’ among participants in Neo-prophetic movements in contemporary multi-religious Ghana.

Research Problem and question

In Ghana as neo-prophets try to engage the traditional worldviews of the people with elements from the Christian faith, it seems to me from the response from the Ghanaian society indicate that there is much confusion with the beliefs and practices such as the concept of enemy, evil and divinatory consultation of the Neo-prophetic approach. Though it in some sense seems to bring some relief to some Ghanaian. In their article “Claiming religious Space: The Case of Neo-prophetism in Ghana”, Omenyo and Atiemo (2006), discussed the concept of enemy or *Ɔtamfo*, ‘enemy’ from the traditional Akan cultural perspective and noted that this perspective has been appropriated into the practices and teachings of the Neo-prophetic movements. According to them, in the Akan traditional life and thought, *Ɔtamfo*, ‘enemy’ is normally one that is suspected of undermining other people’s health, wealth, honour or general well-being through witchcraft, evil juju, or the spread of malicious gossip. Hence, the *Ɔtamfo* includes actual human beings and not just evil spirits.

This is what Joseph Quayesi-Amakye (2013: 64) in his book, *Christology and Evil in Ghana: Towards a Pentecostal Public Theology*, refers to as the ‘causal other’. According to Quayesi-Amakye, Neo-prophetism often see the cause of evil as lying outside oneself. He also noted that “there is a strong, uncompromising and entrenched belief in the ‘causal other’ as the one behind people trouble even if they are Christians”. The *causal other* therefore may include people who have familial, occupational, educational, and neighbourly connections with victims.

Do neo-prophets appropriate the traditional Akan thought of the enemy into their concept of the enemy or on their prophetic gift? What is the role of “visions” and dreams in this? The concept of the *Ɔtamfo* in Neo-Prophetism poses a challenge on the communal life of the Ghanaian society, and yet neo-prophets claim to offer hope to Ghanaian Christianity (Quayesi-Amakye: 2009).

In order to better appreciate what really is happening in the Ghanaian Neo-prophetic circles this project analyses the concept of the *Ɔtamfo* in Neo-prophetic movements in Ghana. It attempts to find out what is currently going on in the Ghanaian prophetic scene.

Research questions:

The theme of this project is analysing perspectives on evil, enemy and divinatory consultation among participants in Neo-prophetic movements in Pentecostal Ghana. In this project I investigate the following questions:

- (a) What is the interaction between the traditional Akan concept of enemy/evil (*Ɔtamfo*) and that of the Neo-prophetic movements in Ghana?
- (b) How and whether the Neo-prophetic concept of enemy/evil should be considered as religious syncretism?
- (c) How is the Bible interpreted in the conceptualisation of the enemy/evil among Neo-prophetic movements?
- (d) What are the socio-religious implications of the Neo-Prophetic concept of the enemy/evil on the Ghanaian multi-religious community? These questions will guide my study and help me to provide an improved analysis of enemy, evil, Akan traditional religions and Neo-prophetic movements as intersecting domains.

Research Objective

The objective of this research is to: (1) analyse the concept of ‘*Ɔtamfo*’ (the enemy) and discuss its possible root in the Akan traditional religion, (2) find out how the concept of ‘*Ɔtamfo*’ that is currently prevailing in Neo-Prophetism in Ghana affects the communal life of Ghanaians, and (3) find out how this concept reveals the various ways Neo-prophetic adherents conceive and make relevant the concept of ‘*Ɔtamfo*’ to the Ghanaian religio-cultural and social life.

Methodology

In this project I employed historical, ethnographical and anthropological studies.

I employ historical studies to explore the development of Pentecostalism and the advent of prophetism and Neo-prophetism in the history of Christianity in Ghana. I examine the historical advent of prophetism and Neo-prophetism in Ghana.

The main ethnographic tools I used in gathering the primary data are interviews and participant observation. My research was conducted in the central region of Ghana, in a township called Kasoa between the months of June and August 2015 engaging five Neo-prophetic churches and one classical Pentecostal church. My choice of Kasoa is due to the fact that I have been a member of the Kasoa Township since my childhood. As a member who has lived in the locality, I have seen and witnessed for several times the activities of the movement in focus. I am a non-adherent of this movement. I attended the church services of *four* Neo-prophetic churches in Kasoa, so as to get first-hand information about this concept. I had the opportunity to meet with and interviewed three neo-prophets and one adherents of this movement. I also had the opportunity to attend one church service of one classical Pentecostal church and interviewed an elder there. The elder of the classical Pentecostal church belongs to the Church of Pentecost, which is an indigenous African Independent Pentecostal Church with branches almost all over the world with the international headquarters in Ghana.

Another reason for my choice of the Kasoa Township is because it is one of the fastest growing towns in Ghana and it is a place that most of these Neo-prophetic churches are now flourishing. It is also a nerve centre of religious activities with the bustling presence of Neo-prophetic Churches. There are many emerging prophetic ministries or churches in this area which are still in the process of developing and refining their theology and practices. I therefore suppose that they can provide data for assessing the questions mentioned above.

I employed the qualitative research methodology and qualitative interview methods in my data collection and analysis. According to Fisher & Wertz (2002: 277): “[t]he task of qualitative research is to be explicit about-to make visible-the lived (immediate, unconceptualised) meanings of an event for particular individuals and then across individuals. We may then examine these meanings for what they say of experience in general, or about some particular aspect of experience”. Swinton and Mowat (2006) in the same vein acknowledged the open-endedness of qualitative research as empirical, political, sociological, pastoral, gender-oriented and narrative-based that makes it difficult to tie it down and define.

I used qualitative interviews due to the fact that they provide a method for collecting rich and detailed information about how individuals experience, understand and explain events in their lives (cf. Kvale, 1996). Open-ended or semi-structured questions were used in order for my

respondents to focus on what is most relevant to the question, so as to acquire broader set of perspectives. It also gave them the freedom to express their views in their own terms. I interviewed four leaders and one adherent of Neo-prophetic churches and one classical Pentecostal leader to seek his opinion on the concept of enemy.

I took a letter of introduction from the Faculty of Theology of the university and presented it to the leaders of the churches where I conducted my research. I explained the purpose and objective of the research to my participants. I used an interview guide to conduct the interviews. This I prepared with the help of my supervisor. Though there were some exchanges during the interviews I did not alter any of the questions on my interview guide. The language of the interview guide was English, but since my interviewees are not familiar with the English I had to translate the questions to one of the local languages (Twi) which is understood by my interviewees. This facilitated their understanding and response to the questions.

During the research I also participated in and observed some of the worship services of the neo-prophets and the Church of Pentecost during the research. Having some Pentecostal and Charismatic experience as a result of attending some Pentecostal churches before, I had no difficulty in doing that. According to Gold (1969:18), in participant observation-field research, the participant is not known to those whom he observes. He interacts with them as naturally as possible in whatever areas of their living interest him and are acceptable to him in situations in which he can play or learn to play requisite day-to-day roles successfully. Rubin and Babbie (1993:363-4) adds that field researchers need not always participate in what they are studying, though they usually will study it directly at the scene of the action. I was therefore a participant observer in all the churches I visited after I obtained permission from the leaders of the churches.

There are however, some merits and demerits of participant observation. According to Sal Watt and Julie Scott Jones (2010: 112) there are three membership roles in observational research in recent times namely, 'the peripheral, active and complete membership.' According to them, peripheral membership role entails the 'researcher engaging with the group and establishing "insider" identity.' This implies that, the researcher participates in the group's activities but do not get involved in their inner connectives or the core values. In the active membership role, the researcher participates in the group's activities and even in the core values but never gets

committed fully to them. The complete membership role fully engages the researcher's participation in the group's activities and assumes a full commitment to their inner connectives.

In this project, my position is in between the active and complete membership roles of participant observation. My previous experience with Pentecostal and Charismatic churches allowed me to participate in the worship services of the group without having a feeling of a stranger and I also ascribed to their core values. However, during the interview I encountered a number of challenges. Some of my interviewees did not know what Neo-propheticism or prophetic churches are. So I had to explain to them before they could answer my questions. Also, though my interviewees did not hesitate to give me the answers and responses which I needed some of them were very careful and sceptical in granting me the opportunity to have the interview with them. In one place I was told am a journalist in disguise and a fraudster who is coming to seek information for malevolent purpose and also to solicit funds abroad. Some did not allow me to have any interview with them at all though they gave me the assurance. Nonetheless, some were very receptive having told them about the purpose of my study, they did not hold back or hesitate to respond to my questions. My position as a student of religion subsequently helped me to observe their core values and take a critical stance on it as demonstrated in the study.

Semi-formal interviews were conducted as I visited the church premises with the exception of one interview I conducted at the home of one neo-prophet, so as to get first-hand information about the concept of enemy, evil and divinatory consultation. The interviews lasted between 15 minutes to two hours, depending on the time at hand to the interviewee. The interviews were conducted in both English and Akan. Tape recording was allowed to be used to take all the interviews. I listened to all the recorded tapes several times and translated those that were relevant for my project. References are made to the interviews throughout this project where necessary.

With the anthropological studies I have examined important available literature on the subject to find out the works that has been done on the Akan cosmology such as belief in spirit beings, the doctrine on personhood, evil, divination and witchcraft and enemy. An attempt was made to find out why neo-prophets often refer to the enemy as a member of one's family or close friend and how the enemy is treated. I also, examined sociological literature for similar reasons to anthropological literature used. I examined how communal values are cherished and

understood in the light of relating to the enemy as a family relation or a close friend. The sociological literature is also examined to find out how the concepts enemy, evil, and divinatory consultation are used as means of reinforcing social cohesion or division in Akan society.

In order to allow a summary of different voices of biblical references on the subject be heard before attempting to construct an alternative contextualisation the concepts enemy, evil and divinatory consultation from the Akan context, some exegetical work was done. A pastoral approach is adopted to consider some ethical and practical issues with regard to the above mentioned concepts and also used to offer some reflections for practical church situations.

In this thesis I compare aspects of Neo-Prophet (Ghanaian Pentecostals') understanding of the enemy with the traditional Akan life and thought of the enemy. I also compare Ghanaian neo-prophets' understandings of the enemy with central biblical notions on the matter. I also incorporate various aspects of the Neo-prophetic religious phenomenon in Ghana. These include, the traditional Akan worldview, neo-prophets' understanding and interpretation of the Bible, inherited Christian tradition, and the Ghanaian socio-economic contexts and religious experiences of Neo-prophetic adherents. I made use of both primary and secondary sources on the topic.

Limitations

Even though I found various literature on prophetism, there were few on Neo-prophetism and the concept of enemy. This made the study a bit difficult. Also getting access to respondents to the study was challenging, especially the prophets, since most of them usually had many programs they attended.

Background: Earlier research on the subject

From my review of the extant literature on the subject, I found that the main characteristics of Neo-prophetic movements have been an explicit focus for previous researchers. There is therefore some useful existing literature on Ghanaian Pentecostalism. It is a fact that the broader subject I am interested in has been previously studied. However, the concepts enemy and divinatory consultation in connection with Neo-prophetism in Ghana still remain under-explored. These have not appeared to be the crux of their previous works. In the case of Ansah (2011), for example, he studied the characteristics of Neo-prophetic churches in Kumasi, especially the use of anointing oil in those churches. On the other hand, the Neo-prophetic

teachings have not been examined. My intended project will explore this aspect in addition to various forms of healing and exorcism rituals among Neo-prophetic churches. The earlier researchers provide little analysis of the concept of enemy among these churches. I aim therefore to advance this area. A summary of these previous works is in place.

There are a great number of works written on the Pentecostal movement in Ghana. Baëta's *Prophetism In Ghana: A Study of Some 'Spiritual' Churches* (1962) is one such work that most Ghanaian church historians make reference to especially when discussing the Pentecostal phenomenon in the country. In his book Baëta made some important observations. Firstly, he observed that, the 'Spiritual Churches' succeeded because they adopted a less formal, but more lively forms of worship than the Western mission churches at the time. Unlike the Western mission churches whose worship was dull and boring, they used native music and instruments, closer to African ethos. Secondly, he observed that the spiritual churches arose as a sympathetic response to native or local problems with the authority of the parent churches in spiritual matters.

Thirdly, he said, the upsurge and development of the Spiritual Churches help to offer clues to a study on the relation of our Ghanaian Christianity to culture, and throw up a number of clues to the whole problem of adaptation and syncretism in the world mission of the church. Finally, he postulated that the Spiritual Churches signified a departure from the old traditional resources of supernatural assistance for help from the God of the Christian message. A situation similar to the African's abandonment of the incompetent deity for a more potent one (Baëta: 1962; cf. Mbiti: 1975). Baëta's work provides very insightful knowledge on the nature and practices of prophetism that existed in the AICs of Ghana. However, this present proposed project differs from Baëta's because it focuses on the concept of the enemy in Pentecostalism with concentration on Neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. This did not form part of Baëta's work.

In his book *Pentecostalism: Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* (2001), Larbi traces the impact of the Akan worldview and primal understanding that informs Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana. He shows how Pentecostal Christianity offered an alternative religious response to the Ghanaian religio-cultural and spiritual aspirations that Western Christian missionaries failed to meet. In his examination of Pentecostal Prayer Camps in Ghana, Larbi demonstrated how Pentecostals retort to the socio-religious needs of Ghanaians. Larbi in his work demonstrates the understanding of the cosmological conflict that Ghanaian Christians encounters.

According to him, there is a conflict of allegiance to the Christian God on one hand or the ‘gods of the fathers’ on the other (cf. Imasogie 1995). This was because the Christian God seemed to be indifferent to their existential needs and problems. Larbi acknowledges the continuity and discontinuity between Ghanaian Pentecostal Christianity and the Akan traditional religious cosmological understandings. In both cases there is a search for a “cosmological balance of power” that is made possible through the provision of a supernatural assistance outside the believer (Larbi 2001, p. 426). But Pentecostalism is successful where traditional religion fails in that it presents a *victor Christus* who has redeemed the believer and placed him or her far above the satanic hordes that seek to intimidate and vanquish his or her life.

Larbi’s work, useful as it is, does not however capture the concept of the enemy in Neo-prophetism in Ghana.

Another scholar, Asamoah-Gyadu, in his book *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana* (2005) discusses the emergence, impact and growth of Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana. He identifies three major strands in Ghanaian Pentecostalism namely: the *Sunsum Sòre* (AICs), Classical Pentecostalism and neo-Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism, he argues, “represents the most concrete evidence of the phenomenal expansion of Christianity in African countries like Ghana”, a “response to the staid denominationalism of historic mission Christianity” (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005, p. ix).

The focus of his work was on the single-congregation churches of the *Sunsum Sòre* and Charismatic Ministries (CMs). He pointed out that salvation is conceived in terms of transformation and empowerment, healing and deliverance, prosperity, and restoration of spiritual gifts, among the CMs.

Also Opoku Onyinah in his PhD thesis *Akan Witchcraft and the Concept of Exorcism in the Church of Pentecost* (2002), traced the earlier prophetic presence in the *Sunsum Sòre* and also dedicated a chapter to lay prophets or prophetesses in the Church of Pentecost. Onyinah indicates how the church handled the problem of prophets in its midst. He also analyses the role of that ministry in the overall functionality of the church. In one of his works, (Onyinah 2002a), he coined a term ‘Witchdemonology’ to refer the Pentecostal perception of witchcraft as a demonic force that demands Christian exorcism. Onyinah concentrates on the rise of lay prophetism in that church. He also studied how leaders of the prayer centres or camps tried to

respond to the emerging theology of ‘witchdemonology’. Nonetheless Onyinah did not discuss the concept of the enemy in Neo-prophetism in his work.

Paul Gifford is another well know scholar in Ghanaian Pentecostalism. In his book *Ghana’s New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (2004) focused on the activities and effect of what he termed as Ghana’s ‘new churches’: the CMs. Firstly, he examines them within the socioeconomic and political contexts in Ghana during the Rawlings’ regime (1982-2000) of self-seeking leadership. He had a two-fold purpose in writing this book. One is to establish the religious vision of this kind of Christianity and to argue that these churches flourish on the economic predicament of most Ghanaians by presenting themselves as offers of spiritual cure to the Ghanaian material lack.

In fact Gifford’s work is quite in-depth and deals with many relevant issues predominant in charismatic Christianity in Ghana today. He identifies what he calls rituals involving “instruments of destiny”. He also notes that part of the success theology of these churches is the denial of negative realities such as death and suffering. He further connects the “deliverance phenomenon” of the CMs to the Ghanaian pre-Christian religion (Gifford 2004: 60, 85). Gifford also discussed another important issue in his work which is the criticality of the prophet’s person in the activities of prophetic ministries in Ghana. This leads to vertical rather than horizontal relationships in such religious communities (Gifford 2004). Gifford’s approach to Pentecostalism in Ghana is from a sociological perspective. Thus, he analysed and interpreted the movement from a global developmental approach.

In a nutshell, all the above research works are however different from my current study. They provided me with a historical sketch of prophetism and Neo-prophetism in Ghana. These form part of the historical background to the current research work. Some of these works referred to above provided this study with insight into some of the teachings and practices and even the style of ministry of the neo-prophets. For instance the article of Omenyo and Atiemo provided me with information on some of the teachings and novel practices that existed in the Neo-prophetic circle such as the teachings and practices of *akwankyere*, dreams and their interpretation, and the concept of *Ɔtamfo* which are now prevalent in Christian worship in Ghana today. These teachings and practices expounded by the article provided me with the basic understanding of what the phenomenon entails in the Neo-prophetic churches.

Significance and Aim of Research

The study has both practical and academic significance. Academically, the findings of the study will contribute new knowledge to the existing literature on the subject matter, thereby providing scholars with insight into the phenomenon of Neo-prophetism as it exists in the Neo-prophetic and other Pentecostal churches. Also, the findings will also practically benefit participants in the Neo-prophetic movements and Christians in Ghana, in their interpretations and practice of prophetism. It may give them the opportunity to re-examine their beliefs, practices, in connection to the concepts enemy, evil and divinatory consultation.

Organization of chapters

The project is organized into six chapters: chapter one gives an introduction to the study. It constitutes the general introduction; statement of problem; research objectives; research questions; methodology; limitations; background: earlier research on the subject; significance and aim of the research, and organization of chapters. Chapter two examines the Akan indigenous culture. This chapter consists of a brief information on the Akan people; the Akan worldview which consists of the Supreme Being (*Onyame*); the lesser gods (*Abosom*); the Ancestors (*Nananom Nsamanfo*); amulets and talismans (*Asuman*); Spirits of Plants and Animals; and Mother Earth (*Asase Yaa/Efua*). The Akan concept of personhood is also discussed here. It consists of the Akan concept of the soul (*Okra*); the spirit (*Sunsum/Ntorɔ*); and the concept of Blood (*Mogyia*). Here again is discussed the concept of causality; divinatory consultation (*Abisa*); and communal values. Chapter three discusses the concepts evil and witchcraft in the Akan indigenous tradition. The following are discussed: the Akan concept of evil; kinds and causes of evil in the Akan Traditional culture; *Abisa*, ‘divinatory consultation’ and the Causes of *mmusu*, ‘evil’; *mmusuyi*, ‘warding off evil’; types and levels of *mmusuyi*. The Akan concept of Witchcraft (*Bayie*) is discussed consisting of: types of witchcraft: *Bayie*; how witchcraft is acquired; the organisation and activities of witches; protection from witches; and how witches are identified and dealt with in the Akan society. In chapter four I discussed prophetism in Ghana: Neo-prophetism. This chapter consists of a brief analysis of the church situation in Ghana: African Indigenous churches; Classical Pentecostal churches; Neo-Pentecostal/charismatic churches; Neo-Pentecostal/charismatic non-denominational churches; charismatic renewal within the mainline churches; and Neo-prophetic churches. It proceeds to discuss the phenomenon of prophetism in Ghana; Acts of the early prophets in Ghana; and the Pentecostal understanding of prophetism. It further discusses the phenomenon of Neo-prophetism; history of Neo-prophetism; teachings and practices of neo-prophets: the concept

of enemy (*Otamfo*); prophetic guidance (*Akwankyere*); anointing (*ngosra*); the practice of healing and deliverance or various forms of exorcism; the concept of success, well-being or prosperity (*yiedie*); the concept of the 'favoured' and the 'unfavoured' Life; and Ghanaian Pentecostals' understanding of Salvation. This chapter also discusses what is referred to as the prophetic problem: prophets; diviners or seers; how prophets are judged in Neo-prophetism; and current issues about the prophetic phenomenon in Ghana. Chapter five constitutes a comparison of the beliefs and Practices in Akan traditional Cultural with that of the Neo-prophetic churches. It consists of traditional Akan thought of prophetic gift: visions and dreams; enemy and family or close relation: Biblical or cultural influence; the Bible and concept of enemy in Neo-prophetism; Dealing with the enemy; the socio-religious implication of this concept of enemy. Chapter six concludes the work. It constitutes the summary, findings and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AKAN INDIGENOUS TRADITION

The concept of enemy, evil and divinatory consultation cannot be properly understood without a satisfactory appreciation of the Akan indigenous tradition. This is because the concept is inextricably linked with the various components of the Akan indigenous tradition. The culture and worldview of the Akan is very broad, however, due to lack of space a few concepts in the Akan culture are discussed in this chapter. I examined some aspects of the cultural beliefs and worldviews of the Akan which may be related to my project. Among them are the Akan concept of the spirit world (the Supreme Being, the gods, the ancestors and the lesser spirits or beings). The Akan concept of personhood, and the Akan communal values. The practices of *abisa*, 'divinatory consultation', and the concept of *mmusu*, 'evil' and the belief in witchcraft are also discussed here. Before this, I give a brief description of the Akan people below.

The Akan People

Ghana is a country with ten regions and the Akan occupy about six of these regions. These are the Eastern, Ashanti, Central, Western, Brong-Ahafo, and some parts of the Volta Regions. The Akan constitute the largest ethnic group in Ghana. The ethnic group consists of tribes such as Agona, Ahafo, Ahanta, Akuapem, Akwamu, Akyem, Aowin, Asante, Assin, Fante, Kwahu, Wassa, Denkyira and Sefwi. The language of the Akan ethno-linguistic group is Twi (Onyinah 2002: 30) or Akan. It belongs to the language family known as proto-Kwa language (Ameka and Dakubu 2008: 3), which is believed to have come from East/Central Africa. The Kwa languages are spoken by approximately 20 million people along the Atlantic coast of West Africa from Côte d'Ivoire to Nigeria. Among the better-known Kwa languages are Akan (7 million speakers in Ghana, or 44% of the population) and Ewe (1.6 million speakers in Ghana, or 13% of the population; close to 900 000 speakers in Togo, or 20% of the population)¹. This then presupposes that the Akan have migrated from somewhere before settling in present day Ghana (Onyinah 2002: 31). The following scholars have discussed the Akan in details (Omenyo 2001: 26; Pobee 1974: 44 and Onyina 2002: 31).

The Akan Worldview

As stated above, an understanding of Neo-prophetic concept of enemy, divinatory consultation, and evil requires some understandings of the cultural and religious beliefs of the Akan. According to anthropologist de Waal Malefijt (1968: 8-9), religious symbols, myths, ritual

behaviour and sacred images, are not intrinsically different from other cultural symbols. They rather aid in the preservation of culture and its institutions, making it possible to transfer its basic values to different generations. Therefore to have an understanding of the Akan culture demands an examination of the ethnographical materials of the culture.

The Akan world of reality is made up of beings and objects charged with various degrees and qualities of supernatural powers. In the life of human beings, as far as the Akan are concerned, events have spiritual dimensions and their elucidation is of extreme importance to every tribe. According to Kwame Gyekye (1995: 69), the essential or primary ontology of the Akan is spiritual. He postulates that the use of the Akan word *sunsum*, 'spirit' usually refers to the mystical, the unempirical and the non-physical. This is to say that, the Akan believe that behind the visible is the invisible, and nothing occurs by chance. This supposed to mean that spiritual beings decide on what happens in the physical realm. The universe for the Akan is spiritual and thus supernatural forces play a significant role in the thought and actions of the people.

The Akan conception and belief in reality or the existence of beings can be deduced from their religious language, attitude and practices (Gyekye 1995: 68). According to Gyekye, the Akan language of religious rite of libation *apaeε* (illustrated below), instantly discloses the beings that are believed to be in existence by the Akan.

*Onyankopon Twereduampon nsa,
Asaase Yaa nsa!!!!
Nananom Nsamanfo nsa...*

Supreme God, who is alone, upon whom men lean and do not fall, receive this wine and drink.
Earth goddess, whose day of worship is Thursday, receive this wine and drink.
Spirits of our ancestors, receive this wine and drink...

The spiritual beings are generally believed to be in a hierarchical order. Nonetheless, Kofi Asare Opoku (1978) and E. G. Parrinder (1949) disagree on the hierarchical order of the spirit beings. Most scholars, Such as R. S. Rattray (1927: 70) and S. G. Williamson (1965) agree that the spiritual beings are in a hierarchical order. Parrinder (1949: 16) arranges the spirit beings in a hierarchical order as follows: The Supreme God (*Onyame*), the lesser deities (*abosom*), ancestral spirits (*nananom nsamanfo*) and the lower spirit powers (amulets and talismans) which is worn around the waist, *asuman*, a power believed to be obtained from small forest beings (*mmoatia*) with feet facing backwards, witches and wizards and the use of magic. I examine the features of the spirit beings below.

The Supreme Being (*Onyame*)

The common name of the Supreme Being among the Akan is *Onyame*. According to Gyekye, though the Akan ontology is clearly pluralistic, yet it is also clear from the religious language of libation, *apaeε* that, all the entities are not on the same level of being (Gyekye 1995: 69). *Onyame* is regarded as the highest among the pantheon of spirits and this is evident in the many attributes accorded Him among the Akan. In the first place *Onyame* means, ‘the one who when one gets one becomes full or satiated’ (see Smith 1950: 246-247; Rattray 1916: 19) or the Shinning One (Williamson 1974: 87). *Onyame* has several other names and epithets. The most popular of them is *Onyankopon* derived from *Onyame-koro-pon*, ‘which is the great or mighty One’ (Gyekye 1995: 69-70). *Ɔboadee*, which means ‘creator’. In recognition of this, he is also given attributes such as *asaase wura* that is owner of the world. Thus, he is believed to be active in the lives of mankind. Kofi Asare Opoku recounts an Akan myth about the creative powers of *Onyame* (Opoku 1978: 21f). He is *otumfoɔ*, the powerful one: *odomakoma*; the eternal and wise one (Busia 1954: 192).

In all, one can see that *Onyame* is venerated high and above all the other deities. They are believed to derive their powers and being from him.

The Lesser gods (*Abosom*)

In the Akan traditional culture, natural objects and phenomena or features of the environment are believed to be the abode of spirits or divinities. Hence, they are said to be the personification of spirits or divinities. As noted from the religious rite of libation, *apaeε*, the next beings which come after the Supreme Being are the lesser gods or deities called *abosom*, (singular is *ɔbosom*). The *abosom* are believed to dwell in natural objects such as rocks (*abotan*) and caves (*bosombuo*), rivers (*nsuobosom*), trees (*ndua*) and animals (*mmoa*). But these natural objects are not the spirits themselves, but their habitat or abode. They are therefore personified spirits. This is because, it is believed that behind the natural objects lies the essence, or the powers that constitute the true nature of the objects (Opoku 1990: 488-491). The *Abosom* are also, servants who act as mediators between *Onyame* and humans. They act as *akyeame*, ‘mouthpiece’ for *Onyame*. (Smith 1950: 195; Busia 1951: 193)

The Ancestors (*Nananom Nsamanfo*)

One significant aspect of the Akan worldview is the belief in the spirits of ancestors. In fact, the Akan tribes have special place for the ancestors. For that matter they are accorded a unique position in the realm of spirits. The ancestors are the spirits of deceased relatives, who have

departed from the land of the living and are believed to be in the land of the dead known in Akan as *asamando*. They are therefore called *Nananom Nsamanfo*, ‘ghosts of the elders’. They are closely connected to the kinship group. Parrinder (1962: 58) claims that “the departed are not so far away and are believed to be watching over their families like a “cloud of witnesses.” The scope of their influence and operation are limited to that group. It is therefore the responsibility of each lineage to ensure that proper reverence and attention are given to their own *Nsamanfo*, ‘ancestors’. This will ensure an uninterrupted flow of prosperity to the lineage. Otherwise, their neglect will lead to a lot of misfortunes. For detailed explanation about the ancestors see (Opoku 1978: 36-52; Field 1948: 147; and Ephirim-Donkor 2012: 19)

Amulets and Talismans (*Asuman*)

In the worldview of the Akan there is the belief in lower spirit powers often called *asuman*. The *asuman* may take several forms, such as amulets, talismans or beads. They may be worn around the waist, neck or the wrist (Omenyo 2006: 28). It may also be hung at the entrance to a house or a room. *Asuman* may also be contained in brass-pan or in the gourd. In this form it may be put in the corner of a room or placed under the bed. It is believed that the power of *asuman* is derived from the *abosom*. It may also be obtained from the souls of plants and trees (Busia 1954: 195).

Sometimes, they are seen as magical objects charged with impersonal forces that can be manipulated by secret codes or formulae. Busia (1954) however, asserts that the general belief is that all *asuman* ultimately ‘derive their power from other supernatural beings’.

It is also believed that *asuman* are able to protect their users from evil and help to promote their success and health in life. Their effect or ineffectiveness is dependent upon the observation of certain taboos that are often associated with them. *Suman* is also sometimes called *aduro* (‘medicine’) because of its prophylactic nature. *Suman* can also be used for evil ends.

Spirits of Plants and Animals

For the Akan, trees and animals are also believed to be inhabited by spirits. Such spirits can have powers which, in some cases, can be very dangerous to human beings. Certain kinds of trees are believed to possess a particularly strong spirit force called *sasa* which can harm human beings. *Sasa* is ‘the bad, revengeful, hurtful, element in a spirit; that part which must be “laid” or rendered innocuous’ (Manoukian 1950: 57). Such animals are called *sasamoa*. Rattray

1927:182 gives some examples of *sasamoa*: the bongo (*ɔtromo*), the elephant (*ɔsono*); the roan (*eko*); the water buck (*fusuo*); the duyker (*ɔtwe*) among others.

Subsequently, all plants and trees are also believed to have spirits. These kind of spirits, according to Rattray (1927), are different from the tutelary spirits that dwell in trees. This kind of spirit possessed by the plant or tree is that plant or tree's own spirit that gives it life and power. The power of such a plant or tree's spirits can be used for beneficiary or other purposes. In fact, as has been said in the section above, according to Akan traditional understanding, the power of *asuman* may sometimes be derived from plants and animals.

Mother Earth (*Asase Yaa/Efua*)

The Akan also believe that the earth is filled with spiritual powers. As such, it is believed to be the "soul" of the earth and the power of fertility. A number of Akan groups such as the Asante, Akim and Akwapim call it *Asase Yaa*. *Yaa* is the name given to any female born on a Thursday. The Fanti call her *Asase Efua*. *Efua* is the name of a female born on a Friday. In *apaeε*, the religious rite of libation, *Asase Yaa/Efua* is the next mentioned after the Supreme Being is mentioned.

Generally, *Asase Yaa* is regarded as the consort of *Onyankopon Kwame* (Busia 1954: 192-193). Nonetheless, she is not conceived as a deity in the same way as the other gods. A saying that, *Asase nyε bosom; ɔnnkyerε mmusu* attests to this fact. That is to say, 'The earth is not a goddess, she does not divine'. For that matter, there are no temples or shrines, priests or priestesses for *Asase Yaa*. So, the Akan do not consult her for divination as they do with the other gods. According to Busia (1951: 40), the concept of *Asase Yaa* is "rather of a power or a principle possessed by the earth". Nonetheless, on occasions such as the beginning of a planting season or when a grave is to be dug, *Asase Yaa* receives offering and sacrifices.

The Akan Concept of a Person

The human person in the Akan thought is a made up of both physical and spiritual elements. The body is believed to be the most visible material component of the human person. However, there are three other components apart from the body that are usually given (Opoku 1978: 95; Busia 1954: 192-246). These are the: *ɔkra* (soul), *sunsum* (spirit) or *ntorɔ* (semen), and *mogya* (blood).

The Soul (*ɔkra*)

The *ɔkra* is frequently rendered as the soul. It is believed that its source is divine and as such has the quality of immortality. This is due to the general belief that the *ɔkra* is directly given by *Onyame* (the Supreme Being) before the human being is born into the world. The departure of the *ɔkra* from the body implies death for the body. Nonetheless the Akan believe that the *ɔkra* does not die. The Akan proverb below articulates this belief:

Onyame bewu na m'awu
If God could die, I would die.

In the Akan thought, the *ɔkra* is linked with a concept called *nkrabea*. Some scholars slackly often translate *nkrabea* as 'destiny' (Rattray 1916: 25; Danquah 1977 and Amoah 1979). According to this concept, before the *ɔkra* (soul) leaves *Onyame* to come to the world, it obtains from *Onyame* its *nkrabea* which contains broad predetermined plan for a person's life on earth. When such plans are fulfilled or cut short, the person dies and the *ɔkra* returns to the Supreme Being, after death. Ephirim-Donkor (2012: 19), postulates that if a person is unable to have the opportunity to fulfil his or her *nkrabea* as a result of a violent or sudden death, *atɔfo wu*, determined to live a fulfilled life, the *ɔkra* would put on pseudo-human form and live a normal life in the corporeal world, or continue to live as an agitated and revengeful spirit in limbo called *Asasa*. Thus, the *ɔkra* becomes *saman twentwen*, 'evil ghost'.

The Spirit (*Sunsum/Ntorɔ*)

The *sunsum* is another constituent of the human person. Just like the *ɔkra*, the *sunsum* is also believed to be immaterial in the Akan thought. In English it rendered as "spirit". However, the *sunsum* is believed to be transferred by the father of a person, and it is therefore not divine. In the Akan thought, the *sunsum* is believed to be the seat of the "character-disposition" and the intelligence of a person (Twumasi 1970: 861-863). Gyekye (1995: 62) also claims that the *sunsum* is the innate faculty possessed by a person at birth. He disagrees with most of the characterizations which are held about the *sunsum* (1995: 88, 89). He does not therefore believe that the *sunsum*: (a) is derived from the father, (b) is not divine and that (c) it perishes with the disintegration of the *honam* (body), the material component of the person.

The *sunsum* (spirit) of a person can either be said to be "light" as demonstrated by the saying,

Ne sunsum ye hare
His/her spirit is light.

In such a situation, a person can easily be attacked and overcome by evil spirits, including the *sasa* of a person, which is already explained above. It can also be interpreted as the person is not courageous.

On the other hand, a person's *sunsum* (spirit) can also be said to be "heavy". This is related by the saying,

Ne sunsum ye duru
His spirit is heavy

In this case one cannot be overcome by evil spirits. It can also therefore imply a person is courageous. A generous person is said to have *sunsum pa* (good sunsum). Contrast to the *okra* (soul), the *sunsum* (spirit) of a person is believed to be able to leave and return to the body. It serves as the seat of dreams and psychic experiences in a person.

The Blood (*Mogya*)

In the Akan indigenous tradition, the Akan society is fundamentally matrilineal. This is due to the belief that people of the same *abusua* (clan) trace their descent to a common female ancestor. Thus, they are seen as having the same *mogya* (blood). In Akan concept of personhood, the *mogya*, 'blood' is believed to be transmitted from the mother to her children. Hence, the child is physiologically bound to the mother through the *mogya* (blood). This is what gives the child its status and memberships within the *abusua* (clan or family). Therefore, every Akan belongs to one of the seven *abusua*, which is always traced to the mother's lineage (Opoku 1978: 99).

The kinship and political systems are thus based on the *abusua*. This is why the Akan society is fundamentally matrilineal. The members of an *abusua* have certain common characteristics. For instance, the members of the *Oyoko abusua*, has patience as their characteristics. The *Agona abusua*, another family group has eloquence as the dominant characteristic of its members.

It can therefore be said that, in the Akan indigenous tradition, the human person is made up of several distinct constituents: *honam* (the body) the *okra*, (soul) which comes from Onyame (God), *sunsum* (spirit), which is transmitted by the father and *mogya* (blood), which also transmitted by the mother. There is no distinction between the physical and spiritual realms. Both are bound in one whole unit. To the Akan, there is nothing that is purely matter.

Everything has spirit. Also changes occur as a result of action of spirit upon spirit. It is within the above described context of the worldview, that the Akan experience life.

The main players in the universe of the Akan are *Onyame*, *Abosom*, *Nananom Nsamanfo*, *Asuman*, *mmoatia* and an other host of spirit-powers. The Akan universe thus is twofold, spiritual and physical. Therefore, what happens in the spiritual realm will have either a negative or positive consequence in the life of Akan in the physical realm.

Causality

A closer look at the Akan conceptual scheme will reveal that the Akan believe that everything has a cause. Thus, there is nothing without a cause. They believe that there is a spiritual force behind every event. Gyekye (1995; 76-84) noted that the idea of causality in the thought of the Akan rests deeply on the spiritual; though it does not completely disregard the natural causes of events. He argues that the reason for this is that the Akan conception of causality is closely tied to their conception of the world, their theory of being. Thus, the Akan believe that what is real is spiritual.

Williamson (1974: 96-97) unmistakably noted this aspect of the Akan concept of causality when he writes;

A man's trading venture may succeed as the right forces aid 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 or the spirit-ancestors or witches or bad *suman* (magical objects) has no part in it.

This mode of explaining causality, according to Gyekye, is possible because the Akan doctrine of beings supplies an appropriate metaphysical framework (1995: 79). Gyekye postulates that the worldview of the Akan is filled with spirits endowed with varying capabilities leading to the idea that the world is a world of action (Gyekye 1995: 95).

Thus, the world in the Akan thought is a world of action and counteraction of powerful forces; spirits acting upon spirits. A stronger or higher being or spirit can easily destroy the weaker or lower being. Since the human beings and natural phenomena are the lowest beings, they can be controlled by the higher and stronger forces, Gyekye declares (1995: 79).

So to the Akan everything has a cause: *asem biara wɔ ne farebae*. An Akan proverb goes like this

Se abe bɔ ne mu ase a, na ewɔ nea asase ase no
Whenever the palm tree tilts it is because of what the earth has told it.

Birebire amma a, amane mma
If Birebire has not come, there would have been no calamity.

Thus, according to Gyekye, Akan thinkers maintain a doctrine of universal causation. Nothing therefore happens without a cause. He further asserts that though they agree that there are natural or ordinary or regular causes of events, they do not worry themselves to find explanations to such events, for instance flooding of a river after a heavy rainfall, or the drying of a river in times of draught. Since, they consider such events and the like as *Onyame nhyehyɛ*, ‘the arrangement or order of God’. Thus they have a saying that;

Ade a Onyame ahyehyɛ onipa biara ntumi nsee,
The order which God has established no living man can alter.

However, the events which concern them most and for which they give different explanations are those which they consider as ‘extraordinary’ or ‘contingent’. These are events or events which they consider to fall outside the course of nature and are therefore seen as exceptions to the laws of nature. For instance, an unusually long period of drought, a tree falling and killing a farmer on his way to the farm or a pregnancy that extends much beyond a period of nine months. The Akan thinker will therefore attribute such an event to an ultimate cause. This is because they are not considered subsumable under any immediate law of nature (Gyekye 1995).

Gyekye explains that it is because these kinds of events do not fit into their conception of the normal order of things. They are therefore seen as disruptions of the pre-established order of *Onyame*, the Supreme Being. This is because they consider such events as infrequent and abnormal. They are discrete and isolated; they appear to be puzzling, bizarre, and incomprehensible.

To the Akan thinker, the ultimate cause however, may not necessarily be the Supreme Being. It could be any of the lesser spirits or ancestral spirits (Gyekye 1995: 78). Or better still it could be an enemy who has plotted that through the use of evil *asuman* (magical object) or witchcraft, as can be seen in the writing of Williamson 1974: 96-97 above. They will begin to question such occurrences with seriousness to find answers or explanations to them. It is when they are unable to find satisfactory or concrete answers or explanation to their questions that they resort

to *abisa*, ‘divinatory consultation’. This they do by seeking the service of an *Ɔkomfo*, the figure who attends to the *abosom*, ‘the lesser gods’.

Though, Gyekye argues that should the Akan pay a closer attention to their own experience they would probably had a different view of what they term as extraordinary events. They would then convince themselves that what they thought was so extraordinary, was not impossible, after all. Nonetheless, he says that the Akan cannot do that since they have a spiritual worldview. They will therefore seek spiritual explanations (possibly through *abisa*, ‘divinatory consultation’), before they can be satisfied. Causal reference are therefore made to powers or spirits. The cause of an event is ascribed to some spiritual being or power.

The Akan therefore, often fail to consider other factors that may be relevant to what is so-called “abnormal” or “extraordinary” events. Explanation based on chance or luck is out of their conception of causality. Chance and luck explanations according to Gyekye are repugnant especially to determinist Akan thinkers. Since they are of the view that “nothing just or merely happens”, *biribiara nsi kwa* and “everything has its ‘because of’”, that is, its reason or cause; *biribiara wo ne se nti* (Gyekye 1995: 82).

Gyekye further asserts that their conception of an orderly universe rules out the possibility of an unqualifiedly random event. Hence, chance which is an uncaused event, has no place in their explanation of causes of natural events. Explaining an event as by chance, coincidence luck or fortune, from the point of view of an Akan thinker is just as saying the cause is unknown. However, the Akan would reply that ignorance of the cause of an event does not suppose to mean that it has no cause. They would normally attribute the cause of an event that human beings are the victims to supernatural powers.

Thus according to Gyekye (1995: 83), the Akan have a conception of dual causality, which follows from their concept of duality. That is the world to the Akan is made up of spiritual and natural beings (Gyekye 1995: 68-69). Thus, The Akan recognise the causal roles of physical objects. However, spiritual causality is vertical. That is, the causal direction moves from a higher being to a lower being. Physical causality is horizontal. That is material objects can also be the cause of an event. However, to the Akan in any of these events satisfactory explanations must make reference to spiritual powers.

Divinatory consultation (*Abisa*)

As can be observed from the above discussion of *nkrabea*, ‘destiny’ and causality, the Akan would resorted to *abisa*, ‘divinatory consultation’; in order to find out the destiny of a person or the cause of an event or the reason for a misfortune. Thus, *abisa* is a very important practice in the Akan indigenous tradition. However, this issue or practice of *abisa* which deserves thorough study has not been taken seriously by scholars of the Akan traditional religion. Assimeng (1989) and Bediako (1995) have observed that the focus of most African scholars has most often been concentrated on spiritual beings and their attributes, destinies of men and African initiated churches.

Meanwhile, the crux of the matter is that, among the Akan, *abisa* ‘divinatory consultation’, or the desire to know the supernatural causalities of affairs, is the focus of religious activities (Onyinah 2002: 115). Onyinah suggests several issues to clarify his proposition. He postulates that a myth about the withdrawal of God from the world made the Asante to resort to *abisa*, divination (2002: 44). Also, one role of a queen mother as the chief’s adviser is also based on her ability to divine and counsel (2002: 32). The desire to know and alter one’s destiny lead to *abisa*. He further, asserts that the origin of *abosomsom* (the worship of the gods) was related to a person who began to give prognostications of events.

Furthermore, the principal duty of the *akɔmfɔ* (the functionaries of the gods) in *abosomsom* is *abisa*. This is the central activity of the work of *akɔmfɔ*, the principal figure in *abosomsom* (the worship of the gods). Since, etymologically *akɔmfɔ* is a derivation of the word *kɔm*: ‘to divine’ or ‘to prophesy’, ‘to predict’ or ‘to dance’. Again, he said the popularity of the anti-witchcraft shrines was due to *Abisa*. The norms of Akan life from Akan philosophical thinking are success, health and prosperity. Thus, if things are not going on as expected the Akan resort to his/her religiosity, that is, to get a person or a being to divine and provide answers to problems, questions and perplexities of every-day experiences of life (Onyinah 2002: 116).

Thus, Assimeng (1989: 60) noted that the central focus of religious activity in African traditional society seems to be the warding off of what the Akan call *honhom fi* [evil spirit] from the affairs of men. Though, this assertion of Assimeng comes close to the Akan religious attitude. Onyinah however, differs with Assimeng by saying that *abisa* plays an important role in the warding off of evil spirits. He proposes that the Akan do not immediately resort to the warding off of evil spirits. Rather, the Akan will resort to warding off evil spirits after all initial

attempts to find solutions fail, and they had found out through *abisa* that their problems are of supernatural origins (see Busia 1962: 13).

The *abosom* thus, have *abisa da*, ‘a day of consultation’, where people come for consultation (Onyinah 2002: 56). On such days the deity is invited to possess the *ɔkɔmfo*. The invitation takes the form of the *ɔkɔmfo* dancing to certain drum rhythms; possession takes place during the dance. The *ɔkɔmfo* then receives messages from the deity, which are normally constructed in allusive expressions. Hence, they are unintelligible to the clients. The *ɔkɔmfo* relays the message through an interpreter who deciphers them to the client. The information will be given with regards to the cause, type and treatment of a disease or causes of mishaps, such as barrenness, an accident, a sudden death or origin of conflicts in a marriage. Also, signals of an approaching misfortune, and how to avoid it may also be given.

Thus, from the above discussion it can be noted that *abisa* is a vital practice in the Akan indigenous tradition. It helps them to find the cause of their predicament and how to get solutions to their problems. This practice can also be said to be dependent on their dualistic worldview. The belief in spirit beings, destiny and causal powers which are believed to be higher than human beings are key to this practice.

Communal values

Community is a value highly cherished by the Akan people. The communal structure of the Akan society has created a sense of community that characterises social relations among individual members. The sense of community has been remarked by many writers. However, the Akan communal system does not exclude individualistic values. The identity of Akan ethnicity is often expressed by the term *Akanman*. The Akan word *ɔman* (plural *aman*) which forms the second element in this expression has a meaning much of ‘community, town; nation, state’. This has also been translated as "Akanland".

Kwame Gyekye (1996: 35-36) defines communal values as the values that express appreciation of worth and importance of the community, those values that underpin and guide the types of social relations, attitudes, and behaviour that ought to exist between individuals who live together in a community, sharing a social life and having a sense of common good.

Community, he says, is a group of persons linked by interpersonal bonds, who share common values, interests, and goals. Again, he defines communalism as the doctrine or theory that the community or group is the focus of the activities of the individual members of the society.

From the above definitions one can see the obvious nature of the Akan communal values. This is because community is one of the vital features of the Akan heritage. The Akan society according to Opoku emphasizes cooperation, mutual helpfulness, generosity and concern for group welfare as virtues that are fundamental to the community ideal and are worthy of pursuit (Opoku 1990: 489).

These are the values that are instilled in the individual. To the Akan, the meaning of life can be grasped when an individual is a member of a group. Busia has this to say:

The individual is brought up to think of himself always in relation to this group and to behave always in such a way as to bring honour and not disgrace to its members. The ideal set before him is that of mutual helpfulness and cooperation within the group of kinsfolk. Each member should help the other in health or sickness, in success or failure, in poverty or plenty (Busia 1962: 33).

From the proposition above, it can be deduced that in the Akan indigenous tradition the emphasis is on group life and what each member can do for the community. Therefore, an ideal person is one who is selfless. A person who reaches beyond himself to affect the lives of others in the community. Hence, the value of a person's life, is measured by what that person does for others than by what he does for himself. The fulfilment of one's responsibility is not by what one amasses for him/herself but what he gives away to others.

Does the concept of communalism therefore mean that the idea of individualism does not exist in the Akan indigenous tradition? Opoku states that, the promotion of group interest does not necessarily lead to the abrogation or denial of the individual interest. Since the Akan argue that the well-being of the individual cannot be considered in isolation from that group. The Akan view of things, he says, is that the needs and interests of all the members of the community can be achieved by a system of communalism that is geared towards the promotion of the general welfare and interest of all the individual members who belong to the community.

The Akan proverb "when a man descends from heaven, he descends into a human society," according to Opoku underscore the Akan belief that people are social beings by nature. Therefore it is impossible for them to live in isolation because they are not born to live a life

of solitariness, and society is the context or condition for human existence. People are therefore not sufficient in themselves so that they provide their own needs single-handedly. Another Akan proverb relates to this belief: “Man is not a palm tree that he should be self-sufficient”. To satisfy one’s basic needs, one therefore needs the assistance of others, or one needs to be in relation with others in order to realise one’s full personality.

Cooperation, mutual help are the sine qua non of individual welfare, as the Akan proverb may depict, “When the left hand washes the right and the right the left, then both hands will be clean”. The concept of communalism therefore implies that the well-being of all is that which determines the good of each person in the community, for the welfare of each cannot be considered without the welfare of all (Opoku 1990: 490)

Opoku (1990: 490), uses an Akan art work of a siamese crocodile to illustrate how the individual relates to the society. The siamese crocodile has two heads, two tails and a common stomach. The saying that goes with it is that although they have a common stomach they struggle over food, (as if the food were going to different or separate stomachs). The separate heads of the siamese crocodiles depicts each member of society in his or her own way is unique. This is expressed by individual tastes, wishes, passions and desires. This therefore may imply that tastes and preferences may differ from person to person.

The struggle for food is due to the separate heads of the Siamese crocodile. Hence, Opoku explains that individual self-expression or individuality is the cause of conflict in human society. He however added that though the symbol gives recognition to human individuality it also goes on to suggest the background against which conflicts that arise out of personal individuality may be viewed.

Thus, he says, the common stomach of the crocodiles indicates that members of the community share an identity of interests, and this common interest is the result of the cooperation of all. The contribution of each leads to the good of all. The symbol also depicts the futility of social conflicts. The prosperity of all is dependent on the cooperation of all the members of the society.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONCEPTS WITCHCRAFT AND EVIL IN THE AKAN TRADITION

To understand and appreciate why the concept of enemy is so pervasive in Neo-prophetism, the concepts evil and witchcraft need also to be discussed and understood. This chapter therefore examines the concepts “evil” and “witchcraft” in the Akan traditional culture. It discusses what the Akan terms as evil, the categories or kinds of evil and the causes of evil, the different level of evil and how evil is warded off. Also, it examines the Akan belief in witchcraft; what is witchcraft and how it is acquired, the types of witchcraft and how a witch or wizard is treated.

The Akan concept of Evil

In the Akan indigenous tradition according to Abamfo Ofori Atiemo (1995: 18), the term *mmusu*, means ‘evil’. However, there are different shades of the term ‘evil’ in the Akan tradition. The different shades may fall under one kind of evil or the other. However, in spite of the distinctions, the society considers whatever is termed as evil as grievous. Since evil has religious and social implications, it signifies danger and usually carries a disgrace. *Mmusu* is a grievous kind of evil, which in origin, essence and manifestation, weakens the spiritual foundations of one or all of the various components that constitute the human person. It also disrupts the peace and the harmony of the community, which itself embraces both spiritual and physical entities (Atiemo 1995: 26).

Thus the general concern of the Akan is to avoid *mmusu* at all cost, or where it is suspected to be imminent, to quickly ward it off. The Akan idea of the good life means the absence of *mmusu*. Thus, in the worldview of the Akan salvation seems to mean the absence of *mmusu*. Hence, acts, events, and conditions that the term *mmusu* is applied are the opposite to the acts, events and conditions that the Akan cherish as good. For instance, acts such as attending to the gods and ancestors, obedience to community and clan taboo, upholding the moral standards of the community and doing things that brings honour and fame to one’s family are considered good acts (Atiemo 1995: 26-27). This clearly explains why the Akan does not take pain and suffering lightly.

In the same vein, events and conditions such as good health, prosperity, dying at a ripe old age and not through accidents or a dreadful disease; successful marriages blessed with good

children, to have an *Okra*, 'a soul' who is constantly contented, cheerful and clean and to have a good *nkrabea*, 'destiny or fate' are also cherished among the Akan. Anything that contravenes any of these acts, events and conditions is said to be *mmusu*, 'evil'. The reason is that such negative acts, events and conditions drive the protective influence or power of the gods, ancestors and the important spiritual elements in the human person or the community away. The individual or the community or both may be exposed to attacks by evil spiritual powers. Also, an act which is considered as *mmusu* may provoke the wrath of auspicious powers such as the ancestors and the gods as way of administering discipline and social justice in the community (Atiemo 1995: 27).

According to Atiemo another term which also means evil is *bɔne*. However, *bɔne* is seen as 'ordinary evil' which is different from *mmusu*. In terms of nature and consequences *bɔne* is lighter than *mmusu*. So it can be said that every *mmusu* is *bɔne* but not every *bɔne* is *mmusu*. Atiemo asserts that *mmusu* always has something to do with the supernatural, and may be responded to only by resorting to rituals. It is not easy though to draw a line between *bɔne* and *mmusu*, Atiemo declares (1995: 18).

For instance, Atiemo illustrated that, if a child steals once or twice from parents, it may be deemed *bɔne*, 'ordinary evil'. When it however becomes habitual, then it is deemed *mmusu*. This is because, it brings disgrace to both the child and the whole family. Hence, a spiritual cause may be suspected in this case. Also, when stealing involves ancestral property or stealing from the shrine, it is deemed *mmusu*.

Kinds and causes of evil in the Akan Tradition

The concept of evil in the Akan Tradition covers several kinds of evil. They are categorised into socio-religious evils, moral evils, physical evils and others as unusual events.

According to Atiemo (1995: 19), since the Akan have a spiritual worldview and an inextricable socially-knit sense of identity, all evils to some extent have socio-religious implications in the Akan society. Evils which have socio-religious nature include: infringing customary prohibitions such as having sexual intercourse in the bush, going to the river, lake or bush on a day deemed as sacred and showing disrespect to an elderly person. Also, disregarding customary responsibilities is considered a socio-religious evil. For instance, an inheritor of a deceased person's property who refuses to take care of the orphans and widows, failing to conduct proper burial and funeral rites for a dead relative, mistreating a stranger, bearing another person a grudge and a wife refusing to cook for her husband or a husband

refusing to eat the food prepared by his wife. Finally, neglecting to attend to the gods and the ancestors is also considered a socio-religious evil among the Akan.

The next kind of evils among the Akan are moral evils. Moral evils are the kind of evils which are considered as an offence to the gods and the ancestors. Atiemo (1995: 19) therefore asserts that, moral evils are regarded as *mmusu* since that offend the gods and the ancestors and also brings shame to the perpetrators and their families. These kind of evils may include stealing, adultery, especially with one's father or brother's wife, incest and giving false witness.

Another kind of evil is physical evils. This kind of evil are normally related to misfortunes. Examples are: epidemic, accidents, barrenness, persistent failure in marriage, repeated loss of spouse [or children], and sickness that defies treatment. Atiemo also stated that modern misfortunes such as failures in education or business, are also considered *mmusu*, 'evil' among the Akan (Atiemo 1995:19).

Beside the above mentioned kinds of evils, there are certain occurrences that are also described as *mmusu*, 'evil' among the Akan. These kind of evils are mostly events that distracts the order in nature or happens at their unusual time. Such events are therefore considered unusual events in nature. According to Atiemo (1995: 20), they are considered as *mmusu*, because there are some kind of beliefs associated with them. This is because such events are considered to signify evil. They are therefore considered as bad omen. For instance, when a rat appears in daylight it is considered *mmusu*. This is because it is not normal for rats to appear in daylight. Also, the presence of an owl in a house is considered *mmusu*. This is because the owl is a bird associated with witchcraft.

From the above it can be inferred that different usage of the term *mmusu* indicate that *mmusu* can be an act of commission or omission. This can be observed under socio-religious and moral evils or the conditions and events under physical evils and some unusual events. Atiemo (1995: 20) postulates that the kind of evils represented under socio-religious and moral evils and evils of some unusual events are considered *mmusu* because they bring in their trail the kind of evils designated as physical evils. They are called *mmusu* because they result in concrete evil or suffering. Thus, if anyone is involved in any of the acts listed under socio-religious, moral evils and unusual events such a person is inviting physical evils unto him/herself, family or community.

Atiemo (1995: 20-21) however pointed out that the kind of evils listed under moral evils are not always considered the causes. Sometimes they are effects of some other causes. For they are acts which bring the whole family into disgrace and might result in tragic consequences for the person involved. According to him, the Akan maxim *Aninguase mmfata Okanni ba*, 'Disgrace does not befit the child of an Akan' emphasises this. Atiemo claims that Rattray explains that killing a kinsman accidentally would be attributed to *mmusu*, "...bad luck following the commission or omission of some act which has offended the supernatural agency."

Atiemo further explained that *mmusu* seems to be a mystical or spiritual impersonal force that "comes upon" or "follows" a person, family, or a whole village as a result of evil acts of omission or commission by a person or a group of persons related to the larger group. It may also "come upon" or "follow" a person or a group as a result of the activity of witches, or other spiritual powers. He thus stated that we can distinguish between three strands of *mmusu*, 'evil' namely: *mmusu* as an act of omission or commission, *mmusu* as physical evil or suffering and *mmusu* as a spiritual force that follows people Atiemo discussed these in details (Atiemo 1995: 21-22).

According to Atiemo (1995: 22), the concept of *mmusu* is well understood from the context of the worldview and the concept of reality and causality of the Akan, since to the Akan the world is filled with spirit-beings whose moods and actions affect the natural order. Changes are believed to be the consequences of spirit acting upon spirit. A stronger or higher spirit acting negatively upon the spirit of man manifests itself as *mmusu*. The concept of *mmusu*, thus makes sense in the Akan worldview.

All that the Akan relish to constitute the good life is negated by *mmusu*. *Mmusu* then is a breach between one and the gods, the ancestors and other powers whose bright countenance ensures one's prosperity. *Mmusu* seems to afford an unbridled boost to the negative activity of the spirit powers. It is believed that when there is *mmusu* auspicious and potent powers usually refuse to act, or lose their potency. The Akan maxim is apt which says, *mmusu tia aduru so*, '*mmusu*, steps on medicine' (Atiemo 1995:22). Atiemo stated that, a potent medicine whether it is plant medicine for the cure of a sickness, or a *suman*, 'talisman/amulet' for protection, loses its effectiveness in the presence of *mmusu*.

When a sickness persists after well-attested potent medications has been administered, or when a *suman*, 'talisman/amulet' believed to be potent fails to perform, the conclusion is

obvious, that some kind of *mmusu* has been done. Also, it even believed that harmless and normal situations become dangerous in the presence of *mmusu*. The Akan proverb below illustrates this belief:

Mmusu wo wo ho a, na nwaw ka wo.

It is only when one is followed by *mmusu*, that one is bitten by a snail.

It is therefore believed that there are no *mmusu* without cause. Hence, no matter what spiritual force is involved, *mmusu* can occur only when through an act of omission or commission exposes oneself. However, if someone suffers the consequences of *mmusu* it is not supposed to mean that one has personally or directly been involved or committed a kind of *mmusu* act. It is also believed that the deeds or misdeeds of parents, ancestors and close relatives may sometimes be the cause of people's problems (Atiemo 1995: 23).

***Abisa*, 'Consultation' and the Causes of *Mmusu*, 'Evil'**

As discussed chapter two above, *abisa* means consultation. It is the act of going to a shrine to inquire from the gods through a *Ɔkomfo*, 'a mouthpiece of the gods', about forthcoming events or an event which has already happened, to know what the future holds or the cause of an event, in order to know the course of action or precautions to take. Atiemo (1995: 35) asserts that when *abisa*, 'consultations' are done at the shrine, the reasons why an individual or community suffer a particular evil are revealed. The causes of a particular event are sometimes stated in definite terms and they are almost always connected to the supernatural.

An outbreak of an epidemic may be associated with the negligence of the elders of the elder of the community to perform their responsibilities to the ancestors or gods; or that an individual has done an *akyiwade*, 'a hateful, abominable or detestable thing' either secretly or openly and has not been punished or done something to pacify the gods and the ancestors. The plight of a community may be associated with the attack of witchcraft. Among the Akan it is believed that witches, sometimes, "import" diseases into their towns. Also, *duabɔ*, 'a curse', offending the ancestors or the gods, defilement of the *ɔkra* through a misdeed, or bearing a person a grudge may be said to be the cause of an illness should it persist in spite of the application of a well-attested treatment.

If a hunter kills another person and goes to the shrine for consultation in order to find out the cause of his misfortune, he may be told he is an *ɔkrabirifo*, that is he has a 'blackened soul' and therefore attracts misery, troubles and tragic accident (see Atiemo 1995: 25-26). So such a person is followed by *mmusu* and therefore attracts *mmusu* by his very nature, or he is under

a curse or that he has a bad *nkrabea*, ‘destiny’. Still, his woes may be attributed to his/her parents’ failure to fulfil a vow made to a *ɔbosom*, ‘god’ while they desired to solve their problem of infertility.

If a woman who possesses all the good qualities that makes her a good wife never gets a husband, or person who has lost favour with his/her boss or friends visits the shrine for consultation, he/she may be told his/her *anuonyam*, ‘glory’ may have been taken by witches. According to Atiemo (1995: 36), a person’s *anuonyam*, ‘glory’ is the aura that surrounds the person. When such is taken away by witches the person loses all attraction or favours. Finally when death frequently occurs in the same *abusua*, ‘family’, it may be attributed to the consequences of twisting justice against widows or orphans of the dead relative by the elders of that *abusua*. Giving the right of inheritance to the wrong person may also provoke a series of calamities in the *abusua*.

It can therefore be inferred from the above discussions that the concept of *mmusu* heightens the perception of evil and suffering as powerfully destructive and utterly negative. *Mmusu* also deepens the mystery that surrounds evil and suffering. This concept of evil in the Akan indigenous tradition indicates that the Akan acknowledges the presence of naked evil in the world. The Akan do not think of evil as a superstition or just some mental conception but as something concrete which can be seen and felt. Evil overpowers the individual and society, seeking to refute efforts at achieving the good life. Nonetheless, this is not supposed to mean that the Akan see life from a negative perspective.

Since, though evil is believed to have powerful spiritual associations, it is not considered unbeatable. Faithfully revering the gods and the ancestors, taking good care of the *ɔkra*, ‘the soul’, upholding the moral standard, and observing essential taboos, can prevent *mmusu* from happening. Not even the efforts of jealous enemies and malignant forces such as juju and witchcraft can affect a person who observes the above. Also, whether the source of a particular ‘evil’ is traced to the benevolent or malevolent spirits, it is believed by the Akan that they can be controlled or completely eradicated through an Akan religious ritual known as *mmusuyi*.

***Mmusuyi*: Warding off evil**

In the Akan indigenous tradition, *mmusuyi* is a ritual act that is believed to remove or keep evil away (Atiemo 1995: 29). Williamson (1974:105), has rightly noted that, “for the common man religion is very largely the means of reinforcing life, of proper precaution

against the powers which might destroy him”. Thus, in the Akan indigenous tradition *mmusuyi* is a way by which the Akan “reinforce life of proper precaution against the powers” which he/she fears might destroy him/her. Etymologically, the term *mmusuyi* is made up of two Akan words, *mmusu* and *yi*. *Mmusu* means ‘evil’, ‘calamity’ or ‘misfortune’. *Yi* means ‘to remove’, ‘ward off’ or ‘take away’ (Atiemo 1995: 29). *Mmusuyi* simply means to remove take away or ward off evil, misfortune or calamity.

Mmusuyi is a very important ritual which is rooted in Akan religious life. It features at the different levels of the Akan religion in different forms. It can be seen at the personal, family and state levels of the Akan religion. The purpose of *mmusuyi* is to “reinforce life” and provide “proper precaution” which might be destructive of life. Atiemo postulated that *mmusu* in whatever form is dreaded by the Akan. Hence, it was such an observation which led Williamson to conclude that *mmusuyi* is the “Akan concept of salvation” (Atiemo 1995: 29).

Since *mmusu* is commonly believed to be sent by an enemy, the religious rites of libation show a typical way in which evil is expelled or the evil wishes of an enemy are warded off. Below is an excerpt from a religious rite of libation which shows how the Akan ward off evil:

Me Nananom Nsamanfo, nnɛ yɛ Awukudae (or Akwesidae, as the case may be), mo mmɛgye ɔɔ nni, na mo mma kurow yi nyɛ yiye; na momma mma nwo mma, na Nnipa a ɛwɔ kurow yi mu nyina nya sika. Ma w'koa ho nyɛ no den, ma ɔman yi nyina ho nyɛ wɔn den. Mma mmusu bi mma kurow yi so; Na obiara a ɔmpɛ kurow yi yiye no mma ɔnnyɛ yiye da.

Spirits of my ancestors, today is Awukudae, (or Akwesidae as the case may be), come and eat ɔɔ (mashed yam mixed with palm oil): Let this town prosper: let those who bear children do so and let all the people in this town become rich. Let your servant be in good health. Let the whole state be in good health; Keep evil away from our town. Let anyone who wishes evil for this town suffer evil (Atiemo 1995: 39).

The above manner of prayer is typical of the Akan and is emphasised by the Akan proverb below:

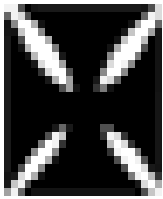
Dua a enya wo a ebewo w'ani no, yetu asee; yensensene ano
The stick that would pierce your eyes, is uprooted; we do not sharpen it.

Though this proverb in a general sense speaks about the attitude or practice of getting rid of potential dangers early, rather than encouraging them to grow. Just as one will not sharpen the stick that would like to pierce his eye, but uproots it. This proverb is likely to be interpreted as getting rid of an enemy and, or his attacks before that enemy gets you. Just as the proverb says, “If the serpent bites before being charmed, there is no profit for the charmer.” Ecclesiastes 10:11. So the Akan will like to get rid of the threat of the enemy before the enemy gets him/her. In the religious rite of libation, *apaɛɛ*, it can be observed that

mmusu, 'evil' sent by an enemy against a community or family are prayed to be sent back to the enemy. Or whatever 'evil' an enemy has thought of sending against anybody or group is asked to return to that that person.

Types and levels of *mmusuyi*

According to Atiemo (1995: 30) there are two main types of *mmusuyi* namely routine and crisis *mmusuyi*. Routine *mmusuyi* is the type of *mmusuyi* which is done regularly as a matter of routine. It may be done on daily basis or at longer intervals such as weekly, monthly and yearly. This type of *mmusuyi* are the kind of rituals performed mostly at festival. Other simply rituals may be performed on daily basis by individuals to ward off evil. The item that may be used for the performance of *mmusuyi* is called *mmusuyideε*, 'that which removes bad luck'. There is also an Adinkra (see Atiemo 1995: 30) symbol or design called *Mmusuyideε*. It is a symbol of good fortune or sanctity. Below is the Adinkra symbol for *mmusuyideε*



According to Atiemo the symbol is the Maltese Cross, which might have been borrowed by the North African Moslems who introduced the design to West Africa from the relics of ancient Christianity in the region.

Figure 1

Crisis *mmusuyi* on the other hand is done when there is a calamity or some kind of a misfortune, such as epidemic or when there is a turn in the life cycle such as puberty, death and succession to a public office, sickness, accidents, and wars, infringements of customary prohibitions, failure and set-backs (Atiemo: 1995: 31).

The two types of *mmusuyi* can be done at the various levels of the social structure which also forms the cult groups in Akan religious life. Hence, *mmusuyi* may be carried out at the community and personal levels. The functionary maybe a traditional priest, chief or a clan elder. However, in some cases it may be performed by the parents at the personal level on behalf of a child, or be performed by one for one's self. There are special places for the performance of *mmusuyi* such as the shrine of a *ɔbosom*, the stool house, cross-roads and junctions, busy lines, outskirts of towns or villages, outside of the house, river and lake side, and the refuse dump. The time especially the specific day of the week is also considered. It might be a day of a *ɔbosom* or the day of the week in which a person is born.

Mmusuyi are preferably done at dawn or at dusk, or at mid-night. The purpose is to avoid disturbances by curious onlookers. The procedure for *mmusuyi* ritual however varies. There is

no uniformity in the pattern of *mmusuyi* common to all Akan sub-groups. However, ritual which falls under the routine type have fixed patterns and must be observed with strict accuracy. Any omission in the process may render the whole process inefficacious. Most of the rituals under the crisis type do not have fixed forms. It is the *abosom* who normally indicate the form a crisis type *mmusuyi* may take through divination.

The occasions that may call for *mmusuyi* are the causes of *mmusu* or the event, acts and situations that may be classified as *mmusu*. An example of *mmusuyi* is illustrated in the libation ritual and *akra aguare*, ‘purification or bathing of soul’. It is ritual wash or bath to appease the *akra*, ‘soul’ (see Atiemo 1995: 41; Sackey 2006: 114). The purpose is to strengthen and purify one’s soul in order to withstand any attack from an enemy, or to ward off an act committed by the person. It is a means of protecting one self’s from evil.

The Akan concept of Witchcraft: *Bayie*

In the Akan indigenous tradition just like any other African tradition, is the belief in witchcraft. Witchcraft in the Akan tradition is called *bayie*. *Bayie* however, seems to have a slightly different dimension in the Akan tradition. Though, the fear of witchcraft is embedded in the Akan society, the Akan however believe that witchcraft is not only something evil that is used for bad intent but it can also be used to do good things as well. In this section I discuss what *bayie*, ‘witchcraft’ in the Akan tradition is, the types of *bayie* and how witchcraft is acquired. I also examine how the witch in the Akan society is treated and how the Akan protect themselves against witchcraft activities.

What is *bayie*?

The Akan term seems to have several nuances. The term when examined etymologically can be interpreted in several ways. *Bayie* is made up of two words *ba* and *yie* where *ba* means ‘child’ and *yie* ‘to remove’. But my encounter with some Akans has also given me the understanding that the word *yie* can also mean ‘well’ or ‘good’. So *bayie* can mean ‘to remove one’s child’ usually another person’s child(ren) or ‘to do one’s child well or good’ usually at the expense of other people’s child(ren). *Ba* can also mean ‘came’. In this case it can be interpreted as ‘one who came well’. That is, a person whose presence brings good fortune.

Thus from the above when a person is said to be an *ɔbayifo*, ‘a witch’ in the Akan traditional culture it can be interpreted as a person who takes away, or kills a child. Amoah (1986: 77)

thus defines *bayie* as “an external spiritual power which can manifest itself in various forms and which, it is believed, can possess a person”. She emphasised that the common belief is that *bayie* is usually used for evil and destructive purposes: the destruction of human life, especially children and destruction of property. She also confirmed that *bayie* is used to promote the interest and success of those who have it, at the expense of others. Also, from the above *bayie* can be “an inherent potency internalised in some fortunate human being as part of their personality” (Onyinah 2002: 67). The person who possesses the *bayie*, ‘witchcraft’ is called *Obayifo* (a witch) and *Benbonsam*, (Onyinah 2002: 67) ‘the male who is evil’ or *bonsam*, ‘a wizard’ (Atiemo 1995: 8).

However, in explaining the concept of witchcraft in the Akan traditional culture Debrunner (1961: 1), applied the definition of witchcraft of the Nupe of Nigeria to the Akan concept of *bayie*. Debrunner stated that, “the specific concept of witchcraft is the idea of some supernatural power of which man can be possessed, and which is used exclusively for evil and antisocial purposes.” Onyinah (2002: 66) agree with the application of the Nupe concept of witchcraft by Debrunner to the Akan concept of witchcraft. However, Onyinah postulated that the Akan concept of witchcraft is somewhat different from the Nupe concept. According to him, though in both concepts there is a claim that people are to be possessed by supernatural powers, just as can be seen in Amoah’s definition of *bayie*. The Nupe believe that witchcraft is exclusively used for evil and antisocial purposes, whereas the Akan believe that though *bayie* is often used for evil, it can also be used for good purposes.

Types of witchcraft: *Bayie*

From the discussion above it is clear that there are two types of *bayie*, ‘witchcraft’ among the Akan. Witchcraft which can be used for good purposes and witchcraft that can be used for evil or bad purposes. Onyinah (2002:66) therefore claimed that the Akan belief that *bayie* is also used for good purposes can be seen in all aspects of the society, such as music, film and the day to day activities of the Akan. *Bayie* can be used to describe a genius who performs an extraordinary achievement in any field or profession. In this regard, Opoku Afriyie, a Ghanaian footballer as a result of his splendid performance won the nickname *bayie*. Also, the ability to invent and advance in technology are often explained by the Akan as the good use of *bayie*. From this perspective an Akan musician Alfred Benjamin Crentsil, composed the song titled “Devil” in his album “You Devil go away from me”. An excerpt from the song is as follows:

Se ewɔ ayen fa ye ade papa, w'ayen yi a, fa boa wo mma, memmfa nse nkrɔfo mma... Se ewɔ sika a, fa ye ade papa. Wo sika yi a, fa boa wo mma, memmfa nye mansotwe... Onipa bibini... Adasa mma e! wontie me. Onyame abɔ yen y'aba wiase yi mu. Abonsam ne tumi dɔso nti w'ama yen ayen. Abinom de wɔn ayen wɔde see ade. Abinom nso wɔn ayen a, ayen papa a. Wɔde ye ade yie. Kwasi broni n'ayen a, ayen papa. Dde ahyehye aelopen, Eti mu a na w'ani agye... Dde ahyehye train... Obibini n'ayen a Dde ye awukade. Ohu de ne yonko nya nkso pe, Dse akwa yi a, meye ma w'apa ne ho tam, n'enyiwa efura, w'aye obubuafo, nnke nya sika ara da. Ebe! Ayen, ayen...mo mma yemfa y'ayen mfa mboa yen mma, na yen mma ntumpon. Ahoɔyaa, nsem honu yi a, ne nyina ye nsusu bɔne a...go away from me... You devil, go away from...

If you have witchcraft use it for something good, this your witchcraft, use it to help your children, do not use it to destroy other's children. If you have money, use it for something good. This your money, use it to help your children, do not use it for litigation...you black man. Folks! Listen to me. God has created us into this world. Because the Devil has many powers, he has given us witchcraft. Others use their witchcraft for destruction. The witchcraft of others is a good witchcraft. They use it for something good. The witchcraft of the white man is a good witchcraft. He has used it to invent aeroplane. The witchcraft of the black man is used for wickedness. When he sees the progress of his neighbour, then he says, this man, I will make him go naked, make him blind, cripple him, he will never get money. Why! Witch, witch...let us use our witchcraft to help our children, so that our children will prosper. Envy, jealousy, folly, all are evil imaginations...go away from me...You devil, go away from...

From the above lyrics it becomes clear that witchcraft may be seen from two perspectives.

Witchcraft that can be used for something good and witchcraft that can be used for evil intent. The inventions of trains and aeroplane are described as the good use of *bayie*, 'witchcraft' by the Akan musician. Also, a splendid performance by any person which results in an extraordinary achievement is good *bayie*. From this background Onyinah (2002: 67) argues that Debrunner's definition for *bayie* is not conducive for the Akan. He therefore stipulated that *bayie*, 'witchcraft' from the Akan perspective can be defined as "the belief that some people may possess supernatural powers, which may be used for either good or evil."

Onyinah (2002: 76) asserted that those who possess good witchcraft can turn destructive acts into good deeds for those they love. For instance: it is thought that they can promote good marriages for the women they love; make students brilliant by adding to their brains those removed from others; use their powers to help people get good jobs and make them rich; help their daughters get good husbands and bear more children. In this regard Onyinah agree with Kofi Appiah-Kubi (1983: 262) who stated that the Akan believe some witchcraft to be positive. Since they can be used to help others to achieve great deeds in the society, especially during war or in business and education.

However, Onyinah postulates that the difference between good and evil *bayie*, is believed to be dependent on the person who possesses the *bayie* and not the *bayie* itself (2002: 76).

Thus, if the person has a bad character and possesses *bayie* it is obvious that his/her *bayie* will be evil. But when a person who has a good character is possessed by *bayie* he/she is likely to use *bayie* for something good. One who possesses evil witchcraft can also be

referred to as *Bayiboro* or *Bayikwasea*. According to Onyinah, it is held that evil witchcraft grows through the possessor's insatiable appetite for "human flesh" and power, instead of using his/her *bayie* to help people. Appiah-Kubi (1983: 262) asserts that Akan witchcraft as a theory of causation embraces a theory of morals. It says that witches are wicked people and it is their wicked feelings which cause their witchcraft to do harm.

To him, the concept of witchcraft disapproves of the common anti-social vices and approves of the virtues of the society. The belief supports the moral order of the community over and above particular quarrels. Anger, hatred and strife are not only bad, but they carry in them the mystical threat of disaster to others or oneself. Thus while ancestors are said to attack the wicked in the society witchcraft is believed to attack the virtuous. This assertion confirms the idea that A. B. Crensil conveys in his song, that when a witch sees that his neighbour prospers or is making progress he/she vows to make that person go naked, crippled and never to be rich.

Onyinah (2002: 70) stated that *bayie*, 'witchcraft' is similar to spirit-possession. Nonetheless the two are said to be distinct phenomena. Their similarity is based on the fact that both are thought to have supernatural powers and controlled by certain spirits. However, their difference lies in the belief that in witchcraft, the *ahoboa* (witch-spirit animal) is thought to unite with a person in a mutual marriage. While in spirit-possession, a person is said to be a vehicle, whose body serves as a receptacle for a spirit entity, who controls the person for brief intervals and then vacates. Onyinah further explained that the difference is heightened by the fact that while witches are socially abhorred and despised in society, spirit-possessed persons (*akɔmfɔɔ*) are well respected. This stems from the notion that the functions of those who are possessed by the gods are thought to help the community by the giving of divination and the knowledge of herbal medicines. Hence whereas a spirit-possession phenomenon is a public affair, witchcraft is a concealed (or nocturnal) activity.

The practice of witchcraft among the Akan is referred to as *bayigorɔ*. The *bayigorɔ* is a nocturnal activity with well-structured by-laws. The witch is supposed to possess *bayikukuo*, 'witchcraft pot'. In this pot is believed to be a mixture of human blood and articles such as beads, herbs, human nails and snakes. The *bayikukuo* is believed to be kept either in one's room, farm, river, the hearth, dunghill or outside the house. In the accusation of witchcraft, it is expected that the person shows where this pot is hidden, so that it will be burnt or

destroyed. Though, few people are able to produce some physical objects, it is often claimed that the *bayikukuo*, ‘witchcraft-pot’ is spiritual.

The *ahoboa* mentioned above according to Onyinah can be translated as “the animal power that is within me.” He however, adopted the term “witch-spirit animal” to refer to the *ahoboa*. The witch-spirit animal is believed to be spiritual and invisible to the natural eye. However, they are believed to materialise when they go to perform their duties. The witch-spirit animal is believed to be carried on the person of the witch in items such as jewellerys, girdles, and beads, others are thought to be carried in their bellies or genital parts. Such animals may include a snake, dog, lion, bird or a centipede. It is believed that a person can have more than one witch-spirit animal and the more witch-spirit animal one possesses the more powerful the person becomes as a witch. However, if such an animal is killed in the cause of its operation the person who possesses it will die. Others however claim that the *ahoboa* can never be caught, since it is spiritual.

Onyinah therefore asserted that in this regard the witch-spirit animal is thought to be the real power that the witch possesses and without *ahoboa*, ‘the witch-spirit animal’ there is no witchcraft. Also, the belief that the witchcraft animal and the witch-spirit animal are spiritual, thus places the *bayifo*, ‘witch’ above the ordinary human being (Onyinah 2002: 73-74). This therefore might be one of the reasons why witchcraft is the most feared force among the Akan. During my research I heard how some Neo-prophetic adherents has testified of how they were bitten or threatened in their dreams by the *ahoboa* and when they woke up they saw the manifestation of what has happened in the dream, physically.

Those who also managed to kill the *ahoboa* testified that a relative who they suspected to be a witch who has been hindering their progress in life has died. The fear of witchcraft may also be due to the fact that it goes against the operative ideal of the Akan society, since the operative ideal of the Akan society is that the group’s interest should supersede that of the individual. But it seems that the Akan sees *bayie* as evil because of its anti-social phenomenon, used in most cases to promote an individual’s interest instead of the group.

How witchcraft is acquired

Witchcraft in the Akan tradition is believed to be something that a person who is not a witch can get either knowing or unknowing. There are therefore various ways that are proposed as means through which one can get or be infested with witchcraft from a witch or wizard.

Onyinah (2002: 74-76) discussed some of the well-known ways by which witchcraft can be

acquired, and my own experience from my research and encounter with many Akan people confirms this. Onyinah stated that for the Akan witchcraft is believed to be mainly acquired within one's family. Thus one way by which one can acquire witchcraft is through inheritance. In this way it is believed that a person can get witchcraft while in the mother's womb. In this case it can either be the mother passing it on to the child or another family member giving it to the child while in the womb of her mother. It can also be inherited from a dying witch within the family.

Onyinah claims that an inherited witchcraft cannot be given to a person in another clan, unless in an exceptional case where it can be given to a friend. According to him, witchcraft can be transferred without the knowledge of the recipient. Debrunner and Fields also agree that it is believed that witchcraft can be given to people against their will (Debrunner 1961: 58-59; Field 1937: 154). Onyinah however, asserts that in such a case the witchcraft begins to manifest after the decease of the transferor (2002: 74).

Another means by which one can acquire witchcraft is heredity. Onyinah explained that a person who has this kind of witchcraft is believed to have received it from the almighty God. It is believed that people with this kind of witchcraft are very powerful. Further, people can acquire witchcraft through the receiving of gifts. According to Onyinah, it is held that a practicing witch can infest articles such as necklaces, beads and pieces of cloth with their power and give them to the recipient without their knowledge.

Again, it is believed that witchcraft can be acquired through the eating of certain foods such as mashed-plantain or yam mixed with red oil, prepared and infested with witchcraft by a witch. It is also believed that others can acquire witchcraft by purchasing it themselves either knowingly or unknowingly in a market place or a special witch market. Onyinah however, asserts that this kind of acquisition of witchcraft is not common among the Akan, since they believe that one is born with witchcraft and may also have inherited it from a family member.

Also one common way of getting witchcraft which Onyinah did not mention is through dreams. It is believed among the Akan that one can get witchcraft through a dream, either by eating certain food or having sexual intercourse in a dream. This is from my own experience and encounter with most Akan people and observations made through most Neo-prophetic services I observed during my research. The Akan takes dreams seriously since they believe that the *sunsum*, 'spirit' is the seat of dreams and psychic experience in a person. A weaker spirit can be invaded by a stronger spirit through dreams while one is asleep and whatever

effect of the stronger spirit's reaction on the weaker spirit can manifest physically (cf. Gyekye 1995: 88-95). Perhaps this is why they do not take dreams lightly and also believe that a person can get witchcraft through dreams.

According to Onyinah (2002: 76) in recent times it is believed that all sort of people, young and old, women and men, literates and illiterates can acquire witchcraft, whereas Rattray (1927: 28) observed that in his time non-adults could not be witches. Debrunner's (1961: 56-57) work reveals that the trend begun to change in his time. Women are believed to be those who easily acquire or get witchcraft, since they are believed to have a 'lighter or weaker' *sunsum*, 'spirit' that is not able to resist witchcraft influence. Witchcraft attack is believed to be an attack of a strong *sunsum*, 'spirit' on a weaker one. Therefore in the Akan tradition since women are held to have weaker *sunsum*, they are mostly accused of witchcraft. The work of Elisabeth Amoah emphasises this assertion (Amoah 1986). She however found out that these accusations are usually due to some characteristics and nature that these women portray which are held to be strange in the Akan society. Some of the cause of such awkward behaviour is due to menopause, Amoah claimed.

The Organisation and Activities of Witches

It is commonly believed that the organisation and activities of witches are spiritual and done in secret, and for that matter the ordinary person cannot see the organisation with the naked eye. There seems to be a palpable knowledge about the organisation and activities of witches. According to Onyinah it is believed that witches are organised on local, national and international levels. They have kings, queens, messengers and executioners. Their activities are mostly believed to take place at night. The *akra*, 'souls' of the witches are believed to leave their physical bodies in sleep and fly off to meetings (Onyinah 2002: 76). It is commonly believed that witches meet in big trees and the *bayikukuo*, 'pots,' which contain human blood, are usually kept under such trees (Debrunner 1961: 24-26). However, Onyinah postulates that in recent time they are believed to meet in places such as the sea, rivers, lakes, market places and church buildings.

Abayifoɔ, 'witches and wizards' are believed to feed on human flesh and drink human blood. They take in turns to provide this 'meal' and the *ɔbayifoɔ*, 'witch/wizard' is required to provide only his/her a relative. It is therefore believed the people who die during special occasions such as Christmas, Easter and the Akan festivals are killed by *abayifoɔ* for celebrations. Infertility in women, impotence in men, and *awomawu* are all attributed to the

activities of witches. *Awomawu* is “the condition where some couples often encounter infant mortality.” Other diseases like diabetes, leprosy, and convulsions are also thought to be caused by witches (Onyinah 2002: 77).

Material losses such as loss of job and property are also alleged to be due to the activities of witches. The witches are held to steal people’s money, breed parasites on cash crops like cocoa so that they bear less or no fruits. Witches are also believed to make people contemptible through their deeds. For instance, it is said that they can make leaders, such as chiefs, rich men, heads of state, family heads and pastors commit undesirable acts like adultery, rape, excessive drinking and theft so as to make them lose respect in the community and possibly lose their positions. It is further held that they can read people’s intentions and work against them (Onyinah 2002: 77)

Onyinah (2002: 78) argues that *bayie* must not be confused with other supernatural ways of causing evil and harm. He says the activities of *akomfo*, *asumankwafɔ* and *adutofo* (priest and sorcerers) involve ritual acts and visible apparatus, such as the use of *asuman* and *aduro* (talisman/amulets and “medicines”). According to him, the distinctive characteristic of harming by *bayie*, is that it is done in secret; it is the imperceptible projection of inducement from the witch.

Witchcraft among the Akan is fundamentally held to be evil. Thus, Williamson (1974: 104), postulate that “The Supreme evil is witchcraft because the mode of its working is to destroy that life-force without which none can prosper in life.” Having examined the Akan belief in witchcraft, Onyinah states seven effects of such beliefs. Firstly, he stated that *bayie* is considered a spiritual, complex and secret society that cannot be measured by physical and scientific methods. Secondly, he says the belief causes people to live in fear and suspicion. According to him, the fear and suspicion of witchcraft and witchcraft activities is worsened by the attitude of some physicians and doctors who, when faced with medical problems which baffle them, refer their patients to people who are believed to be “spiritually powerful people” (Onyinah 2002:78).

This however is not so strange because in the Akan tradition and African culture as a whole sicknesses are believed to have both spiritual and physical causes. But both categories are believed to manifest in the same way and this makes it difficult for an ordinary person to identify which one is spiritual and which one is physical. In order to establish the nature of a sickness it becomes necessary to consult/seek the specialist such as *akomfo*, traditional

‘priest/priestesses’ or church-based faith healers. Thus when a sickness fails to respond to conventional treatment it is generally designated as spiritual and therefore patients are referred to faith healers (Sackey 2006: 117).

Here the specialist consults his oracles through divination to find the cause of the sickness. Mostly the culprit are witches or people with *sasa*, which is a bad spirit which attacks another person’s *sunsum*, ‘spirit’ (Appiah-Kubi 1983: 261; Opoku 1978: 75). Thirdly, Onyinah stated that all sudden deaths, infant mortality and mysterious deaths are assigned to *abayifo*. This effect is true since *abayifo* are believed to feed on human flesh and blood. Fourthly, Onyinah stated that such beliefs imply that any chronic disease is the work of *abayifo*. The fifth implication is that any act of mismanagement or carelessness is the responsibility of *abayifo*. This then would imply that people will not take responsibility for their careless and irresponsible living. The sixth implication is also that all sorts of bad behavioural practices are attributed to the scheme of *abayifo*. Lastly Onyinah stated that this belief will also imply that the relatives of good witches prosper, while the relatives of evil witches suffer (Onyinah 2002: 78).

Based on the above implications of the belief in witchcraft Onyinah postulated that the whole concept causes confusion and suspicion among family members, since no one knows who is *abayifo*. Consequently, any kind of mishap, failure or disease calls for consultation from a powerful spiritual person for supernatural knowledge of the causation of the problem. According to him this assumption leaves room for dubious people to deceive the populace and cause confusion in society. For instance, when a prognosis given includes naming a family member, which it often does, it creates family problems. He asserts that, *abayisem*, ‘witchcraft issues’ generally become the source of family tension, which often draw family members into litigation before the family head (Onyinah 2002: 78-79; see Bleek 1975: 340 and Field 1960: 128)

From the above the concept it can be clearly seen that the concept of witchcraft is at the base of the concept of enemy and witches maybe tagged as the enemy of a person. It also explains why the enemy would be related to the member of a person’s family.

Protection from Witches

Protection against witches becomes very significant in the Akan society due to the nefarious activities that are associated with them, as discussed above. Consequently, Onyinah (2002: 79) observed that all classes of society, such as the poor and rich, literate and illiterate, the

traditional believer and the Christian similarly seek protection from *abayifoɔ*. According to Onyinah the best protection that one can have from witches is for one to have *sunsum a, εε den*, that is, ‘a strong spirit’. This belief is emphasised by the Akan saying *wo sunsum ye duru a, ɔbayifoɔ ntumi wo*, ‘if you have a heavy or strong spirit the witch cannot overpower, overcome or attack you’ (Opoku 1978: 97).

According to Debrunner (1961: 88) the concept of *wo sunsum ye duru* as means of protection from witches was repeated to him several times during his research. As discussed elsewhere, people with *sunsum a εε duru* are those who are bold, fearless, forceful, strong-willed or, simply put, those with a strong personality. Witches are said to attack the *akra* (souls) of people. Strong *sunsum*, ‘spirit’ protects the *akra*, ‘soul’ which is the main focus of witchcraft activities. However, the question is that how can people who are fearful of witch or witchcraft activities be strengthened in their personality spirits, so as to protect their souls from them? People who are seen as “spiritually-powerful” such as *akɔmfɔɔ*, *asumankwafoɔ*, *adunsifoɔ* in the traditional setting are believed to have ways of providing answers for this problem.

The solutions are found in the giving of *asuman*, ‘charms, amulets’ and the placing of clients under taboos. These clients often “put their heads under the god”; that is, they enter into relationship or covenant with the *ɔbosom* to protect them. Some of the prophylactic *suman*, like talismans and cowries, must always be worn, carried or hung on doors to prevent witches from entering their rooms. Others like *mɔtɔ*, ‘black powder’ are either injected into the body through small cuts that are made on joints or faces and the medicines rubbed in, or through drinking with water or wine.

Sometimes people bathe in herbal water, or they burn *εhyε*, similar to ‘incense’ in their rooms. People who are already sick are besmeared with white clay. The belief here is that these medicines, either in or on the person, will make that person’s flesh so bitter or nasty that witches will not care to taste it. Thus, it can be inferred by these claims that the *sunsum* of the clients becomes strengthened and so receive protection by becoming fearless of witches. The Pentecostal concept of exorcism, which enforces deliverance for all Akan believers, has this protective medication in the background.

How witches are identified and dealt with in the Akan society

The main means of identifying a witch or the activity of witches is through *abisa*, ‘divinatory consultation’ at the shrine of an *ɔbosom*, ‘a god’ or at the hearing at the chief’s palace (see

Onyinah 2002: 81-85). When the witch is identified what happens is that the person is exorcised but rarely killed. Onyinah postulates that the practice of killing witches was uncommon among the Akan, although early ethnographers of Akan people such as Ellis, Bowdich and Cruickshank give a different picture, by writing that witches were tortured to death. Onyinah however stated that beside Cruickshank who gives a vivid description of how an old man proved guilty by the corpse carrying ordeal in the Fanti area was killed, the rest do not give evidence.

According to Rattray (1929: 313), it was held that a witch was never to be decapitated; a witch's blood must not be shed. However, he explains further that after being found guilty, either by ordinary process of a public trial, by having been tracked down by a witch-finder, or as the result of an ordeal, the witch was either driven out with a fire-brand in his or her hand to die of starvation, or was smeared all over with palm oil and cast into a fire, clubbed or strangled, or drowned. In this case Rattray proposes that witches were killed. But Onyinah (2002: 84) asserts that that Rattray's record of witch-finder might have been an influence of the anti-witchcraft shrines which developed in the later part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century in Ghana. It was during this time that witch hunting was common.

According to Onyinah, Debrunner (1961:126) took this matter up and writes that in the past witches were killed, but, like McLeod, he does not explain this further than Rattray.

According to Onyinah, Busia also mentions that unless the victim of the witch was avenged, his ghost would disturb the community, yet he does not show how the vengeance was carried out. According to Onyinah Ghanaian scholars such as Pobee, Assimeng, Sarpong and Nukunya are silent on this aspect. He postulates that with regard to the killing of witches, anthropologists and other scholars who write about Akan witchcraft stand the risk of being influenced by the killing of witches during the medieval period in the West to make assertions such as those in the work of Debrunner (1961: 126).

According to Onyinah, it is plausible that killing did not happen very frequently, otherwise one would have found occasional narration of such punishments in the journals of the British envoys and missionaries in Asante and other Akan areas, just as they did on human sacrifice and capital punishment. The concept of not shedding the blood of witches among the Akan might have been heavily based upon the well-established belief that witches could only bewitch members of their own families; it would be difficult to kill a member of one's own

family, such as a mother or a sister. This assertion of Onyinah can be emphasised by the Akan proverb below:

Wotan woni a, womfa no mma dom

Even if you hate your mother, you do not hand her over to the enemy (Rattray 1927:151).

The mother is the source of one's own life, hence handing her to the enemy is just like handing yourself to the enemy. This proverb can be explained to mean that though an enemy will be in a family it will not be easy for him/her to hand his/her fellow member to outsiders to be humiliated or persecuted. This is because, the Akan believe that *mogya yeduru sen nsu*, 'blood is thicker than water', or *mogya ye sunsum*, 'blood is spirit'. Once, you are related to a person through *mogya*, 'blood' you are one with the person and giving a relative out to the outsider is just like handing yourself to the enemy. This therefore mean that it is not 'natural' for a person to hand over his relative to outsiders.

Onyinah also asserts that the belief that a witch does not die with witchcraft may have also strengthened this notion. He however, stated that this idea does not take away the fact that some witches might have suffered death on account of some accusations. But Rattray's conclusion speaks out clearly:

Although witchcraft in Ashanti was not uncommon, and although the offence was undoubtedly regarded with particular repugnance, one fact stands out clearly, namely the absence in Ashanti of hunts for witches, resulting in the extermination of whole village communities, which was such a marked feature of the "smelling out" of witches in other parts of the African continent. (1929: 313)

From the foregone discussions it can be observed that the concept of enemy is deeply rooted in the Akan concepts of *mmusu*, 'evil', *bayie*, 'witchcraft; and *abisa*, 'divinatory consultation'. Since when there is any kind of misfortune, it is presupposed that there is or there might be a cause and a causal other. But the cause or causal other cannot be easily known by an ordinary person, so the service of one who deemed to be 'spiritually-powerful' person must solicited in order to find the cause or causal other. This is called *abisa*, 'divinatory consultation'. Through such a phenomenon the cause or the causal other is normally attributed to a supernatural entity or a person (a witch) who uses evil-juju or *asuman*, or curses to impede the progress of the victim, out of envy, jealousy or hatred; or just to be mischievous. The spirit powers and the people who are engaged in orchestrating evil, or bringing misfortunes are deemed the enemy.

The supernatural entities may include, *Onyame*, 'God' *abosom*, 'the gods', *Nananom Nsamanfo*, 'the ancestors' and other spirits such as *mmoatia*, 'dwarfs', *sasabonsam*, 'the

legendary forest monster', often translated as the devil and witches. Though *Onyame*, *abosom* and *Nananom-Nsamanfo* are held to bring or cause evil, however in the Akan thought it is clear that they are not the enemy. Their sort of evil is held to bring discipline to people who by their actions or inactions violates the moral and social norms of the society, or offends this kind of supernatural forces. But when the divination proves to be related to the other spirit forces, especially witchcraft or an evil wisher, or a curse then the concept of the *Ɔtamfo*, 'enemy', is associated with the misfortune. Hence, it can be said that in the Akan indigenous tradition the enemy can be other spirit forces which are held to be mischievous or evil and a person who uses witchcraft or wishes other people evil and works towards it through *evil-juju* or *asuman* to bring it to pass.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROPHETISM IN GHANA: NEO-PROPHETISM

The church situation in Ghana

Ghana is held to be a secular state, since there is no particular religious group controlling the state of affairs in the country. However, it is obvious that the Christian religion especially the Pentecostal branch is the largest religious group in the country. The churches that originated from the nineteenth century European missionary enterprises are collectively designated Western mission churches, mainline churches or historic churches. They include the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and the Methodist Church.

Apart from the above churches, there are also some movements which are described as Pentecostal movements which are believed to have been started by some indigenous charismatic figures known as African prophets. Hence, these are said to have had no foreign influence of the Pentecostal revival. It is however documented that some of the indigenous revivalists later made some connections with some of the Pentecostal revivalists in the early 1970s. There have been great stirrings or renewals within the Pentecostal group which has led to about six major Christian renewal movements, though some scholars have different opinions about this categorisation. Larbi (2001: 57) posits that six major Christian renewal movements can be placed within two periods: 1900-1970 and 1970 -1990. These renewal movements according to him have coloured the face of Christianity and ushered in new Christian spirituality.

Among the six major Christian renewal movements are the Spiritual Church movement also known as the Prophet-healing churches or the Spiritual (Larbi 2001: 57). These churches are commonly known as the African Indigenous Churches (AICs) (Omenyo and Atiemo 2006: 58). The next is the Mainline or evangelical Pentecostal movement (Larbi 2001: 57), also referred to as the Classical Pentecostal Churches (Omenyo and Atiemo 2006: 58). Larbi (2001: 57) asserts that the ripples of the evangelistic activities of the evangelical Pentecostal movement aided in producing four other renewal movements namely; (1) the Charismatic Movement/Charismatic Renewal Groups within the mainline churches (Omenyo and Atiemo 2006: 58), (2) Para-church Movement (Neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic non-denominational

fellowships), (3) the Independent Pentecostal/Charismatic churches/Ministries or the neo-Pentecostal movement (commonly known as Charismatic churches in Ghana) (Larbi 2001: 57; Mwaura 2004: 100-101; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 26-27; Olupona 2002: 11-21), and (4) the Prophet/Healer-Centred Pentecostalist Prayer Camps, which is the newest movement that is recently gaining much attention in the country. These are the churches designated as Neo-prophetic churches by scholars Omenyo and Atiemo (2006).

In this chapter my focus is on the Prophet/Healer-centred Churches or the Neo-prophetic churches. I therefore discuss what this kind of churches is and show why they are branded as such, or classified Neo-prophetic churches, in Ghana. I first of all gives a brief explanation about the different categories of the Pentecostal groups in Ghana. These categories will help us to get a brief understanding of the situation of the church in Ghana. (For more detailed information and explanations about the above Pentecostal renewal movements see: Dovlo 1992: 55-73; Larbi 2001; Mwaura 2004; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005; Omenyo and Atiemo 2006 and Ayegboyin and Ukah 2002).

African Indigenous Churches

This type of Pentecostal churches are those churches which are held to be established by the indigenous charismatic figures known as African Prophets, during or after their evangelistic movements in Africa. They form the first phase of Pentecostalism and prophetism in Ghana. In Ghana it is documented that these great religious stirrings began in 1914 with the visit to the coastal town of Axim of the 'Black Elijah' of West Africa, the Liberian prophet, William Wadé Harris (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 19-23). They are typically referred to as *Sunsum sore* in Ghana, due to their emphasis on the operation of the Holy Spirit. These churches were first studied by C. G. Baeta between 1953 and 1962. They are referred to as Aladura in Nigeria due to their emphasis on prayer (cf. Ayegboyin & Ishola 1997; Baeta 1962/2004). Such churches include Musama Disco Christo Church of Prophet Jehu Appiah, the Church of the Twelve Apostles of John Nackabah, the Apostle Revelation Society (ARS) of Prophet Wovenu and Grace Tani's Faith Healing church (Dovlo 1992: 57-58).

Classical Pentecostal churches

This type of Pentecostal group is also held to be established in Africa by indigenous charismatic figures, but due to their resemblance to and connection with the early twentieth century Pentecostal movement in America they are referred to as Classical Pentecostal

churches. In Ghana the Classical Pentecostal movement in the country is traceable to the work of Apostle Peter Newman Anim. It is documented that Peter Anim's work finally led to the evolution of three major churches namely the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), the Apostolic Church (AC) and the Church of Pentecost (CoP). These churches together with the American Assemblies of God (AG) constitute Classical Pentecostal churches in Ghana (Larbi 2001). The Classical Pentecostals are said to have a strong moral ethos and more defined organizational structures. They are more eschatological in theology and show more concern about the imminent return of Christ. The founders of these churches are no longer alive to dictate the organisation of their churches. (Dovlo 1992: 58; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 23-26; Kalu 2008: 15-21; Omenyo and Atiemo 2006: 58).

Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic churches

The Neo-pentecostal group of Pentecostals according to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005: 26) is the third wave of Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana. According to him "The expression 'neo-Pentecostal' is used here as an umbrella term to encompass Pentecostal renewal phenomena associated with trans-denominational fellowships, prayer groups, ministries and independent churches, which came into existence or prominence from about the last three decades of the twentieth century." This type of Pentecostal movement has a phenomenology similar to Britain's House Church Movement and North America's 'new paradigm churches' (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 27-28). Thus these churches have features or style or worship similar to these groups.

These churches are Christian groups which have their roots in the evangelical fellowships of the late 1960's and 1970's in Ghana. According to him they are mainly non-denominational and independent of one another, though they had joint activities such as hosting international evangelists such Dr. Morris Cerullo, T. L. Osborn (both from the U.S.A) and B. A. Idahosa for crusades and crusade. However, most of them have turned from fellowship to churches referring to themselves as 'ministry' and their leaders took the titles reverend, Bishop, Pastor, Rev. Dr. They are called 'charismatic' because of their stress on the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues (Dovlo 1992: 60-72 and Atiemo 1994: 39)

Their distinguishing characteristics include predominant youthful membership, the use English as their medium of communication and also the adoption of American Christian worship particularly in terms of music, dressing, and preaching (more on prosperity and

success) (Dovlo 1992: 60-72; Atiemo 1994: 39-40). They emphasize individual ministry and responsibility to have a relationship with God, or personal devotion. They believe each individual has the ability to read and understand the Bible without the help of any other person.

As a result of belief in individual ministry they give room for each and every individual to operate and use their gifts freely in the church. As a result of this they are commonly referred to as Charismatic Ministries. This type of churches is known for stressing the born-again experience. By born-again they mean if one has received the Holy Ghost, the evidence they believe to be speaking in tongues (cf. Dovlo 1992: 60-72; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005 and Stiles-Ocran 2013: 37-39). Examples of these ministries are; Christian Action Faith Ministry of Nicolas Duncan-Williams, Deeper Christian life Ministry of William Kumuyi, Redemption Hour Faith Ministry and International Central Gospel Church of Mensa Otabil.

Neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic non-denominational Fellowships

This type of Pentecostal renewal is a second manifestations of the Pentecostal renewal movements in Ghana. They are referred to as trans- or inter-denominational fellowships (Dovlo 1992: 60; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 27-28). They are “lay neo-Pentecostal associations established under the auspices of their North American versions.” (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 27-28). Dovlo (1992: 60) asserts that these churches do not operate in Ghana. Asamoah-Gyadu (2005: 27-28), posits that these are not churches but rather para-church associations that encourage participants to remain in their churches and, with their charismatic experiences, try to bring about renewal from within. Hence, this type of movement is made up of people from different denominations who meet together as a non-denomination group to pray or study the word of God together. Such movements include the International full Gospel Businessmen fellowship and the Women’s Aglow Fellowship International (cf. Dovlo 1992: 60; Omenyo and Atiemo 2006: 58).

Charismatic Renewal Groups within the mainline churches

In Ghana the mission established or Europeanist churches such as Methodist, Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian churches are commonly known as the Mainline Churches. They are recently losing their members to the Pentecostal type of churches in Ghana. As a result of this they are trying to have some kind of Pentecostal renewal into their churches in order to keep their members. They have introduced hand playing of musical instruments and clapping,

prayer meetings where members are allowed to speak in tongues. These were formerly not part of the liturgy of these old churches, but it is common to find these activities, even prophetism among them. This they are doing in order to maintain their members and keep them from going to the Pentecostal churches. So scholars refer to this phenomenon as a renewal in the Mainline Churches (cf. Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 30). Examples are Catholic Charismatic Renewal and the Bible Study and Prayer fellowship of the protestant denominations (Dovlo 1992: 61). Dovlo however, posits that the renewal in the mainline churches may not necessarily have resulted in the neo-pentecostal phenomena. Since, such renewal groups actually began earlier and were tolerated to stem into Independent churches.

Neo-prophetic churches

This type of movement is so referred to due to their emphasis on the prophetic ministry in the church. They are referred as neo- because there has already been some sort of prophetic phenomenon across West Africa by the charismatic figures who are known as the African Prophets. This church and the former kind of prophetism by the former African prophets are discussed below.

In this regard I examine the history and origin of prophetism in Ghana as a whole and then analyse the history of Neo-prophetism and show how they are different from the first phase of prophetism that have been experienced in Ghana which led to the establishment of what is now termed as the *Sunsum-Sore*, ‘spiritual churches’ in Ghana which forms part of the African Indigenous churches (AICs). Also, I discuss the main practices or activities and teachings of the Neo-prophetic churches which make them different from the other branches of Pentecostal churches in Ghana. Further I examine the issues arising from prophetism in Ghana today, especially with the conducts and activities of the neo-prophets. This I will term as the Prophetic problem.

The Phenomenon of Prophetism in Ghana

Prophetism seems to be deeply rooted in Ghana in some form, before the coming of Christianity. Hence, it was not difficult for prophets to be accepted or hailed in Ghana. In the Akan traditional religion there is a religious functionary called *Ɔkɔmfɔ*, which by interpretation means one who divine. He or she is the mouthpiece of the gods. Etymologically, the word is made of a prefix *Ɔ-* which mean ‘he/she’, a stem word *kɔm* which means, ‘to prophesies’, or ‘to dances’ or ‘to divines’ and a suffix—*fo* which is

sometimes used as a plural prefix and at other times to mean ‘one who’, that is, makes the word a noun agent. Hence, in short an *Ɔkɔmfɔ* can be said to be ‘one who prophesy, dance or divine’. Hence, it is clear that the idea of what a prophet is rooted in the Akan tradition. However, when this word is used it normally makes reference to the traditional priest at the shrine of a god.

Another word in the Akan tradition which proves that prophetism is rooted in Akan culture is *Odiyifo*, or *Ɔkɔmhyeni* and *Ɔdehunufɔ*. These normally make reference to prophets when used and not the traditional priests/priestesses. The *Odiyifo* is made up of the stem word *edi* and *yie*. *Edi* means ‘out’, and *yie* means ‘removing/taking’ ‘bringing’ or ‘revealing’. Hence, *odiyifo* means one who reveals, brings or take out’ a secret. *Ɔkɔmhyeni* is simply ‘one who prophesies or foretell events’. The phrase *hye* in the word means ‘to decree’, or ‘to tell’. *Ɔdehunufɔ* means ‘a seer’. The stem word *hunu* means to ‘to see’. With this background, people regarded as prophets are revered in the society, because they are deemed special kind of people as a result of their ability to connect to the supernatural to see the unseen, foretell the unknown and reveal a mystery to the people. This is very typical of the Akan or the African religious as Baeta (1962: 6-7) noted:

Prophetism appears to me to be a perennial phenomenon of African life, and the basic operative element in it seems to be personal in character. Whether in relation to or independently of events or development in society, the individual endowed with a striking personality and ability to impose his will on others, believing himself, and believed by others to be a special agent of some supernatural being or force, will emerge from time to time and secure a following. Powers traditionally credited to such persons, of healing, of revealing hidden things, predicting the future, cursing and blessing effectually, etc. will be attributed to him whether he claims them or not.

According to Onyinah (2002: 146) what Baëta described as prophetism in Christianity is a notable feature of the Akan traditional practices. Onyinah therefore postulates that Baëta’s description of prophetism as a person who secures a following because of the individual’s claim to have the ability of revealing hidden things and predicting the future, means *abisa*, ‘divinatory consultation’; which is an integral part of the Akan religious life. Thus he claim that *abisa* is an important aspect of prophetism. In this regard Onyinah confirms my assertion that prophetism seems to be rooted in the Akan indigenous tradition.

In the later part of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century when it seems that the Europeanist/Nationalistic churches failed to give Africans what they expected from them, there arose itinerant prophetic movements led by charismatic figures such as Wade Harris of

Liberia, Garrick Sokali Braide of the Niger Delta Simon Kimbangu of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Isaiah Shembe of South Africa. The advent of these prophets according to Ogbu Kalu (2008: x), “tilled the soil on which modern Pentecostalism thrives. They were closer to the grain of African culture in their responses to the gospel and so felt the resonance between charismatic religious worldviews and the equally charismatic biblical worldviews.”

In Ghana there were a number of prophets which are very prominent in the history of prophetism that country. Onyinah postulated that the first of these prophets to have emerged in Ghana was Samuel Nyankson, from Onyaa –Wonsu in the Central Region of Ghana. According to him, Samuel Nyankson was a Methodist Catechist, who might have emerged in the 1910s and worked among the Asante Jacobu people in Dunkwa on-Offin area (Baeta 2004: 27-30). However William Wade Harris, a native of Liberia from the Grebo people is the most noticeable among the prophets who emerged in the then Gold Coast. His evangelistic ministry began in 1913 in the Ivory Coast and extended to the south-western part of Ghana in 1914. John Swatson was another prophet who resigned from the Methodist church, and became a disciple of Harris. He was born at Beyin in Apollonia (western Ghana) and ministered for the Anglican Church mainly in Apollonia and parts of Denkyira between 1914 and 1919. Also, prophet Oppong, who was an illiterate native of Dormaa Ahenkro and a former *ɔdutofoɔ*, ‘a sorcerer’, also ministered for the Methodist Church in Asante, in the 1920s.

Acts of the early Prophets in Ghana

The Prophets who appeared in Ghana are notable for several reasons. In general, the prophet traced the source of their ministries to divine revelations. The prophets believed they were directly called and commissioned by God and were gifted with spiritual power from God. This usually happens either through a dream or trance or sometimes by hearing an audible voice which spoke to them directly or at other visitation of angels. As a result, their activities therefore were held to be very vibrant, filled with the performance of extra-ordinary feats like miracles, wonders, healing and revelations. They therefore attracted great number of followers unlike the Europeanist mission churches (see Kalu: 2013: 285-287, Baeta 2004: 28-32, 65-66). Below is an account of Cephias Omenyo about the ministry of these prophets:

The Prophets attracted large followings due to their respective spectacular manner of ministry which was reminiscent of a traditional priest using Christian resources, thus making them acceptable to both

some traditionalists and Christians. The African Prophets demonstrated extraordinary powers that portrayed them as 'powerful' men of God who were close to God, and as a result were able to diagnose ailments, trace their sources and causes as well as deliver victims from their dismal situations (2006:69-72).

In relation to the ministry and charisma of Harris one scholar wrote:

Harris claimed to be a prophet with all the special powers which God bestows on those He chooses. These powers enabled him to drive out demons and spirits, the enemies of God. He cured the sick in the body and mind by driving out the evil beings preying on them. Those who practiced black magic had to confess and repent or he made mad. He had all the power of the fetishmen and more: with his basin of Holy Water he put God's seal on those who repented and accepted baptism. If after that they fell into the old wickedness, they died or went mad. He believed God had given him other powers, more dramatic assertions of their relationship, notably the power to call down fire and rain from heaven (Harliburton 1971: 3).

Omenyo (2006: 73) has also noted that John Swatson and Kwame Sampson Opong like Harris were also believed to have had power to overcome spiritual forces that threatened the safety and well-being of the African.

Baeta (2004: 29-32), reported of a woman Hannah Barnes (formerly known as Abena Baawa), who later became the wife of the founder of the Musama Disco Christo church (Baeta 2004: 31-33), Prophet Joseph Egyanka Appiah. Hannah Barnes was admitted into a prayer group formed by Prophet Joseph Egyanka Appiah and was distinguished from the group because of her 'spiritual' activities. Baeta (2004: 30) reports that Hannah Barnes could tell who were evil persons, and those whom upon some disaster or misfortune was to fall when the 'Holy Spirit' was upon her.

Prophet Joseph Egyanka Appiah whose prophetic name became Prophet Jemisemiham Jehu-Appiah, according to Baeta was influenced by the Prophet Samuel Nyankson and had the desire to have the Holy Spirit as Nyankson did. He, like Nyankson, could also perform miracles especially healing through fervent prayer. Like Nyankson, he could do wonders with his walking-stick (Baeta 2004: 27, 29).

From this perspective it is therefore not surprising that these earlier prophets were considered as charismatic leaders since they were held to be people who had power to oppose the spiritual forces and deities and to provide authentic choice to the people. Their ability to perform extra-ordinary feats was a definite reason. Therefore, these attributes attest to the reason why their ministries were considered unique and important in the history of prophetism in Ghana. Thus, their operations provided for the needs of the local people as they addressed the worldview which is common to them.

It is however reported that at the early stage the prophets first worked in collaboration with the Europeanist churches and also directed their converts to them. This led to renewal within the churches where they were permitted to operate as prophets. Nonetheless, when there was a misunderstanding in terms of keeping church orders between the prophets and the Europeanist/Nationalist churches, the prophets formed their own movements (see Kalu: 2013: 285-287). It is reported that at a point the leaders of the Europeanist churches began to be suspicious of the activities of the prophets' ministry as occult practices. In relation to the Methodist church at Winneba, Ghana Baeta (2004: 33) for instance writes that, "During 1923 the Rev. Gaddiel Acquah, then the circuit superintendent, firmly ordered Appiah to stop all his occult practices completely and at once, 'as the Methodists were not like that'."

Omenyo (2006: 72) also reported that, "some churches were sceptical of the direct inspiration and charisma of the prophets and therefore were not prepared to work in equal partnership with them." He said, "the Basel missionaries did not entertain them at all." According to Omenyo, the Basel missionaries in Ashanti could not understand the extraordinary charisma of Oppong. They were suspicious of him saying that he was involved in hypnotism. Hence, they did not accept him. Harris was also refused to preach in the Roman Catholic Church. He is even reported as being cursed by the Roman Catholic Church (Haliburton 1971: 89, Omenyo 2006: 69).

The resistance and opposition to the activities and ministries of these earlier prophets later on resulted in the formation of what has now been known in African Christianity as the African Indigenous churches (AICs). Scholars such as G. C. Baeta (1996/2004), Kingsley Larbi (2001) and Deji and Ademola (1997) have described these charismatic leaders who appeared in the twentieth century as 'African Prophets'. The movements or churches which came out of the evangelistic ministries of these African prophets have also been designated by Jacob Olupona, as 'African Prophetic churches', since the role of the charismatic leader and founder as a prophet is very prominent.

These African prophets were seen as the custodians of charismatic power. Hence, according to Olupona (2002: 12), "the visions, prophecies, utterances and actual practices of these leaders help define the identity and character of these churches and the Pentecostal African movement in general." Though, these churches or movements do not explicitly refer to themselves as Pentecostals. Marthinus L. Daneel wrote that, "they reveal definite pentecostal

traits, in that the Holy Spirit features prominently in their worship and daily activities” (Daneel 2007: 21). Hence, Daneel also referred to them as “spirit-type” churches.

According to Adogame et al (2012: 165), the quantitative propagation of the independent indigenous Pentecostal churches has changed the qualitative face of Christianity in Africa. The names of these churches however are different based on their local region of origin. For instance in Ghana they are called *Sunsum sore*, “churches of the spirit” or “spiritual churches”. In Nigeria they are generically called *Aladura*, “people of prayer”, due to their aggressive and extensive mode of prayer that are completely different from the liturgically organised mode of prayer by the historic mission churches. According to Daneel (2007: 21) these movements refer to themselves as *Mekereke oMweya*, that is “churches of the Spirit”.

The classification from the different contexts according to Adogame underscores a single point; the critical role of the Holy Spirit in the rise and functioning of these churches. Hence, though there might be some internal differences among them, there is the presence of the emphases and tendencies common to most Pentecostal and charismatic movements such as speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing, exorcism, deliverance testimony sharing visions and revelations, fervent and ecstatic prayers, and an exuberant, expressive and dynamic worship which are all attributed to the work and operation of the Holy Spirit.

Pentecostals Understanding of Prophetism

In this section I examine the explanation of Prophetism and the Pentecostal understanding of prophetism. Quayesi-Amakye (2009: 24) asserts that prophetism is a religious phenomenon that involves an individual being supernaturally endowed with extra-sensory capabilities that enables him/her to perform supernatural functions. It involves the supernatural ability to gain spiritual insight of spiritual matters and the use of the knowledge thus gained in the realm of humans. In this regard Quayesi-Amakye explained that in prophetism an individual is thus equipped with is extra-sensory perception of the operations, will, intentions and directions of the possessing supernatural power or force.

Quayesi-Amakye (2009: 75) has noted that the act of prophesying is known in Akan as *nkòmhyè* (that is forthtelling), so the *nkòmhyeni hye nkòm* (the prophesier tells forth God’s mind). He confirms that, *nkòmhye* derives from the traditional religious practice *akòm* whereby the traditional priest(ess) tells forth the mind of deities to the community or

individuals. However, whereas in the traditional setting such spiritual benevolence is attributable to the *abosom* it becomes consecrated and Christianised *nkɔmhyɛ* in the church where it is attributable to the *Sunsum Krɔnkrɔn* (Holy Spirit).

He further posits that in biblical thought prophetism defines God's activeness in history through his concern, purpose and participation in human affairs. Hence, prophetism gives meaning to history. Israel's prophets were seen as Yahweh's messengers or spokesmen whose language was often characterized by "Thus says the Lord". Explaining Pentecostal prophetism Quayesi-Amakye posits that the supernatural power or force is the Holy Spirit whose direction, guidance, will, intentions and purpose operate vocally, intuitively and visually (by dreams and closed or open visions) through the chosen human instrument.

He therefore refers to Pentecostal prophetism as a phenomenon in the Pentecostal church that claims to reveal the mind of God to his people in their existential needs of here and now. According to him, Pentecostal prophetism seeks to speak to situations now rather than in some eschatological future. It has as its focus the material and physical concerns of clients/seekers. Quayesi-Amakye (2009: 25) has noted that God's actions in history, according to Pentecostal prophetism in Ghana, are achieved through the facilitation of a 'man or woman of God'. Thus, it is this divine spokesperson who discloses the mind of God on clients' problems and concerns, and also offers therapeutic solutions to them.

In the above Pentecostal conception prophetism it appears to be similar to the understanding of prophetism in the traditional religion as discussed above. A prophet in the Pentecostal point of view is a Christian whom the Holy Spirit enables to gain spiritual insight into spiritual mysteries. Such an individual could either be a male or female, old or young. Hence, the Pentecostal prophet is an individual supernaturally equipped to communicate the mind, will, intentions of God as well as forewarn and offer guidance and/or directions to individuals or the church. The aim is to offer supernatural comfort, encouragement, guidance and assistance to individuals or a church.

Quayesi-Amakye (2009: 25-26) thus explained that in Pentecostalist understanding the prophet in addition to the gift of prophecy may possess either or both the gifts of words of wisdom and knowledge as well as discerning of spirits. He asserts that, in the Pentecostal church, words of knowledge and wisdom are considered as revelational gifts whereas

prophecy (with the associated gift of diverse tongues) is seen as a vocal gift. By vocal gift Pentecostals mean a gift that operates by the use of the mouth.

According to Quayesi-Amakye (2009: 26), in Pentecostalist understanding a word of knowledge is a supernatural knowledge received intuitively, or via dreams or visions about a past or present situation concerning an individual, group or affair. Whereas the word of wisdom on the other hand is the supernatural ability to offer appropriate guidance or help based on the knowledge supernaturally received. It thus looks into the future. The gift of discerning of spirits is the supernatural ability to determine the spiritual source of a problem, and activity and operations of individuals and spiritual functionaries especially in a religious gathering. It appears to me that when Pentecostal prophets claim to “enter into the spirit” or “go into the spirit world” then they are using the gift of discernment.

A dream however, is received in sleep but a vision may be received with the eyes opened. In that sense it is called an open vision. When a vision comes in a trance form or as if the individual is in a dozing state it is considered as a closed vision. The prophet’s revelational abilities are believed to be heightened by means of persistent prayers and fasting. A Pentecostal prophet may also possess other supernatural gifts of faith, healing and working of miracles to augment his/her characteristic gifts aforementioned (Quayesi-Amakye 2009: 26). In the Church of Pentecost, Quayesi-Amakye has identified four different types of prophets namely Prophetesiers, Singing Prophets, Grassroots Prophets and Institutionalised Prophets Quayesi-Amakye (2009: iii). Quayesi-Amakye discusses the nature of these prophets in details (see Quayesi-Amakye 2009: 27-28, 75-78, 104-106)

Neo-Prophetism

From the above discussion it can be observed that prophetism is not a new phenomenon in African Christianity, particularly Ghana. The works of early African scholars such as Baeta (1962/2004), Kingsley Larbi (1992) and Deji and Ademola (1997) have shown that the early part of the twentieth century witnessed the advent of different charismatic leaders who they have described as ‘African Prophets’. The emphases of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of these, particularly prophecy, resulted in the designation of their movements or churches as prophetic and Pentecostal. One great success of their movement is the engagement of the indigenous worldview with elements from the Gospel, where the European mission churches have failed.

The designation Neo-prophetism in this study is not to suggest that prophetism is a new phenomenon in the history of Christianity in Ghana. It is rather used to describe the new movement of the Pentecostal type which emerged in Ghana since the 1990s. It has been shown in the above that prophetism has always existed in the indigenous tradition of the people, most especially the Akan. African scholars such as Onyinah (2004a) has noted that the early Christian missionaries failed when they attempted to erase prophetism in both its traditional and 'Christian' editions from their converts. Another African scholars John D. K. Ekem (2009: 58, 61), also believes that the absence of prophetism within the Europeanist churches is a factor which led to the establishment of the African Indigenous churches.

The reason for the appeal of prophetism was apparently that the people could not find much security in some of the Europeanist mission churches when it comes to dealing with issues related to the spiritual realm such as witches and other evil forces. The advent of the African prophetic churches or indigenous churches thus can be said to make a more independent African expression of Christianity, since the beliefs and practices of the African prophetic churches depict the African worldview. Scholars such as Williamson (1965: 164), Busia (1961: 86-89) and Omenyo (2006: 72-75) agree to this assertion.

Neo-prophetism therefore is about contemporary prophets and their ministries. Though these churches are classified as Pentecostal churches, they are well known or described as Neo-prophetic movements or churches due to the prominent role of the prophetic figure and their main emphases on the prophetic gift as an important gift in the church, which according to some scholars as discussed above is an aspect of African religious life. Adogame has therefore contended that the new type of Pentecostal movements in relation to their healing strategies and prophesying build on the legacy of the African Indigenous Churches.

Adogame has also noted that the way in which the AICs present healing as an integral element of Christian salvation is dependent on the indigenous worldviews of causality (2012: 169). In this manner Baeta (2004: 6-7) has predicted that prophetism, which is a key element in African Initiated Christianity, was a perennial phenomenon of African religious life and was likely to reappear in different forms of this type of Christianity. The role of the prophetic figure as a key religious functionary thus re-emerged in the twentieth century within modern forms of indigenous Pentecostalism.

Paul Gifford (2004: 89-112, 186) also discusses the nature and ministry of the new prophets in Ghanaian Christianity. When the predictions of Baeta made half a century ago are considered the new manifestation of prophetism in Ghana is very remarkable. Baeta's prediction that prophetism which to him is a perennial phenomenon of African life, will emerge from time to time and secure a following seems to be fulfilled in recent times. There are indeed people who are now credited with powers such healing, revelation of hidden things, predicting the future, cursing and blessing effectually. Some indeed are making a more successful showing than others. This therefore confirms the fact that the above-mentioned gifts, inward enlightenment, a sense of divine calling, impulsive enthusiasm (in original sense of being in God, experiencing ardent religious zeal) are facts of life and have their effects in African society, just as Baeta has observed.

In recent times prophecies are delivered over the airwaves, televisions and in live internet broadcast to people who are seeking divine favours and interventions in their homes and even living abroad. Noticing the re-emergence of Prophetism in the Pentecostal movements in Ghana and Africa as a whole, scholars Cephas Omenyo and Abamfo Atiemo (2006) has coined the term 'Neo-prophetism' for this new kind of prophetism in contemporary African Christianity. Today, Neo-prophetism in Ghana attempts to provide answers to the existential needs for some Ghanaian, whose worldview are rooted in the primal religion.

Neo-prophetism seems to provide the protection and the kind of security that those who still have their worldview rooted in the primal religion desire to have. Neo-prophets, like the early twentieth century prophets, do not deny the reality of the supernatural world. They therefore attempt to provide the modern Ghanaians who seem to have a strong belief that the world is enchanted, with ways which they consider to be more effective in dealing with the powers and principalities of this world. So today, members of the public go to the neo-prophets for what the Akan call *akwankyerε*, 'guidance', as they seek to either understand their unhappy destinies or seek protection from envious enemies and witches.

It seems that some Ghanaians link their thought of the traditional priests, sorcerers and the diviners in the traditional religion to prophets in the church. So it appears that they still link the idea of divination in the primal religion to the prophetic ministry in the church. They are in expectation of a 'powerful person' in the church as in the primal religion who can foretell future events and reveal hidden things to them. Thus, the traditional priest was one who

revealed hindrances to progress and prescribed solutions to them (cf. Onyinah 2002: 1-2). Today, Neo-prophets like the former prophets have many followers in Ghana, because of their prophetic charisma and their ability to blend the primal religious worldview into the Christian faith.

Omenyo and Atiemo (2006: 66) posit that neo-prophets claim to be people with great spiritual powers and are capable of performing extra-ordinary feats. Their clients thus regard them as people who can see into the future and spiritual dimensions of people's present problems.

In Ghana scholars have designated Neo-prophetism as an addition to the Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal movement. One scholar, Stiles-Ocran (2004: 1) has therefore designated Neo-prophetic churches or movements as 'Prophet-led Charismatic Churches'. Scholars Omenyo and Atiemo (2006: 55) referred to these churches in their article as 'Neo-Prophetic Churches'. According to them Neo-prophetic churches are those Ghanaian charismatic churches with strong emphases on the place and functions of prophets and prophetic ministries and gifts.

Joseph Quayesi-Amakye (2011: 293-294) has also referred to them as 'Peripheral Prophetism'. He explained that peripheral prophetism refers to the prophetic phenomenon in the prayer centres and Neo-prophetic churches in Ghanaian Pentecostalism (2013: 27). This is because his study on Christology and Evil in Ghana revealed that there are two church systems in the church of Pentecost. One is the "institutional church" and the other "peripheral church".

The "institutional church" represents the official system of the Church of Pentecost, whilst the "peripheral church" refers to the "prayer centres or camps" established in the church of Pentecost by lay leaders of the church of Pentecost who function as prophets. These prophets according to Quayesi-Amakye are called "grassroots prophets" in the church of Pentecost. The activities of these prophets Quayesi-Amakye explained are akin to the new prophets in the Neo-prophetic churches. Grassroots prophets are people in the church of Pentecost to whom people who are perplexed by the blight of life turn for supernatural help and intervention. They do not belong to the class of official prophets in the ordained pastoral ministry of the Church of Pentecost. However, they are in constant touch with the ordinary

mundane affairs of the suffering masses, hence the designation “grassroots prophets” (2013: 3-5).

In fact one common feature of these neo-prophets is the establishment of prayer centres or centres with different names. The Great Fire Pentecostal church where I conducted an interview refers to its prayer centre as “Mispa”. The Church of Pentecost prayer camp at Down Town-Kasoa, in the central region of Ghana where I conducted another interview is also called “Prayer and Revival centre” (cf. Quayesi-Amakye 2013: 65), but it is also commonly called “Agyenkwa Prayer Centre”. However, scholars such as Asamoah-Gyadu (2013: 65-86), Omenyo (2006) and Sarpong (2000) posit that the phenomenon of prayer centres/camps is not peculiar to Ghanaian Pentecostal churches but is also present in the mainline historical churches. Christian G. Baeta (2004) also associated the phenomenon with the *Sunsum Sore*, who are considered the forerunners of the Pentecostals.

When one observes the Neo-prophetic movement it can be seen that it involves prophets whose ministries are quite similar to that of the earlier prophets between 1914 and 1960 studied by Baeta. The beliefs and practices of the neo-prophets are also similar to the early prophets. However, according to Stiles-Ocran (2004: 1), the contemporary prophets prefer their churches to be identified as “Charismatic Churches.”

History of Neo-Prophetism

Writers of church history in Ghana have dated the advent of Neo-prophetism or contemporary prophecy in Ghana to the early part of the 1990s (Omenyo and Atiemo: 2006). They trace the origin of contemporary prophecy to Kumasi in the Ashanti region of Ghana before it spread across the country. The pioneer and precursor of Neo-prophetism is according to Gifford (2004: 91) Prophet Francis Akwesi Amoako who surfaced on the Ghanaian religious scene in the early 1980s (cf. Atiemo and Omenyo: 2006: 59, 60). The calling of Prophet Akwesi Amoako is related to a divine calling he received through a dream just like the case of the early prophets before him. This phenomenon is common to all the neo-prophets who are well-known in Ghana today (cf. Atiemo and Omenyo 2006).

According to Quayesi-Amakye (2013: 4), Neo-prophetic churches have become a commonplace on the Ghanaian religious scene since 1993. Today, they command a large following in all major cities and towns and are also becoming the most popular characteristics

of Ghanaian Pentecostalism in Ghana. It can therefore be observed that at the turn of the twentieth century, Christianity in Ghana has been characterised by waves of prophetism. Since then, prophetic ministries have recently become more or less a normal religious phenomenon.

Today apart from Prophet Akwesi Amoako some neo-prophets who are well-known in Ghana include Elisha Salifu Amoako, founder of Alive Chapel International; the seer Tony Asamoah-Boateng (nicknamed Apae-Live), founder of Great Light Worship Centre; Ebenezer Adarkwa-Yiadom (nicknamed Prophet One), founder of Ebenezer Miracle Worship Centre; Daniel Obinim of International God's way Church and Isaac Owusu Bempa, founder of End Time Power Ministry International, now known as Glorious Word International Ministries.

The emergence of Neo-prophetism according to Omenyo and Atiemo (2006: 56), is to serve the needs of people whose orientation to issues of life is rooted in the primal worldview. They also posit that the phenomenon seems to serve the interest of people of low socio-economic status who do not fit well into the elitist Charismatic churches. The following observation is made by Stiles-Ocran (2004: 2) about the activities of the neo-prophets:

A careful observation of their 'prophetic' meetings reveal that the 'prophecies' of these prophets centre, mostly, on the socio-economic needs of their clients – marriage, wealth and riches. It is interesting to note that most of these churches are filled with people who believe that seeking greener pastures outside the country is the only solution to their economic problems. This is reflected in the high percentage of clients who carry their passports with them for prayers to be said over them for easy acquisition of visas.

Similar activities are also noted by Gifford (2004: 89, 95) in his work on Ghana's neo-Pentecostalism of the contemporary prophets. His work indicates that the needs of the clients of the neo-prophets normally focused on the socio-economic needs such as finances, business, and marriage.

Thus from the above as Omenyo and Atiemo, Stiles-Ocran and Gifford postulate that the 'prophetic' activities of the neo-prophets are focussed on the socio-economic needs of their clients. That is to say, the neo-prophets are basically concerned about the material needs of those who patronize their 'prophetic' services such as marriage, wealth and riches. Though this is true, during my research I observed that in recent times the services of the neo-prophets is not only the interest of people of low socio-economic status who do not fit well into the elitist charismatic churches as Omenyo and Atiemo observed about a decade ago. Today both people who are of

low and high socio-economic status solicit the activities of the neo-prophets as I observed during my research.

In Ghana the founders of the Neo-prophetic churches as said somewhere in the above employ the electronic media such as radio and television and the internet as evangelistic means to broadcast of their activities. They are able to address people ‘prophetically’ in their homes through these media. It is believed that, through their prophetic gifts they are able to mention names of persons unknown to them, and describe a particular situation of such persons. Consequently, out of enthusiasm and amazement people, especially those that are ministered to in such a prophetic way are fascinated and appeal by them (cf. Atakora 2013: 42).

Teachings and Practices of Neo-prophets

In Neo-prophetism in Ghana there are certain specific theological emphases that are common to the Neo-prophetic churches. These specific theological emphases are the concept of *ɔtamfo*, ‘enemy’, the practice of *akwankyerɛ*, ‘guidance’, *ngosra*, ‘anointing’ and the various forms exorcism and healing. Another theological concept which is recently gaining currency in Neo-prophetism in Ghana is *yiedie*, ‘success, well-being or prosperity’ and also the concept of the ‘favoured’ and the ‘unfavoured’ life.

The concept of enemy: *ɔtamfo*

The Akan word *ɔtamfo* is made up of a stem word *tan*, ‘envy, jealousy, or hatred’ ɔ-, which is a nominal prefix and *-fo*, which is nominal surfix or plural prefix. Thus, *ɔtan* simply means hatred, jealousy or envy and *ɔtamfo*, will imply ‘one who is envious, jealous, hateful’. The *ɔtamfo*, ‘enemy’ or *atamfo* (*plural*), ‘enemies’ in Neo-prophetic churches is viewed from two perspectives. From one perspective the *ɔtamfo*, are viewed in terms of human beings that their members have cause to suspect of carrying out malicious activities against them such as undermining their health, wealth, honour, or general well-being through witchcraft, evil, juju or the spread of malicious gossip. In this case, the *ɔtamfo* is usually a person that is believed to destroy valuable things of people or a person of whom one can have the cause to suspect of envy or jealousy. It is believed that the *ɔtamfo* can cause childlessness, insanity, poverty or even death through witchcraft or evil *juju*. *Juju* according to Quayesi-Amakye (2013: 67), is a spell believed among West Africans, to possess magical or supernatural power to harm somebody.

The other perspective from which the *ɔtamfo* is viewed is that the enemies include the actual spiritual beings that are perceived to be agents of Satan and from whom enemies derive their power and with whom they are allied (Omenyo and Atiemo 2006: 62). In this regard Omenyo and Arthur (2013: 55) posit that the hermeneutical endeavours of the neo-prophets betray their propensity to want to deal with the *atamfo*, 'enemies' and thereby show Christ's victory over the devil and all his agents.

It can therefore be deduced from the above that in the Neo-prophetic understanding *ɔtamfo*, the enemy not only includes spirit beings but also human beings as well. Hence, it can be said that for neo-prophets in Ghana, the enemy as a concept in the Bible is the same as "powers and principalities", which they believe include human enemies (Ephesians 6:12). It therefore is clear from their hermeneutics how they explain Micah 7:5-6 in the Old Testament and Jesus' reference to the same scripture in the New Testament: "...a man's enemies are the members of his own household" to mean that the enemy of a person are the relatives and friends of a person. This claim is emphasized by Quayesi-Amakye (2011: 297). According to him people that are believed to undermine peoples' prosperity in life, are usually held to be the *atamfo*. Quayesi-Amakye posits that it held among the neo-prophets that such enemies are often held to be the relatives and friends of a person.

Quayesi-Amakye (2011: 296-297), has rightly noted that in peripheral prophetic or Neo-prophetic churches' theology the personification of evil is a key issue. According to him evil among neo-prophets assumes a mystified human face with distressing manifestation in human suffering which requires prophetic deflation for soteriological effects. Hence, in Neo-prophetic teaching the enemies are generally held to be the devil, evil spirits, witchcraft and other enemies who are only out to "steal, kill and destroy" (John 10:10) the children of God. In this regard Quayesi-Amakye, posits that this teaching of peripheral prophetism suggests that prosperity in one's life can be hindered by the actions and activities of "the other" from outside. This "other" thus suggests that misfortunes in a person's life is caused by external forces more powerful than and impossible to be destroyed by people physically. Again, it suggests that nothing happens without a spiritual cause, and this cause usually emanates from one's own close relations with others. Hence, social deviances are often blamed on others other than the individuals themselves. The "the other" can be a familial, occupational, friendly or religious relation, Quayesi-Amaye declares.

Another issue which must not be easily dismissed in the personification of evil in Neo-propheticism as observed by Quayesi-Amakye is the role of “the other” who creates a situation of penury for people and who justifies the need of prophetic negotiation. Here again, personal responsibility is shifted to “the other” instead of oneself.

Prophetic Guidance: *Akwankyerε*

Prophetic guidance is a practice in Neo-prophetic circles which expects the prophetic figure or leader to give information that is supposed to explain a person’s situation and also prescribe solution (Omenyo and Atiemo 2006: 62). *Akwankyerε*, ‘prophetic guidance’ is sometimes done openly in the setting of public worship. Mostly during sermons the sermon can be interrupted by a catchy interjection by congregants like “prophecy, you are Odii (prophet/seer),” “prophesy to me,” “you have seen correctly”, (Quayesi-Amakye 2013: 7).

However, the most formal way *Akwankyerε* is done is on a one-on-one basis. In this case times or days are specially set during which there are often long line for counselling and consultation. So numbers are given to clients to come in turns. During these sessions, clients relate their problems to the prophet, and sometimes his team for prayer and *akwankyerε*, this is similar to Akan *abisa* (Stiles-Ocran 2004: 96). The one-on-one ministry session is referred to as ‘counselling’ or ‘guidance session.’ The contents of prophecy given during these sessions may include detailed description of the client’s problem and supposed enemies behind the problem. They also give their clients the reasons why they have come to be hated by the so-called enemies.

I observed and also participated in this practice during my research. I noted that some prophets have fees for this kind of consultation whereas as a marketing strategy others also claim they do not take any fee for their consultation. Atakora (2013: 50-51) supports my observation. According to him, monetary donations are believed to release extraordinary solutions to clients’ problems. Hence, clients who are able to donate the required amount receive the prophet’s attention. Atakora asserts that, not all monetary donations attract the prophet’s attention. He stated that in some of the Neo-Prophetic Churches, one must donate between fifty and hundred Ghana cedis (Ghc 50 and Ghc100) if one wants a prophet to attend to one and also provide an effective and concrete solution to ones needs (Atakora 2013: 51). I observed in one place of my research that there is a kind of consultation which they call “Emergency hour”. What happens is that if one wants to be quickly attended to by the

prophet or has a problem which requires an immediate response one has to pay a sumptuous amount of money in order to be attended or placed on a protocol list for immediate attendance by the prophet.

In fact, I realised that this is a very special period in the worship that most of the clients look forward to when they come to the meetings. Without this session it seems the whole service was in vain. This moved one prophet where I visited to say to the congregation that the prophecy is a gift and what God wants him to tell them is what he will, so they should not expect him to come with prophecies, that is tell them about their situations and prescribe a solution for them always.

In fact, *akwankyerε* ‘prophetic guidance’ is another practice which distinguishes prophets of the Neo-prophetic churches from leaders of other waves of Pentecostal renewal. There are different perspectives among neo-prophets on what they base or draw the *akwankyerε*, ‘prophetic guidance’, from or on. There are some who claim that are they sometimes the kind of *akwankyerε* they give is based on “common sense”, as they observe their client’s problem. Reverend Antwi (personal interview July 28, 2015), Rev. Dr. Eric (personal interview, July 30, 2015) and Bishop Daniel Kissi (Prophet Bonegas) (sermon translated by me, July 2015), agree that not every problem is caused by evil forces, but sometimes out of the persons own negligence or bad attitude towards life. Hence, in such cases you do not need any consultation of oracles but a piece of advice.

Others also associate the *akwankyerε*, to Holy Spirit. That is they give guidance to their clients based on what the Holy Spirit tells them. Yet, others claim they take or get their ‘prophetic guidance’ directly from the Bible. They indicate that there are instances where some prophets in the Bible gave *akwankyerε* and such are ‘prophetic guidance’ which should not be rejected but practiced even in this modern time. Atakora (2013: 50) emphasizes these assertions and claims.

Also, clients of some prophets are taken through certain rituals by means of prophetic direction. The rituals involve the use of different prophylactics such as water, blessed handkerchiefs, blessed money, olive oil and Christianized anointing oil, among many others. These consecrated items some prophets claim are used to mediate the divine and to serve as points of contact, which are believed to be spiritual support for prosperity, success and victory (cf. Atakora 2013: 50).

Another type of ritual which also comes as prophetic direction are clapping, jumping and hooting. These are assumed to be prophetic means by which clients enemies are destroyed. One common feature of Neo-prophetic churches apart from having church activities almost throughout the whole week is the hosting of regular prayer vigils on Fridays. At other times, they declare seasons of ‘prophetic ministration’. The ‘prophetic ministration’ is the time of prophecy, where the prophet reveals to the worshippers at random or in a prayer-line the situation of a person. Usually, before ‘prophetic ministration’ is held, a specific number of days are declared for fasting and prayer. Worshippers often gather during this period to pray against their so-called enemies which they believe are the cause of their woes in life. They also pray to God for protection, good life and prosperity (Atakora 2013: 51).

The content of prophecy that may come to the worshippers during the ‘prophetic ministration’ may range from vivid description of a person’s situation to what a person wears under his/her clothes. It is held that such information about the client is revealed to the prophet by the Holy Spirit. It is during this period that the prophetic declarations are greeted with the catchy phrases such as “Say it all”, and “You are a prophet”. These phrases are usually heard when the names of a clients’ human enemies or the causal spiritual forces are mentioned (cf. Atakora 2013: 51).

Anointing: *Ngosra*

In Neo-prophetism a practice which has become very common since their advent to the Ghanaian religious scene is *ngosra*. Anointing is seen as synonymous with unction with authority, bringing the power of God to bear upon the life of an individual. In Ghana among Neo-prophetic anointing service is a very popular activity. The main item used to anoint members is oil. Omenyo and Arthur (2013: 55), posits that in Neo-prophetism there is the belief that there is an anointing in which the sovereign God acts with no visible elements ‘but you see the unction at work’, as in Acts 13: 1-4, where no oil was used.

Here the Holy Ghost directly told the church to separate Saul and Barnabas for the work which they were called to do. The Apostles only laid hands on them after prayer and fasting and sent them away without using as visible element to signify the power of God. In spite of this belief, the most common type of anointing among Neo-prophetic churches in Ghana is the tangible one in which oil is administered by a pastor or church leader on the congregation. Among other things, Stiles-Ocran (2004: 96) stated that the anointing service is viewed

among neo-prophets as a kind of ‘impartation’ of spiritual gifts to empower the clients to realise wealth, obtain healing and see visions.

Omenyo and Arthur (2013: 56) have observed that anointing oil is usually applied on the forehead, or on the ailing part of the body. It can also be applied on the palms so one can obtain blessings for one’s economic activity or a few cases is taken orally to mediate healing. I witnessed this type of practice during my visit to one of the prophetic churches during my research. There are different types and names of the anointing oil for several purpose in Neo-prophetic churches. One very common type of oil that has become a ‘hot-cake’ in Neo-prophetic circles today is ‘Back to sender’ oil. In this context the ‘sender’ is the enemy.

This kind of oil are mostly prepared by the neo-prophets in the Neo-prophetic churches themselves. They sell this kind of oil to their clients in order for them to use it to protect themselves against their enemies. It is believed that when this type of oil is used, whatever evil their enemy has or will plan against them, will go back to the enemy, who is the sender (cf. Atakora 2013: 46). Hence, the name ‘back to sender’. One prophet I visited was selling a type of this bottle at five Ghana cedis (Gh¢ 5) whereas another was selling his at fifty Ghana cedis (Gh¢ 50). According to Atakora (2013: 52) Prophet Adarkwa-Yiadom sells his consecrated anointing oil called *dade bi twadade bi mu*, ‘iron breaks iron’ to his clients as much as fifty Ghana Cedis (Ghc 50) per bottle. So the prices vary from one prophet to the other and it is also dependent on what type or what kind of a problem one is going to use the oil to solve.

The practice of Healing and deliverance or various forms of exorcism

It seems that in Ghana one cannot claim to be a prophet without practicing healing and deliverance. Apart from the ability to give *akwankyere* a prophet must also have the ability to provide healing and deliverance. One major characteristic of the former prophets was to administer deliverance and healing. In fact Baëta (2004: 29), stated that most of the Appiah’s miracles were those of healing. In the tenets of the church which came out of Appiah’s ministry as a prophet, Musama Disco Christo church, “healing” according to Baëta is “undoubtedly far and away the most important activity of the church” (2004: 50-53).

The early twentieth century prophets such as William Wade Harris and John Swatson (Omenyo 2006: 67-68; cf. Haliburton 1971: 3, Larbi 2001: 59) also practiced healing and

deliverance. It can therefore be seen that as early as the twentieth century, healing and deliverance were practices that existed in the history of Christianity in Ghana. Today, neo-prophets in Ghana are also into healing and deliverance, just like the early twentieth century prophets. However, it seems that the practice is currently on the rise with the emergence of neo-prophets in Ghana since almost every Neo-prophetic church seems to have a prophet who claims to be a 'healing and deliverance minister'. Atakora (2013: 51-52), has observed that in recent times churches in Ghana, particularly Neo-prophetic churches, have people who have speciality in the 'healing and deliverance ministry'. Such people or Prophets, are known 'Healing and Deliverance Ministers' (cf. Atiemo 1995: 103).

Atakora asserts that the neo-prophets use items such as anointing oil, honey, handkerchiefs, porridge, boiled egg, toilet soap and lime to administer healing and deliverance to their clients. According to him they base the use of these items in aiding healing and deliverance on certain scriptures such as Isaiah 10:27,

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.”

The items are therefore held to be consecrated through prayer and when they get into contact with the sick and people who are believed to be tormented by evil forces, they will be set free.

In fact, some of the neo-prophets also use their calendars, flyers or posters and pictures as means of effecting healing and deliverance. I observed these claims by Atakora and heard many testimonies of the efficacy of the consecrated items from the places I visited to conduct my research. Therefore, neo-prophets encourage their clients to buy the calendars, flyers or posters and hang/paste them in their rooms and their doorpost to drive away evil forces and their *atamfo*. In one church I visited the prophet, Daniel Kissi (nicknamed, Bishop Bonegas), sells his poster for five Ghana cedis (Gh¢ 5). It is believed that the consecrated items carry in them the power of God and are also considered as means of effecting healing and other blessings (cf. Atakora 2013: 52).

Again, Atakora (2013: 52), asserts that the demonstration of the power of Jesus Christ to heal and deliver people who are believed to be in bondage of the devil is an important feature of the neo-prophets. This usually happens during their 'prophetic' or 'anointing' services. According to Atiemo (1995: 103), there are two major forms of healing and deliverance in

Neo-prophetic churches namely; Individual (personal) and Mass Healing and Deliverance Sessions. The Mass Healing and Deliverance Sessions may take place at the chapel as part of the church's weekly program or during special revival services or sometimes done during crusades. Thus, mass healing and deliverance may be done during the anointing or prophetic services in the neo-prophetic churches.

In most cases, there is a 'deliverance team' (Atiemo 1995: 103) or 'Prayer warriors' (Atakora 2013: 53), with a deliverance leader. The leader may be the prophet himself or a person who is considered to be gifted by the Holy Spirit. Such a person may direct the deliverance through visions. People who are believed to be possessed and manipulated by evil spirits are prayed for during mass healing and deliverance sessions. Those who are also believed to be demon possessed are exorcised in the name of Jesus. Also, people whose sicknesses defy any medical treatment are brought to the prophet for deliverance. Such people go through deliverance and some are believed to receive instant healing.

The personal or individual deliverance sessions, on the other hand, involve the deliverance of people who are believed to be possessed or manipulated by the evil forces and others who are suffering from all kinds of sicknesses that defy treatment on a one-on-one basis. Generally, individual deliverance is preceded by counselling where the prophet interrogates the person. The purpose of the counselling or consultation is for the prophet to know the cause of the problem of the person. This is also to help the prophet to spend more time on those with special problems during the deliverance session (Atakora 2013: 53).

There are however no special places for deliverance. Individual and mass deliverance sessions may take place at the chapel, the house (especially for individual deliverance session) or places that are conducive for healing and deliverance. However, because of the noise involved during healing and deliverance because of the loudness of the prayers, the preferred places for such practices are in the chapel or places not close to residences (Atiemo 1995: 103).

The concept of success, well-being or prosperity: *Yiedie*

According to Omenyo and Arthur (2013: 56), *yiedie*, 'success, well-being or prosperity' is another theological concept which is gaining fast currency in Neo-propheticism in Ghana, in recent times. According to them this concept suggests that the Christian must succeed in his

endeavours and prosper materially by reason of his relationship with the God of prosperity. I noticed this concept in most of the teachings of the Neo-prophetic churches I visited. One prophet, Owusu Bempa advocate that why should a Christian who has the almighty God as his God be poor or be a failure. His sermon title, “It shall be in Your Favour”, says it all. He claims that it due to this that a Christian must have an enemy. He said that although, one might not be rich now but since one is related to the God of all riches, one is potentially rich and people who have ‘evil eye’, and can see the future of such a person, then they tend to hate such a person, or become his/her enemies. Hence, he said if one does not have an enemy, then one is a miserable person, and it is because he/she has no good future. Below are some excerpts from his sermon:

Let me tell you something. If you find out that you are poor or have nothing in life to be envious of and you find out that you have enemies. Then understand that, it is because you have a bright future... Let’s see something in the scriptures. Let us take Joseph for example. Because, that is quiet normal and it is also a very popular scripture. When the brothers of Joseph were hating him, he wasn’t the prime minister yet. So what at all developed that hatred? Because of his dream. So your dreams/visions can attract enemies for you. Even your manner of speech can make someone hate you. Because, you speak with faith. If you are here and you have no enemies, then your life is miserable. Am telling you that such a person you don’t have a good future. Show me someone who has many enemies and I will show a person who has a good future. [my translation, see Appendix 1a].

Omenyo and Arthur (2013: 56), posit that the motivation behind this theological belief and their practices are connected with the reasons for the rise of Neo-prophetism and Pentecostalism in general. In this regard, Larbi (2001: 435-436) writes that, ‘the search for abundant life, in which health, material blessings and protection from evil forces are significant’ in Pentecostal beliefs and the reason why they are in the rise. According to Omenyo and Arthur, the whole Pentecostal-type movement in Africa is seen by one Abraham Akrong as ‘a complex admixture of African traditional religious ideas and philosophy and the faith of the evangelical movement from North America’. They therefore, postulate that the hermeneutics of the Neo-prophetic churches are shaped by their African background and philosophy as well as their Pentecostal beliefs.

The Concept of the ‘Favoured’ and the ‘Unfavoured’ Life

The effect of the concept of success, *yiedie* in Neo-prophetism has led to the propagation of another type of teaching which is becoming very popular in the Neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. This teaching is the concept of the ‘favoured’ and ‘unfavoured’ life. Quayesi-Amakye (2011: 300) claims that the ‘favoured life’ among neo-prophets is explained as ‘that which enjoys socio-economic and political transformation through the intercession of God through a prophetic word or direction’. Atakora (2013: 49), asserts that concepts makes the ministry of

the neo-prophets very crucial. Since people who want to enjoy success in life turn to them for prayers and *akwankyere* to help them receive the favour of God. I observed this in the sermon of Prophet Owusu Bempa as he continued to stress the need for one to have the divine favour as he relates the story of the seven women who appeared before King Ahasuerus. According to him though the women were well organised they had no spiritual backing that is ‘divine favour’: Below are some excerpts from his sermon:

The women have been well organised. But the good news of the story is this. When you go before the king or into his chamber and come out and you are not called; that is an indication that you have been disqualified. The woman who first went into the chamber of King Ahasuerus was not longer called so she was knocked out. It is a knockout method and not a knock-in. Hallelujah!... Eh... it is a knockout. It is very serious. All the women went before the king. Every one of them went and never returned. Do you know the reason why it happened so? It because, the women were beautiful but had no spiritual backing.

You may have some experience, but without any spiritual backing it is useless. Perhaps you are very talented, but without spiritual backing it is useless. Whatever thing you are doing, you need a spiritual backing. When you get a divine-spiritual backing, come what may you will succeed. You’ll win. You need divine spiritual backing. Ooooo...so haven’t you seen a person who is so beautiful but her marriage is in shambles? Whenever, she gets married the man will divorce and send her away. She has beauty but has no spiritual support. Haven’t you seen a person who happened to be very wealthy? Who was a car dealer and owned a great deal houses? But because the person had no spiritual support, he has lose his houses and cars. That person lacks spiritual backing... [My translation, see Appendix 1a].

Relating to Esther Owusu said:

Do you know Esther’s secret? Because she had the favour of God. Because she had the support of God. Because she had God’s backing. Oh, my God! You need God’s favour. You need God’s support. You need God’s push. He will push you in order for you to get there. [My translation, see Appendix 1a]

From the above one can say that a favoured person in the theology of neo-prophets is a person who has good luck and is held to have opportunities which should have escaped them had it not been for divine intervention. Hence, favour is said to beautify its holder with magnetic force for right and appropriate inter-human relation. Thus, it is believed that favoured persons get things they do not deserve from people such as family members, friends and even from people who may be complete strangers to them or might have even been an enemy. The following excerpt from Owusu’s sermon emphasizes this belief:

Look, when the blessings of God fall upon you, men will not think about what they do for you. This kind of blessings should fall upon you. He/she will finish doing it for you before he/she will go and think about it. What it is, is that normally, cash, we think about it before we do it. But when God notices you and God’s favour falls upon you, people will be doing it for you without any thought about it. They will finish doing it for you before they will realise what they have done. Say, “Jehovah, do such for me”. Say, “God give me this kind of favour”. The man will perform your marriage customs before he will come to himself. The helper shall help you and go home before he will realise it. [My translation, see Appendix 1a].

The opposite of the ‘favoured’ life discussed above can be said about the ‘unfavoured’ life. A life which does not enjoy socio-economic and political transformation through the intercession of God through a prophetic word or direction is thus held to be an unfavoured life. According to Quayesi-Amakye (2011: 300), it is commonly held among some neo-prophets that unfavoured people look unattractive in the spirit. So, unfavoured people are believed to be rejected by people, even people who may be complete strangers to them. Doors of opportunities are closed for people who are disfavoured in life.

Quayesi-Amakye further posits that the concept of the favoured and unfavoured life is associated with the belief in witchcraft. According to him it is purported that witches steal and destroy people’s favour. Since, it is held that without the ‘favour’ a person will struggle in life. A favoured person thus, enjoys success and prosperity. So for a person to get a good husband, wife, job, visa, among others, the neo-prophets teach that one must pray for God’s favour.

Thus, some neo-prophets associate suffering and poverty in life to an unfavoured life. To them, poverty is not just a matter of lack of finances, but any deprivation in a person’s life that reduces his or her status in life and takes away his or her enjoyment of social acclamation and respect. Ghanaians see poverty as a curse because it downgrades and humiliates its victims.

Ghanaian Pentecostals’ Understanding of Salvation

At this point it seems significant to present a general idea of what Pentecostals in Ghana have about salvation. What do Ghanaian Pentecostals mean when they talk about getting saved or liberated? Emmanuel Kingsley Larbi has noted that though Pentecostals have a clear understanding of what salvation is in their theology, they however depict something differently when it comes to the practical aspects of displaying what salvation is. Larbi is right his assertion but this phenomenon is not peculiar to Pentecostals only, but for all Christians. This is because theory and practice are never the same. Larbi (2002: 96-98) asserts that basically salvation among Ghanaian Pentecostals is about “the atonement, forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God.” He opines that the concept of the original sin is a well understood concept among classical and neo-Pentecostal leaders who have their roots in classical Pentecostalism, or the Scripture Union.

Researching on Pentecostals' understanding of salvation, Larbi found almost the same answers from his respondents when asked about their understanding of the term "salvation" such as 'Jesus saves,' 'there is salvation in Jesus,' or 'you need salvation.' Almost all of his respondents as the first point related to the issue of the original sin, the depravity of the human nature, and reconciliation that comes through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Larbi thus posits that this understanding of salvation among his respondents indicates that the material and physical aspects of salvation were most consistently suggested as secondary.

Consequently, Larbi posits that though Ghanaian Pentecostals consider 'salvation' primarily in terms of the atonement, forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God, yet in their practices he observed a contrast. That is, he found out Ghanaian Pentecostals are reaching out to things that go beyond the 'born again' experience, to an experience that permeates their life here and now and promises them of a better tomorrow in the hereafter.' Salvation relates more to the here and now. Hence, Pentecostals according to Larbi are much more concerned with needs such as healing, success in financial and economic endeavours, gaining employment, satisfying family needs, to overcome addictions such as smoking and drunkenness, and to get access to better educational issues and accommodation. Some issues are related to deliverance from a bad or frightful dreams and demonic and witchcraft attacks. Hence, when Ghanaian Pentecostals pray or ask for prayers, in this regard they are reaching out to God, in search of salvation (cf. Larbi 2002: 96).

Quayesi-Amakye (2013: 67) has also noted that in Ghanaian Pentecostal spirituality, salvation may imply a total breach with traditional deities and all forms of occultism. This is what Birgit Meyer has also referred to as 'a complete breakaway with the past,' in Ghanaian Pentecostalism. Conversion is then a liberation through Christ from the control and influence of traditional deities which are demonised and translated as the devil. According to Quayesi-Amakye against this backdrop Ghanaian Pentecostals continue to sing songs such as:

As for us we shall serve God,
As for us we shall serve God,
Our fathers served deities without any gain,
As for us we shall serve God.

To the Ghanaian Pentecostal Christ offered what the traditional deities failed to give. The deities thus do not deserve their allegiance any more. In this regard and relation to the above discussion according to Larbi, many people claim to have received salvation to otherwise their distressed

situations through the help of the Pentecostal churches and their healing centre. For those people, the concept of salvation cannot be divorced from their existential needs.

Hence, for the Pentecostals the Saviour is not only the one that saves them from the curse and the plight of sin, though this is their starting point, he is also the one who supremely helps them in their day-to-day existential needs. Larbi (2002: 97), argues that since it appears that the principal concern of majority of suppliants is related to their existential needs, here and now, one may be tempted to conclude that Ghanaian/African Christians are not conscious of redemption from sin. According to him, valid as this position may be in certain segments of African Christianity, it does not fully account for the African experience, or at least the evidence he obtained from the churches and the prayer groups.

It may however, be said that since the African seems to have a holistic orientation to reality, and more so because of economic, social and political upheavals that constantly plague the continent of Africa, material concerns play a very important role in the religious consciousness, and in African perceptions of the role of the 'Saviour' in this regard. It may therefore be inappropriate to state that Africans are not conscious of redemption from sin. John Mbiti (1986: 166, 168) has noted that,

While some African Christians, including many in the independent churches, put great emphasis on the physical saving acts of Jesus, such as those recorded in the gospels, we must not limit the African understanding to the physical level of life. There are many who also put great emphasis on the Cross of Jesus and its saving grace. Perhaps the best example of this is the East African Revival Movement.... Nobody can deny that through the channels of the Revival Movement, people are appropriating biblical salvation, which makes sense to their lives and satisfies their yearnings. The concentration here is more on Jesus and his Cross, and less on his other activities prior to the Cross. The revival also takes up the life of the believer after death, so that it holds firmly that the Christian goes immediately to be with the Lord in heaven.

In his work Larbi (2002: 98) observed that some contemporary prophets establish their adherents in the doctrine of sin and the atonement. However, Larbi claims that the reason for this well-established teachings on salvation among some contemporary prophets may be due to an influence from their classical Pentecostal background. One such prophet as mentioned by Larbi is Bishop OwusuTabiri who according to Larbi is although he concerned with the health, economic and social well-being of his clients, he essentially establishes his clients in the doctrine of sin and the atonement. According to Larbi, through the New Testament some people understood the issue of original sin and the need for forgiveness and reconciliation with God, when they heard the gospel preached to them. Nevertheless, the physical and material assistance that Jesus provided to people in the world is what really captivated them

to join the church. The appreciation and embracing of the teachings on the original sin and atonement came later on.

Mbiti (1986: 158-159) thus made the following observation from the New Testament:

Often in the New Testament, individuals are physically saved first by Jesus and through the Acts of the Apostles. Only later does the spiritual dimension of their salvation surface and grow. But this need not be the order of sequence since God's grace is not confined to one method, and the experience of Paul on the road to Damascus is a clear illustration of the reversal of this sequence. Indeed many African Christians came to the Christian message of salvation, which speaks first about spiritual matters and only later, or not at all, about physical welfare in their lives.... What is important here is to consider salvation in holistic terms.... Only when one is expressed at the expense of the other, a distortion of biblical salvation ensues and one part of man is virtually excluded and starved out.

According to Birgit Meyer (1995: 237) Pentecostals have an uncompromising attitude towards the traditional religion, which they portray as diabolical, thereby demonising and also translating traditional and family deities and spirits as the devil (Meyer 1999: xvii-xviii, xxiii; cf. Meyer 1998: 316-317). Meyer (1998: 317) argues that Pentecostals do not buy the idea of revaluation of culture and traditions in order to be reconciled with the Christian faith. This kind of idea is what seems to differentiate Pentecostals from other Christian groups in Ghana today. According to her "the rupture, forms a key to a better understanding of current Ghanaian Pentecostalism. The appeal to 'time' as an epistemological category enable Pentecostals to draw a rift between 'us' and 'them,' 'now' and 'then,' 'modern' and 'traditional' and, of course, 'God' and the 'Devil'" (Meyer 1998: 317).

Nevertheless according to Larbi (2002: 98) the traditional concept of salvation appears to have been a "*praeparatio evangelica*" to the Pentecostal conception of salvation. According to Larbi (2002: 104), the issue of material prosperity have been taken by Pentecostals to the realm of divine blessings. Larbi (2002: 104) further emphasizes that "the traditional African understanding of salvation and the biblical motif about God's wish to intervene to deliver people in desperation have continued to form much of the background of the way Pentecostals in particular and African Christians in general, perceive, appropriate and experience the concept of salvation." According to him, church history in Ghana demonstrates that the need for healing, deliverance, securities, and economic well-being, continue to occupy the minds of Ghanaian or African Christians. This assertion seems to be true since for the Ghanaian or African Christian the above mentioned needs are part and parcel of what they consider as salvation.

The Prophetic Problem

In this section I discuss what I refer to as the prophetic problem relating it to the teachings and practice of Neo-prophetic churches, especially the concept of enemy. I use the term prophetic problem to refer or relate to the difficulty and problems people have with the acceptance of the prophetic ministry and also the troubles that people associate or find with the neo-prophets, their teachings and practices, and their prophecies. It mainly centres on the challenges that the teachings and practices or the emphasis of the neo-prophets poses on the community and the Christian councils in Ghana.

The proliferation of Neo-prophetic churches is so visible in Ghana so much so that it is common to find Neo-prophetic churches every hundred metres in cities, towns and villages. They organise their church services throughout the week ranging from early morning devotions, prophetic/miracle services to revival services lasting forty or ninety days. Throughout the day over about ten television channels and ten radio stations across the country neo-prophets can be seen and heard. It is also common to see the activities of neo-prophets in public places like the market, streets and public transports.

In Neo-prophetic churches most especially sermons ranges from short homilies of about ten minutes to long sermons of about forty-five minutes. The preaching are normally experiential rather than cognitive. The sermons aim at touching lives. According to Herholdt (1998: 428), it is the moment when the word comes alive, where God speaks forcefully into individual lives. Sermons are more exhortative and usually dwells on the existential needs or problems of clients and act as faith generators in divine miracles. The sermons are also followed by times of intensive, prolonged militaristic perspiring muscular prayers aimed at demolishing the strongholds of enemies.

From the different sections above on prophetism in Ghana, it can be seen that in the early days of the prophetism in Ghana some of the mission established churches which benefited from the itinerary works ministry of the African prophets had some issues with the prophets and their ministry. Some were accused of practicing hypnotism or occultism (cf. Omenyo 2006: 69, 71-73; Larbi 2001: 62, 65-66, 67-68). Though, these prophets had helped these mission churches in terms of converts and the provision of the security and protection (cf. Larbi 2001: 58-66) which the indigenous people needed from their enchanted world but was

lacking in their churches. Some of them were cursed and driven or ex-communicated from the mission established churches and not allowed to preach at all.

Some scholars such as Haliburton however, see these prophets as true prophets (Larbi 2001: 58-59, 64-65, 67-68). For instance, H. W. Debrunner (1967: 271) quoted Casely-Hayford, an African scholar's report on Harris' activities: 'This is not a revival. It is Pentecost. Its orbit worldwide...men, women and children are drawn as by irresistible power, and when he has done with them, they find their way to the churches of their own accord and remain there. It fills one with awe to hear some of these converts pray.' Also, concerning Sampson Oppong, Haliburton (1965: 95) wrote: 'a prophet, one specially inspired and sent by God, endowed with superhuman powers, including prescience' (cf. Omenyo 2006: 72). Prescience is the ability to accurately foretell future events (Larbi 2001: 59). This ability according to Larbi was also reported by Shank (1994) as one of the gifts possessed by Wade Harris.

It can thus be seen that these African prophets were considered by scholars of church history in Ghana and Africa at large as true prophets as a result of their activities yet some of the mission established churches most especially the Catholic and Methodists churches have issues with the ministries of these prophets. This then shows that the problem with the prophetic gifts or ministry will continue to exist, especially with people who are not comfortable with the prophets who do not succumb to their church authority and ordinances. One can see that there has always been two sides of the prophetic ministry throughout history. At time they are accepted and at another time they are rejected and accused especially by the existing churches, since they will not fit into their theologies or attempts to confine them in their churches (Omenyo 2006: 72-75).

As it has been so it is today, in Ghana with the neo-prophets. They have many followers as they try to understand the African worldview and make it relevant to Christianity. Like their predecessors, they try to understand the spiritual universe of the people and then penetrate that universe thereby making the gospel relevant to the fears, concerns and aspirations. Yet, my observation and responses from the society show that they are also accused of practicing occultism or using familiar spirits. Some are also accused like the former prophets as being illiterates, crude or impolite in their speeches and language, creators of fears and panic in the society, most especially in the family and the nation as a whole as result of their prophecies.

Baeta's (2004: 6-7) prediction becomes clear today as we study the activities of the neo-prophets. Some indeed are making much showing than others. Like the former prophets, neo-prophets are accused of many things such as craving for money and popularity, frequently cursing their clients or people who offend them, challenging each other to making a show of their spiritual abilities as prophets, sexual assaults and engagement in violent and criminal activities, illegal use of public security personnel's services, and the use of juju from local priests.

However, an interview with Elder Freeman (July 2015) of the Church of Pentecost Prayer camp at Kasoa, shows that the church of Pentecost having come of age now has a more refined theology and operation of the prophetic gift. Seminars are organised for such prophets and people who operate the prayer and prophetic ministry under the auspices of the church. The above assertion shows that there is much work to be done to bring the neo-prophets and their activities under control. I think they have to be brought to book and made to undertake Bible seminars in order to have a well refined theology and a more matured way of operating their prophetic gifts. Bodies responsible for religious activities in Ghana have to consider carefully their activities and initiate some control measures.

Baeta (2004: 3) has stipulated some reasons why prophets arise. According to him, they may arise as a result of intolerable social, political or religious conditions, or a combination of these conditions that threatens the continuing existence of the prophet's society or its culture, through a seemingly irresistible intrusion of a stronger alien group or culture. Thus, he says this is the reason why some prophets and their dissident churches in African are regarded as a standard element in African nationalism. Since, they served as the pivotal medium for the resistance to, or rejection of, European control.

One biblical scholar, Joseph Blenkinsopp (1984: 17) has also observed that the biblical prophets arose to protest on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged, the victims of an exploitative society and political order. Thus, one of the major concern of these prophets is community. James Limburg (1977: 25-38) refers to such categories of people, that is the poor and disadvantaged in the society on whose behalf the prophets protest as the powerless. Baeta (2004: 4) however added that this is not the only reason why prophetism arises. Prophetism according to Baeta also arises from the dream or vision of a prophet, which might not

necessarily, or in fact always, be related to prevailing external conditions. He said it may be (and often is) entirely a matter of personal inward, usually religious, experience or development.

From the above, the two reasons may be clearly applied to the reason why some or all the former prophets arose in Ghana or Africa in general. However, with regards to neo-prophets in recent times it seems to me that all or almost all of them in Ghana have emerged as a result of their personal dream or vision; that is as a result of some religious experience they had, and their motive is seemingly different from resisting an intruder or protesting on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged in society. Their perception of prophetism also seems to be entirely different from the traditional concept of prophetism.

One writer Asamoah-Agyei (2010)² has observed that in recent times prophetism in Ghana seems to be gradually reduced to healing and one's ability to heal automatically. One's ability to conduct effective healing service qualifies him/her as a prophet. Asamoah-Agyei says a critical assessment of the *adiyifo*, 'prophets' in Ghana in recent times also reveals that their major occupation is healing. He added that it is improbable to describe somebody who is not able to heal or cast out "demons" as a prophet.

From the above mentioned allegations I realised during my research the activities of the neo-prophets have become a great concern and an important discourse in the media (radio, television, newspapers and articles). This is what is referred to in this section as the prophetic problem. The interesting thing about prophetism in Ghana today, is that apart from the mission established churches, the classical and Neo-pentecostal/charismatic churches' accusations against the neo-prophets, Neo-prophetic churches also accuse and challenge each other's authenticity.

Some traditional priests also have come out alleging to have lists of many of these neo-prophets who came to them to get magical powers or *asuman*, 'talismans and amulets or in the form of other objects' to operate their churches. They go to the extent of challenging these neo-prophets to contest them publicly to prove if what they is not so. One traditional priest known as Nana Kweku Bonsam³ had recently gone after one such prophet in order to take back his *suman* since the prophet did not come to pay homage as their contract demanded.

Also, the emphasis of neo-prophets on the concepts enemy, success, favoured and unfavoured life is becoming a great issue of discussion in the media. Not to mention the items and the methods they use to administer healing and deliverance services. For their practice of *akwankyerε*, ‘divine guidance’ there is nothing to write home about. As a focus of this project, the concept of enemy is always found to be problematic as the enemy is always personalised and seen as a member of one’s family or a close friend. Women most often fall the victim of such accusation, especially as “witches” who work against people’s progress (Sackey 2006:19-20). That is, women most often than not appear in neo-prophets activities to be the personalised enemy, as it usually revealed that the mother, auntie, sister or grandmother of a person is the enemy.

Omenyo and Atiemo (2006) and Onyinah (2002) have observed how this is causing a great confusion in the family and society as a whole. During my research an interview with one classical Pentecostal, Elder Freeman (July 9, 2015), and two neo-prophets Prophet Ebenezer Darko (July 29, 2015) and Rev. Dr. Eric (July 30, 2015) confirmed that they have had testimonies of how this concept of enemy is becoming a great factor which is breaking and separating many families and friendships, making inter-human relation very difficult and shaky. However, I also noticed how some neo-prophets such as Prophet Darko and Rev. Dr. Eric are currently refining their theologies. According to Rev. Dr. Eric, due to an incident which happened for about ten years ago in his church he has now stopped talking about or revealing who the enemy of a person publicly even if he claims to have knowledge of it through a vision or dream.

Prophet Ebenezer Darko (personal interview, July 29, 2015) claims he does not reveal to people who their enemy is at all. For him the concept of enemy is a universal issue and everyone has in him or her envy or hatred which is the underlining factor for the concept of enemy. According to him everyone has enmity, if the term envy is taken into consideration. Since, envy leads to one being an enemy or seeking the downfall of another person. If one is envious or desires to have what another person has one then looks for ways and means to pull the fellow down. He said this attitude is found among all walks of life, also among white people. He however argues that the difference is that the white folks do not concentrate much on trying to find out who their enemy is neither do they seek to find ways and means to bring their enemies down. The white folks he says are rather concerned about how to improve themselves or make life a little easier.

But according to him the only problem with the Ghanaian attitude is that, they devote all time and efforts, and pay more attention on knowing who their enemy is and they therefore go about seeking for spiritually inclined people to tell them this. But this is not so with the Western world. Though they might also have enemies they do not waste time going about to know who such a person is or try to find ways to deal with them. Darko claims he has not enemies or if he has he does not know who they are, nor does he seek to know them. He says he believes envy exists in every person including himself. It is envy that may lead to covetousness, which when not controlled will lead to doing evil against another person.

From the above I found out that according to Darko, the concept of enemy emanates from *Ɔtan*, 'envy/hatred', the root word from which *Ɔtamfo* is derived. So for him one can attract enemies not because one has done anything wrong to someone, but because one might have something in which the other person do not have. Prophet Owusu Bempa also agrees to this assertion of Darko and also clarifies that the bright future or vision/dream which one may have in life may attract enemies to him/her. I therefore deduced from these neo-prophets that according to Neo-prophetic way of thinking envy is the root cause of one being another person's enemy. Envy is found everywhere in the world; in families, between nations, in churches. It is the reason why one country may rise against another country or a family member against another, hence becoming the enemies. I therefore take sides with Prophet Darko that the concept of enemies is universal, even more so when it is looked from the concept of the evil eye.

However, the African or Ghanaian concept of enemy as propagated by the neo-prophets is unique in the sense that it has taken over the whole thought and minds of people and much attention is given to it so much so that a spiritual dimension has been given to it and needed to be fought spiritually, through imprecatory prayers and prophetic rituals, as directed by a spiritually powerful person through *akwankyerɛ*, 'guidance', as one seeks their help through *abisa*, 'divinatory consultation.' I think this is due to the spiritual worldviews of the Ghanaians or African who think the world is preoccupation with good and evil spirits. This is a world in which spirits are thought to act upon spirits and every cause and action needs to be explained from a spiritual point of view before it is accepted as authentic or satisfactory.

How to deal with the enemy is also being refined in their theology. An interview with one Neo-prophetic church adherent, Harriet Enyonam Dogbe (personal conversation, July 2015,

Mispa Prayer Grounds) revealed that if an enemy is not willing to repent then one can pray for such an enemy to die, no matter who such an enemy is. On the other hand, mercy is pleaded for a repentant enemy or if he/she is willing to repent. Atakora has observed it is only in few cases that there has been physical violence as result of relating a person's enemy to a person. But the normally routine of dealing with the enemy is spiritual, through spiritual warfare or imprecatory prayers such as back-to-sender prayers. This method of dealing with the enemy seems to be an influence from the traditional religious worldview related to the religious rite of libation as demonstrated in a chapter above. Darko and Addo (my informants) however, have similar opinion to them the enemy should be loved and shown mercy not matter what, though with care due to the bad spirit that can be very dangerous in the person.

Prophets, Diviners or Seers

Limburg (1977) examines the use of the term prophet in recent times. According to him, these people may, "claim to see things others do not see and hear things others do not hear through visions, dreams or trances." Also, people who claim to be prophets according to Limburg may also have the abilities to heal, to predict the future, to be "transported" or to pronounce words of good or evil (blessings or curses). He posits that people with such unusual abilities and experience have been known throughout history all over the world.

He asks if these persons should be called prophets since other professionals such as magicians also possess these abilities. Should the neo-prophets in Ghana today also be designated as prophets by virtue of their claim to possess these kind of ability by which they perform extraordinary feats? Based upon their abilities and experiences with the spiritual world, should they also be called "prophets", as they are so-called or claim to be? Limburg noted three titles from the Old Testament that was used to refer to people with such abilities and experiences. These are seers, Holy men and diviners.

Generally, persons who possess the above characteristics may be closely tied to the religion of a people and be considered a "Holy man". Thus, if a person possesses any of the above mentioned abilities and experiences and belongs to a particular religion, his people or believers in such religion will regard him as a holy man. A diviner is a person who specializes in locating missing persons or items or animals, and blessing and cursing, he/she may be designated as a diviner. A seer is a person (holy man or diviner) who claims to see

visions and hear things not revealed to other people. He asserts that the best term for describing people who possess such abilities and experiences is “seers”.

Like messengers in the ancient world and ambassadors in our modern world, Limburg asserts that the biblical prophets had authority and spoke the mind of God or declared his will to the people. To show the authority behind their messages as God, they often add the phrase, “Thus says the Lord” to their messages. By so doing they were denoting the sender of the message and also depicted that the message is not their own. It however, appears to me that the neo-prophets of Ghana as far as I know do not precede or attach this phrase or expression with and to their messages. I observed that they rather portray themselves as the authority behind the message and their adherents and clients also see them as the ultimate authority or the custodians of such abilities. It is therefore common to hear the neo-prophets saying, *mehye nkom gu w’abrabo so se...*, that is, “I prophesy unto your life that...” They can also be heard saying ‘I release it to you, your finance, business, marriage...’ (Gifford 2004: 89, 95). Congregants or adherents can also be heard saying to them, *Onyame nipa/odii hye nkom...*, “man of God/prophet prophesy...,” (Quayesi-Amakye 2013: 7) and they do so.

In this regard it seems that neo-prophets do not play their role as messengers of the one they claim to have been inspired by, God. They therefore rather appear as the custodians of the prophecies. Perhaps this is why Gifford (2004: ix) has said that the prophets in Ghana claim to have the answers to the Ghanaian’s existential problems, and especially to their most pressing existential problems, economic survival and Omenyo and Atiemo (2006: 66) also said they project themselves as people with great spiritual power and capable of performing extraordinary feats.

Baeta’s (1992/2004) work proves that the early African prophets were either self-acclaimed prophets or the title “prophet” was attributed to people who have powers to heal, predict the future, reveal hidden things, cursing and blessing effectually. According to Baeta these prophets impose their will on others by believing themselves or being believed by others to be special agents of some supernatural being or force. This assertion of Baeta thus makes it clear that the African prophets most especially the most recent brand of prophetism now referred to as neo-prophets are not like the biblical prophets. In my opinion, they are best to be described as seers or diviners, if that is not too radical.

The claims of the neo-prophets as seen above seem to show that they act in their own capacity or can also be described as self-acclaimed prophets as the early prophets described

by Baeta. In the light of this, can one say that the neo-prophets of Ghana qualify to be called or described as prophets? Since they attempt to use their ability and experiences to do what they want or what people tell them to do in order to charge a fee? I tend to agree with Limburg that people with such abilities and experiences such as seeing visions, healing, and hearing voices are not to be described as prophets.

These extraordinary abilities and experiences are associated with prophets. However, I think it is not accurate or helpful to designate people of such calibre as prophets if we intend to use the word in the traditional sense. There is no doubt that they claim to see visions and hear voices that others do not. But just as Limburg pointed out not everyone who claims see visions or hear voices is a prophet. Such people can best be described as *adihunifo*, “seers.”

The phenomenon according to Omenyo (2011) just as Baeta (2004) has predicted is a feature of African religion which has stood the test of time. Omenyo postulates that the practice of seeking the cause of evil occurrences, power to deal with it or to avert any future reoccurrences and the search for one’s destiny through divination is that which has now been designated as prophetism in Christianity in Africa today. He said it is this phenomenon of prophetism at different times and various religious traditions that is the major factor that leads individuals to a person perceived to be “a man of God”. The notable prediction of Baeta (2004: 6-7) that prophetism appears to be a perennial phenomenon of African life is tested among AICs, classical Pentecostal, Neo-pentecostal churches and the recent brand of Pentecostals typically known as Neo-prophetism.

This clearly shows that the prophetic phenomenon in Ghanaian Christianity especially the Neo-prophetic churches is an influence of the primal religion. Neo-prophets try to make the biblical notion of prophetism relevant to the traditional Akan worldview. They therefore use the traditional worldview to interpret and explain their practices. Their clients/adherents come to them since they also find in their teachings and practices something that corresponds to their traditional beliefs. In their worldview they believe that nothing happens accidentally; there must therefore be a cause to every mishaps in life. This assertion is emphasized by a saying among the Akan *ennyɛ kwa*, that is, “it is not just ordinary” (Assimeng 2010: 67). This statement thus epitomises this belief.

From the Akan traditional cultural background, believers seek to know the cause of sickness, death, failure life and whatever prevents them from attaining the fullness of life, from this background it is not enough to know the explanation for the source or the cause of evil; and

mishaps but they are also interested in knowing how to remove it. Since, warding off evil (evil spirits) is a central focus of religious activities (Assimeng 1989: 60). They thus have the tendency to seek to ascertain the causative factor of every catastrophe or misfortune in life through *abisa*, “divinatory consultation” which is the Akan practice of divination. Hence, a common expression among the Akan when they seek to know the causative agents of a catastrophe is *meeko abisa*, that is, “I am going to seek out the cause” (cf. Omenyo 2011: 32).

When they go for *abisa*, the main desire is to know or ask for *akwankyerε*, which is the Akan word for the diviner giving instruction or direction in life so as to avert any future mishap. The *akwankyerε* is sought from persons deemed to be “powerful”, such as the traditional priest or religious specialists. It is therefore not amazing that Neo-prophetic church adherents and clients with such a background seek for “prophets” in Christianity in Ghana for *akwankyerε*. Because the prophets appear to be the equivalence or perfect substitutes of the spiritually powerful persons they know about in the traditional religion. They best fit their worldview as a replacement for the primal religious specialists. Since, the religious specialists are deemed to be people who are in constant touch with the source and channel of powers in the universe, they thus have the power to discern the wishes of the ancestors and deities who are believed to protect devotees and society and enhance their fortunes.

The religious specialists must also have the ability to prescribe rituals to avert further danger or provide some protection medicine to forestall danger when they diagnose the cause and source of a trouble (cf. Mbiti 1969: 167; Magesa 1997: 175, 195). It is not therefore surprising that people demand such duties or request such services from the neo-prophets of today. Or that neo-prophets themselves try to give the people something similar to the traditional beliefs in Christianity in Ghana. Among other things, according to Omenyo (2011: 32-33) the traditional priests function as doctors, counsellors, pastors, prophets and intermediaries between the seen and unseen world.

The Akan therefore see a traditional priest as *obi a εwε ani/εwε ani*, that is, “someone who sees/he/she has eyes”. Meaning he/she can see what others cannot see ordinarily, thus a seer. He also posits that they are also held to have *tumi*. That is people who have power beyond what the ordinary person possesses. According to Omenyo, these perception of the traditional priests make their role pivotal in the day-to-day activities of most traditional Africans. Opoku (1978: 74) has observed that priesthood is a very highly respected office in West African society. This therefore shows why neo-prophets are so much believed and have much

following in Ghana today. This background seems to explain why most people do not care to know whether what they proclaim to teach or practice in Christianity in Ghana today is really biblical or not.

According to Ekem (1994: 38), prophecy is the most significant definition of priesthood in the Akan religion. It will therefore not be strange if people who prophesy are held in high esteem by the Akan. Omenyo (2011: 34), asserts that variants of prophetism in the traditional religion can be found in other religious renewals such as Christianity and Islam. He said the renewal movements in African Christianity especially, that which is spearheaded by the African prophetic figures have sought to appropriate resources from Christianity to meet the needs of Africans. This assertion thus makes it clear that the practice of neo-prophets in Ghana today is an indication of an appropriation of the Akan indigenous worldviews of prophetism, of divination into Christianity as prophetism. The teachings of *abisa*, *akwankyerε* and evil and the concept of enemy clearly show an influence of the traditional worldviews in the Christian tradition in Ghana. It is not therefore surprising too that the early prophets of the twentieth century placed emphasis on the pneumatic aspects of ministry as prophecy (Haliburton 1971; Shank 1994). They therefore engaged the indigenous worldviews with elements from the Christian gospel (Kalu 2008: 23). This is clearly what neo-prophets are doing today in Ghana.

How Prophets are judged in Neo-Prophetism

From my observation, I have found out that how powerful or otherwise a prophet is, is judged not only by his/her ability to heal but also the ability to reveal some hidden thing, most especially relating or telling who the enemy of a person is or who is an evil person. In this regard, Asamoah-Agyei (2010)² asserts that many Ghanaians see a prophet as a healer and a revealer of secrets. A prophet then must have the ability to heal and relate or reveal who a person's enemy is or the person behind one's problem in life. Thus, the prophets are believed to be people who see what others do not see and hear what nobody hears and are able to communicate with the "spirit".

However, neither did it appear anywhere in the records of the Bible where a prophet ever related or mentioned to a person the enemy behind the person's problems as it can be seen in Neo-prophetism in Ghana today. I think this is an evidence of a cultural influence, which in this case is the Akan indigenous culture. James Limburg (1977: 1-10), has a different opinion

about who a prophet is. According to him the term 'prophet' should not be used loosely to designate people who give "reading" while in a trance-like state, who diagnoses illnesses and prescribe cure for people and who see visions and hear voices. To him prophets are normal human beings who live normal lives. They are different from tellers of future, givers of the oracles and seers.

John Paterson (2013: 125-126), also posits that, "The Prophets, it must be remembered, were not mere foretellers. They were mainly forth tellers, preachers of righteousness. And they were not mere enthusiasts. They were in the main practical men, statesmen and patriots who arose in the great crises of the national life to keep men true to the Highest. Above all things they were Seers "men of Divine intuition" as the Bible puts it, men inspired of God. They saw the facts as they were, but they could look beneath the surface and see also what was essential and significant in these facts".

Paterson further asserts that the prophets saw the eternal principle by the influence of the Divine Spirit, which must guide the life of nations and men. Thus, the biblical prophets fearlessly declared them to their own to all succeeding ages. He stated that the truths and principles which the prophets apprehended were so obvious and convincing that each true prophet was absolutely certain of their divine origin. In this manner, the biblical prophets felt their Individuality merged into the Divine personality and when they spoke they felt it was God speaking through them. Thus, they could dare to precede or conclude their expression with "Thus saith the Lord," "Hear ye therefore the Word of the Lord."

From the foregone discussion I agree with Paterson and Limburg that it is erroneous to think that prophets are only foretellers of the future, writing history in advance and revealing things yet to come. In this regard, I think if this should be used as a measuring rod for measuring some of the neo-prophets in Ghanaian Christianity today, it would be very difficult to designate most of them as 'prophets'.

Does not this suggests that neo-prophets are influenced by their traditional culture background? Thereby attempting to give a literal interpretation of the concept of enemy and practice of divinatory consultation from their traditional background as they try to relate the message of the Bible to the indigenous worldview? The cultural values in this contextualization seems to be of great or serious consideration, than the message of the Bible though neo-prophets see the

Bible as a book of authority, rather than a historical record of antiquity. Most of them relate their charging of consultation fees to the story of Saul and the Prophet Samuel who told him where his father's sheep had been. According to them the servant of Saul entreated him to go and see the seer and they must carry some present with them as they go. It is clear from this story that it was not the prophet who asked them for a fee, but as a matter of showing appreciation they intended to carry some present with them (1 Samuel 9).

Current Issues about the Prophetic Phenomenon

According to a reporter Akorsah-Sarpong⁴, in an article posted on my-joy-online, a Ghanaian news site, it appears that Ghanaian are under the grip of prophetic spell. He says it seems Ghanaians are hooked on some prophetic drug which they find it difficult to rehabilitate. This according Akorsah-Sarpong has put Ghanaians on some sort of permanent prophetic high. It has become a real development threat, making the prophetic genie hard to be put back in the bottle. He postulates that prophets almost control the thinking of Ghanaians – from the presidency to the petty roadside seller.

According to Akorsah-Sarpong, this has raised the concerns of the Asantehene (King of the Asantes), Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, and veteran journalist and politician, Elizabeth Ohene of the British Broadcasting Corporation, who would normally not comment on prophetic issues. He stated that according to the Ghanaian laws, prophets and their religions are private matter. However, today, the private and the public are indistinct.

Akorsah-Sarpong asserts that the reason why prophets thrives in Ghana and are having their field day is due to poverty, ignorance, and some aspects of the Ghanaian culture that's deeply mired in false notions. According to him not only are the prophets milking Ghanaians heavily but are also confusing them and this is endangering the growth of their rationality. This is very problematic since it seems impossible to balance truth and falsehood in a country where because of superstitious judgments there seems to be no balance between the supernatural and the scientific. Akorsah-Sarpong noted that in a Ghana where poverty is substantial, the deep believe in prophets and the growing hope for miracles to cure diseases and other existential distresses are high and this is bordering on the obsessive.

He acknowledged that the belief in prophets and miracles are well-known. Since, overnight, most parts of Ghana sound like giant church with loud preaching, screams, deafening music

and people speaking-in-tongues. According to him this affects the sleep of most Ghanaians and the degree of their productivity the next day. However, he says the prophets do not think in such terms and Ghana is the loser. He also added that in Ghana, some people attend churches 24 hours a day throughout the week with the anticipation of getting visions and miracles to tackle their existential challenges. He says apart from the spiritual churches and the old, tied orthodox churches, juju and marabou mediums and witchdoctors abound, attracting miracle and vision seekers. The whole spiritual fields appear bemused by the prophets.

Akorsah-Sarpong, however posits that miracle is invariably proportional to the nature of superstitious believes in a society, the more traditional the society is, such as Ghana, the more the people believe in miracles and visions. However, the more modernized the society is, such as Canada, the less the people believe in prophets, miracles, witchcraft, evil spirits and demons as the cause of existential problems. He stated that, Lance Morrow, formerly a journalism professor at Boston University and the New York-based Time magazine, explains that, “the realm of the miraculous sometimes lies just across the border from the fanatical or the tacky ... the territory of the miraculous” are “approached carefully, by stages, passing from the gaudiest, shabbiest outer display toward what may, occasionally, turn out to be a deeper truth. ... A miracle is a wonder, a beam of supernatural power injected into history. Up There descends Down Here for an instant. The world connects to a mystery – a happening that cannot be explained in terms of ordinary life.”

Either in Kumasi Central Market or Makola Market, most miracles induced by the prophets can just be a street-side entertainment scene, drawing the unemployed, busybodies or the curious who are too weak to think and explain their daily tribulations in clear rational terms. The booms in spiritual churches have seen the commercialization of prophets and miracles, making them un-sacred and undermining their divine nature. Stories of prophets raping women, swindling their congregation, aiding criminals, among others, are daily tabloid diet.

Yet, either from educated Ghanaians or illiterate ones, the prophetic grip over Ghanaians is overwhelming. This threatens the wobbly development process that should be directed by very rational elites against the backdrop of Ghana’s history and cultural parts of which are mired in cavernous supernatural believes. From the traditional to the modern, mixtures of prophets and miracles have been a daily spiritual diet of most Ghanaians. This is to me seems

to be due to the fact that the Ghanaian culture has high in-built supernatural beliefs that are dominated by the prophets.

In spite of some authenticated healings and deliverance, prophecies and miracles which are acknowledged among some neo-prophets, it seems to me that experts in divinity and theology have to caution Ghanaians against such that are unbiblical, especially prophecies that relates to a person who his/her enemy is and fatalistic or against too much believe in so-called “prophets”. Most especially because the Ghanaian society is a society where much poverty is weakening rationality and as some aspects of the culture seem to correspond to the beliefs and practices of these prophetic churches.

For instance, the Asantehene (King of the Asante people) Otumfuo Osei Tutu II and some other high-profile opinion-makers in Ghana have attempted to curb some unproductive activities of some of the prophets to Ghana’s development. Due to their concern about some of alarming activities of some of the prophets, they have suggested to Church leaders to develop self-governing devices to contain the activities of the dominant prophets. For Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, this is to “protect the sanctity and image of priesthood.” Still, for Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the prophetic siege on Ghanaians are “deeply worrying,” exploiting the “ignorance and the fear of insecurity” of Ghanaians in order to “dupe them,” and using “false doctrines and spurious prophecies to achieve self-serving agenda.” Otumfuo Osei Tutu II therefore warns that “fraudsters parading as priests must be exposed and shamed to restore credibility and public confidence in the Church.”

A more recent issue arising in the country is about one prophet who has made certain statements about himself and Jesus, how he transformed into a leopard and Jesus transformed into a lion to visit a client. This has added more concern about the prophetic ministry so much that the vice-president of the Ghana Pentecostal Council⁵ and some of the neo-prophets (Owusu Bempa)⁶ has totally condemned the prophet’s action. When the vice-present was asked by a radio presenter what they are doing about the current prophetic situation and activities he claimed that the neo-prophets are not part of the Christian council nor the Ghana Pentecostal Council and it is difficult then to curtail and control some of their activities.

Below is one of the interviews held by one radio presenter with the vice-president of the Ghana Pentecostal Council:

Radio Presenter: ...please listen to this voice and tell us your opinion as a pastor.

Voice: “if I go spiritual (that is to say if enter into the spiritual realms)...and I suspend in the air as a witch does when she flies in the air...and Jesus is beside me and I cast my eyes and look upon Ghana, then Ghana appears like this handkerchief in my hand...very, very small. A pastor who can transform into an animal. I can transform into a snake to come and bite you...when we were going I transformed into a leopard and my father Jesus also transformed into a lion. So when we were entering into the room, then she was running away. So we went out and I transformed into a dog. But as we entered into the room again, then she beat the dog with a bell. So she said as she was doing that then the dog spoke and said, ‘stop it’s me, Obinim (the name of the prophet)’. Then she screamed, ‘eee! Bishop!’ there and then I transformed backed into a person and Jesus also transformed back to the human Jesus form and told the woman, ‘you are stubborn, my child, Obinim has already told you we will transform into an animal and come to you, because the one behind/causing you trouble is an animal. So we are coming to attack him.’ I (the Bishop) can transform into a snake and enter into your room...and as you scream, ‘snake! Snake!’, then I will bite you and vanish, am gone...”

Radio Presenter: ...your opinion Apostle General.

Apostle General: very sad, it’s heresy, it’s magic, it’s unchristian, it’s unbiblical...I don’t know what came upon him to say these things. It’s been...it’s been criticised and people are making fun not only of him, but of all of us as it were.

Radio Presenter: how does it make you feel?

Apostle General: I feel ashamed and the question is who is bringing the preacher to book in our nation? Who is ensuring that before you mount pulpit and grab microphone to talk to people and lead people, who ensures you so qualified and you are licensed to do that? Should we be hanging at the back of freedom of worship to throw many people into as it were destroy their lives? Because if we have such people leading people you can as well tell where the followers are heading to.

Radio Presenter: and there is a Christian council.

Apostle General: there is a Christian council, there is the Ghana Pentecostal Council which am the vice-president...

Radio Presenter: So why haven’t you openly condemned this till now?

Apostle General: we have but these people are not members of our council. So it becomes very difficult to stretch as it were the hand of correction to them. They are freelance and they don’t come under anybody’s control. And so we should start asking ourselves questions, we must debate, should these things continue? There must be what we call self-regulatory bodies.

Radio Presenter: what do you think should be done? What is the right thing to be done?

Apostle General: I think that everyone who is leading people by preaching must belong...must be made to belong to one of these council overseeing bodies. So that when they go into the excess they are checked. So that like me...could you have imagined that should I have done or made those statements, my council would have brought me to book immediately. Because, you can’t do whatever you want when you belong to the Christian council of Ghana, the Ghana Pentecostal council...

From the above it becomes clear that the prophetic phenomena in Ghana is really becoming a great challenge and concern to the media, the public and the council overseeing bodies in the country. I think it is about time that the authorities in the country should put measures in place to curtail or bring some of these things under control for the sake of those who might not know the consequences or implications of such practices by some of these neo-prophets. Prophetism poses a challenge, and yet it however offers hope to Christianity due to its ability to respond to soteriological and pastoral needs amidst its ‘unexplained’ nature and ‘unconventional’ operations.

Indeed, many are they who find problems with the ethos and theology of contemporary Pentecostal prophets. Prophets are often accused of being pecuniary-motivated in their cause.

Yet despite the criticisms, that include media reports, the phenomenon is becoming more and more appealing to many Ghanaians, Christians and non-Christians alike. For that matter it appears to be clear that we do not have to pretend to be unconcerned with issues on prophetism; neither should we think we can eradicate it simply because we have problems with it.

CHAPTER FIVE

COMPARING THE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN AKAN TRADITIONAL CULTURAL WITH THAT OF THE NEO-PROPHETIC CHURCHES

Having discussed the Akan traditional religious and cultural beliefs, I now examine how Neo-prophetic churches' concept about the enemy, evil, and divinatory consultation is dependent on the Akan traditional religion and culture. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2013: 23), Pentecostalism functions within a certain worldview that resonates with indigenous religiosity. Uka (2007:3) also noted that Christianity takes root through a people's religious convictions. It seems that many ideas in Neo-prophetic teachings and practices reveal the Akan religio-cultural influences. This influence of tradition in Neo-prophetism is not a distinct characteristic of the rural folks but it is felt even by the urban dwellers in spite of their sophistication and exposure to modern ideas, cultures and beliefs.

In this chapter I compare the beliefs and practices in the Akan Traditional culture with that of the neo-prophets in order to discuss my research questions and objective. In order to better appreciate what really is happening on the Ghanaian Neo-prophetic circles this project analyses the concept of the *Ɔtamfo* in Neo-prophetic movements in Ghana. The objective of this research is to: (1) analyse the concept of '*Ɔtamfo*' (the enemy) and discuss its possible root in the Akan traditional religion, (2) find out how the concept of '*Ɔtamfo*' that is currently prevailing in Neo-Prophetism in Ghana affects the communal life of Ghanaians, and (3) find out how this concept reveals the various ways Neo-prophetic adherents conceive and make relevant the concept of '*Ɔtamfo*' to the Ghanaian religio-cultural and social life. Below are the research questions that this project seeks to analyse:

- (a) What is the interaction between the traditional Akan concept of enemy/evil (*Ɔtamfo*) and that of the Neo-prophetic movements in Ghana?
- (b) Should the Neo-prophetic concept of enemy/evil be considered as religious syncretism?
- (c) How is the Bible interpreted in the conceptualisation of the enemy/evil among Neo-prophetic movements?
- (d) What are the socio-religious implications of the Neo-Prophetic concept of the enemy/evil on the Ghanaian multi-religious community?

Traditional Akan thought or Prophetic Gift: Visions and Dreams

I begin this discussion with the question: Do neo-prophets really appropriate the traditional Akan thought of the enemy into their concept of the enemy or do they solely depend on their prophetic gift? What is the role of “visions” and dreams in this? An observation of the practices and beliefs of neo-prophets will indicate that they depend on their prophetic gift of visions and dreams to identify the enemy. But a critical look at the practices of neo-prophets of Ghana will reveal an influence from the traditional Akan religious belief. It has been shown in chapter three that prophecy or prophetism is rooted in the Akan traditional religion. So much so that the key definition of priesthood in the Akan traditional religion is prophecy.

One attribute of a traditional priest (*Okomfo*) is that of prophecy. He must be able to see what the ordinary person cannot see and hear what others cannot hear. This then stands to prove that vision is also part of the traditional Akan religion. Dreams and their interpretations are also rooted in the Akan traditional religion. Rattray (1927: 192) rightly noted that a survey of Ashanti religion would hardly be complete without some reference to dreams and dream interpretation. Hence in the life of the Akan dreams have special place or play important roles. A better understanding of dreams in the Akan culture can be seen in the derivative Akan expression for dream, *so dae*; *so* means ‘to carry’ and *da* means ‘to sleep’ The expression means ‘to carry something into sleep’. Dreams are therefore taken very seriously since it is believed that evil can be diagnosed through dreams or an unforeseen event can be revealed through dreams. Therefore many dreamers seek the help of others for interpretation.

One scholar, Vittorio Lanternari (1978: 85-102) has also observed that the role played by dreams and visions in Ghana's spiritual churches is so meaningful that they hold the key to the connection and continuity between these "Christian" churches and several important aspects of African cultural heritage as well as to the strong bond between the institution of the church and many individual para-psychological experiences. Lanternari observed that dreams and visions played an important role in the founding of the spiritual churches in Ghana and across West Africa. This assertion is also true in the establishing of the Neo-prophetic churches in Ghana today. Some of the founders relate their experiences to visions and dreams as their source of inspiration (cf. Omenyo and Atiemo 2006).

Hence, dreams and visions have special place in Neo-prophetic churches. According to Quayesi-Amakye (2013: 63), dreams are thought to provide a ready explanation for spiritual causes of evil in Pentecostal spirituality. Therefore, one special way of detecting demonic affliction in Neo-prophetism in Ghana is through the interpretation of dreams. In Neo-

prophetism the role of dreams in the diagnosis of the evil is common. He said it is generally recognised in Neo-prophetic churches that some dreams are ominous and require liberation through Christ.

Omenyo and Atiemo (2006: 66) posit that neo-prophets project themselves as people with great spiritual power and capable of performing extraordinary feats. They are regarded by their clients as people “who see” into the future and into the spiritual dimensions of people’s present problems. As such they make claim to their ability to understand and interpret dreams. This is similar to the traditional priests in the Akan traditional society who are sort through the practice of *abisa*, ‘divinatory consultation’ for the interpretation of dreams.

In the Akan traditional religion, people resort to *abisa*, ‘divinatory consultation’ in order to seek *akwankyerε*, ‘guidance’ from the *akɔmfo*, ‘traditional priests’ who are held to possess the ability to see visions or divine and give interpretations of dreams. There are therefore days set aside for *abisa* called *abisa da*, ‘day of consultation’ (cf. Onyinah 2002: 56). It seems that since the Akan believe that wholeness through the intervention of supernatural entities because the human beings are at the centre of a cosmic battle (Assimeng 1995: 33; Larbi 2001: 91) they resort to *abisa* to achieve a life transformation. Through *abisa* they consult with a deity through a priest of that deity through whom they believe the deity will reveal their minds which may be the cause of their plight in life.

I suspect that as a result of these practices in the Akan traditional religion, that is why neo-prophets also have special days set aside for their consultation. So that their client can come to them to seek for the interpretations of their dreams and also know their destinies. It seems to be common in Neo-prophetism where believers transfer this traditional understanding of *abisa* to Christianity. Hence, believers search for seers/revealers in their times of trouble. They thus expect the neo-prophets just like the *Ɔkɔmfo*, ‘priests’ of a deity in the traditional religion to diagnose or reveal the cause of their problems.

The designating of a special day of consultation just like the *abisa da* in the traditional society seems to depict that the neo-prophets are somewhat aware of this cultural belief and practice or phenomenon in the traditional society and have created something similar to fill that gap between the Christian religion and the traditional religion.

According to Quayesi-Amakye (2013: 5), there is a strong belief among Ghanaian Pentecostals that nothing happens accidentally or naturally. There is always a connection between physical evil and supernatural wicked forces. These include witches and wizards, charmers, and sorcerers. This is key in the Akan traditional religious beliefs where supernatural forces play a major role in their worldview and key in the concept of causality. Perhaps this is why neo-prophets have created this avenue in their movements to cater for this belief.

Opoku 1992: 44, has rightly observed that “divinatory practices become necessary in human situations where answers to decisions, which are not to be taken lightly, are sought. People may resort to divination to find out the cause if an illness or the person responsible for a particular conjunction of events that causes an unhappy change of fortune.” This seems to explain why Neo-prophetic church clients in Ghana go to neo-prophets to seek answers to failures and misfortunes in their lives. The neo-prophets help their clients to diagnose the presumed source of their problems. In Neo-prophetic churches it is believed that an enemy can manipulate or stop a person from prospering or succeeding by “twisting around” the destiny of the person. By virtue of this belief there exists a traditional cosmology in the Neo-prophetic belief.

In the Akan concept of evil and suffering seems to appraise what constitute good for neo-prophets. The Akan concept of good and evil as discussed in chapter two appears to be similar to that of neo-prophets. Though, there seem to be some differences between how the Akan conceives of good and evil and the Neo-prophetic conception, in many cases the basic idea that evil is the absence of goodness or a deficiency of favour and prosperity is shared by both. The two religious worldviews share the belief that prosperity and favour can be obtained from a deity (God in the case of Neo-prophetic churches) and his agents and is a consequence of the right observation of social rules and conduct (cf. Quarcoopome 1987)

However, the two part ways on the role of God in the visitation of evil on people. Neo-prophetic churches or Pentecostals in general believe that evil may be allowed by God to correct and transform his erring children and even work out special purposes in their lives. (A personal interview with Rev. Anti, and Rev. Dr. Eric, 2015 confirms this belief among neo-prophets). The Akan however, understands evil as something that emanates from the myriad spirit forces. In both religious worldviews, there is the belief in the power of curses on the

wellness of people. Nonetheless, in the Akan society *bɔne*, or *mmusuo*, ‘evil’ may extend beyond badness to include the idea of curses from enemies.

In Ghanaian Pentecostalism the curses of enemies are also dreaded since they are believed to affect individuals and families negatively. This is the reason why curses or magic is averted in both religious worldviews (see Asante 1995). Atiemo (1995) in the same vein posits that the outcome of curses may degenerate into a *mmusuo* that befalls a person, family or a whole village as a consequence of evil acts committed by a person or group of persons related to the larger community.

Mmusuo which may be defined as mischief, misfortune, disaster, misery, calamity, adversity, or a thing that causes mischief. It is anti-social and inimical to human existence and well-being. The Akan belief that *mmusuo* is transferrable is close to Neo-prophetic insistence on generational curses. This thus, implies that problems that an individual goes through will not necessarily be the work of an enemy ‘twisting around’ a person’s destiny. But it may have root in the misdeeds of his/her parents, ancestors and close relatives. Such acts can in fact affect a whole family, clan or state. Because, of *mmusuo*, that is why a disease may sometimes refuse treatment or a person may constantly lose favour or have frequent problems or failures. Hence, to discover the source and cause of *mmusuo* in order to avert it involves divination performed at a shrine of a god.

In Neo-prophetism the concept of the “causal other” of evil and suffering accommodates this Akan idea of *mmusuo*. Consequently, the idea that people suffer as a result of ancestral or personal curses sounds conceptually Akan and is linked to the concept of *mmusuo* in the Akan religious beliefs. It can therefore be said that the motivation to consult prophets regarding the causes of mishaps again shows how this traditional belief influences neo-prophets and their adherents.

Enemy and Family or close relation: Biblical or Cultural Influence?

In this section I endeavour to examine the roots of the concepts of ‘evil’ and ‘enemy’. As discussed in chapter two above, the Akan traditional society is well noted for its communal values. Members are essentially to seek the well-being and welfare of each other and the community as a whole, rather than their own welfare. This is supposed to mean that in the Akan *abusua*, ‘clan’ or ‘family’ community members are not supposed to be at enmity with each other, or regard another as an enemy. Still, it is possible to see or be suspicious of

another person outside of your *abusua* as an enemy, but not so much when the person is part of your own *abusua*.

However, despite the presence of this highly cherished value, there seems to be a great surprise when one examines the concept of enemy in the Akan traditional cultural belief and the type propagated by some Pentecostals in Ghana, most especially the Neo-prophetic branch of Pentecostalism. The enemy more often than not appears to be a member of one's *abusua* 'family', 'household' or a close or remote kinsman. Why does this happen to be so? Where or what is the root cause of this idea in the thought of the Neo-prophetic churches?

As this quotation below commonly used by neo-prophets says:

Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house (Micah 7:5-6).

Or is it an influence from the saying of Jesus below? Since, a similar saying is also found in the New Testament from Jesus' teachings.

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes [enemies] shall be they of his own household (Matthew 10:34-36).

What part do Akan proverbs or sayings have to play in this concept? Themes of the concept of enemy can be found or realised when one examines Akan proverbs. From my research I observed that neo-prophets mostly relate the enemy of a person to a family relation or close friend. Why does this appears to be so? Does it have any influence from the Akan traditional religious beliefs about the concept of enemy or is it from the Bible?

It seems that the reason why the enemy is seen as a family relation or a close relation friend is a result of an influence from the Akan traditional culture. The Bible stories and references appear to be only used to support this traditional belief among neo-prophets. My personal observation of the Akan people and the teaching of the Neo-prophetic sermons and practices regarding the enemy show that the reference of an enemy to a person's family or close friend by neo-prophets is an influence from the Akan culture itself.

For instance my examination of proverbs in the Akan cultures appears to confirm this assertion. In the Akan traditional culture proverbs play an important role in the society. Some importance of proverbs adorn the speech and make it rich and beautiful, bring out the main point of the matter for clear understanding, make an otherwise long statement short, make

listeners pay attention to what is being discussed, and educate and teach morals (cf. Amate 2011).

The Akan have a proverb, *Onyansafo wobu no be, na wonka no asem*, ‘the wise person is spoken to in proverbs, not in speeches’ (Gyekye 1995: 64). This proverb is a significant proverb in the Akan culture. The Akan believe that in speaking to a wise person one need not to engage in lengthy speeches or discussions. This is because the Akan believe that a wise person understands proverbs saturated with immense meaning which conveys in-depth message (See Akrofi 1958; Christaller 1989; Mensah 1966). The wise person must therefore be able to break down and analyse a proverb to get its intended message. It can therefore be said that in the Akan society, the influence of proverbs is pervasive.

Gyekye (1995:63), postulates that proverbs in the Akan tradition are believed to be created by people who have a profound thought. Such proverbs contains philosophical speculations and constitute an important source of Akan ideas or worldviews. This therefore implies that proverbs in the Akan culture form a capsule of ideas. They can reveal a whole thought or beliefs system of the Akan people. In the daily lives of the Akan they refer to relevant proverbs while elucidating concepts or ideas. The Akan proverbs may therefore have been seen as a philosophy of life that offers rational guidance on questions of individual actions and social policy.

From the foregone discussion it can be seen that proverbs have special place in the Akan culture and they also reveal a whole thought or beliefs of the Akan. It can thus, be observed that many Akan proverbs provide an instant insight into a given social, moral, or philosophical situation by presenting a powerful image that simplifies that situation. Hence, I examine some Akan proverbs which appears to reveal that in the Akan traditional cultural beliefs the enemy of a person is held to be a member of one’s *abusua*, ‘family’ or ‘household’ and a close friend. I rely on Rattray’s collection (1916) where I found the following proverbs especially related to my theme:

Ɔtan firi fie,

‘Hatred or envy come from home,’ or ‘source of adversity is one’s own family.’

Aboa bi bekawo a, na ofiri wo tama mu,

‘The animal that will bite you is from your cloth.’

Ɔtamfo benya wo a na efiri wo ankasa wo fi

‘An enemy cannot get you unless he/she is aided by someone from your own family.’

The proverbs above suggests that it is likely that the people who will harm you are those close to you. These proverbs typically suggests that a person's enemy is in his/her own family or household. There is another Akan proverb which conveys a general idea that a person who is close to you, and not necessary your family member, is also likely to harm you. This proverbs is; *Suro nea Oben wo*, 'Fear him who is near [close to] you' (Rattray 1916: 148). In fact, this proverb and those above suggest that it is those who are close to you who can hurt you most because they know how best to do it. Such proverbs are normally what the Akan often use to refer to the enemy of a person being the member of his/her own family or close relation and it is therefore extended to mean that one's friend or a colleague can also be one's enemy.

According to Omenyo and Atiemo (2006: 63), apart from the belief that people's relatives alone or in connection with others can use witchcraft to fight against them, there is also the belief that the neighbours, friends, co-workers and classmates of a person can harm them by the use of evil juju, a curse or work against their interest. It is held that such people can do this by spreading malicious gossip about the victims to significant others. This destroys the person's *anuonyam* (honour/dignity/spiritual attraction). Hence, resulting in the targeted person falling from grace to grass, or fail in life's endeavours and lose favour with significant others. A person's *sunsum*, 'spirit' is also held to be destroyed through the use of charms, and the spread of malicious gossip by such persons. This may result in a person falling seriously ill or even dying.

The belief that a person's enemies are the members of his family or close relations is also illustrated in the following African and Irish proverbs cited by Jon R. Stone (2006: 126-127): "When there is no enemy within, the enemies outside cannot hurt you", an African proverb. "Better fifty enemies outside the house than one within", an Irish proverb. These proverbs are similar to the concept of enemy in Akan traditional culture, most especially in the belief in witchcraft. It is believed that witches outside one's household or family cannot have access to trouble anyone in that family unless there is another witch in that family to consent with and to offer them the approval before they can affect anyone in that family (Omenyo and Atiemo 2006: 62). Otherwise no external witch (enemy) can harm any person within.

Perhaps this is why Onyinah (2002) also based the reference of an enemy as the member of one's family or close relation to the influence of the Akan concept of witchcraft which is

rooted in the Akan religious worldview. Omenyo and Atiemo (2006: 62) posit that the belief in the enemy as a person who believers have cause to suspect of envy and jealousy is at the bottom of the traditional Akan understanding of witchcraft and this is believed to be responsible for doubt and suspicion in the family, especially in the extended family. This assertion supported by some Akan proverbs as those above which tend to show that the Akan believe that the enemy is a member of one's family or one's close friend.

This then indicates that the belief that the enemy of a person is a member of his/her family is rooted in the Akan traditional culture itself and the biblical references only serve as a proof when used by the neo-prophets.

The Bible and concept of enemy in Neo-prophetism

It seems that the above proverbial understanding and concept of witchcraft in the Akan culture makes it is easy for neo-prophets to literally translate the Old Testament scripture Micah 7:5, 6 to mean that the enemy of a person is a literal member of his family. Hence, to them the enemies therefore include human enemies. They are considered agents of darkness who are being used consciously or unconsciously to fight against other people's progress in life. Since, in Neo-prophetism it is believed that prosperity and good health is what God wills for every believer. Therefore, anything contrary to this, for the neo-prophets, is believed to be caused by the enemy. This can be seen in their interpretation of Micah 7:5-6 and it is easier for them to say that Jesus emphasized this scripture when he referred to it in the New Testament (Matthew 10:34-36).

But are neo-prophets totally wrong by this interpretation when they make reference to these scriptures to refer to a person's enemy as a family relation or close friend? Since if one is to consider this scripture as commonly used by neo-prophets one is likely to find out that this observation and claim is found also in the New Testament texts. In the New Testament one can see that the betrayal of Jesus was from Jesus' own group (as it were from his own household or family) (John 6:70-71; 13:21). Thereby a close relation or friend. Even Jesus had said "he who eat with me shall betray me" (Matthew 26:21; Mark 14:18). He also referred to his betrayer as, "friend" (Matthew 26:50).

Also, neo-prophets will normally refer to the story of Joseph as a typical case (Genesis 37). Joseph was hated by his own brothers, the members of his own family. The brothers of Joseph had even plotted to kill him, had not one of them, Judah, brought the idea to sell him. So from the analysis of the scriptures and stories it appears the neo-prophets' teaching of the

enemy is from the Bible. The enemy is really a member of one's family or close friend. One must therefore be careful with those who are closely related to him/her, even as Micah 7:5-6 admonishes. So this seems to testify that the Bible maybe used to support the idea that a family relation or a close friend will definitely be the enemy of a person.

Dealing with the enemy:

From the above the picture that neo-prophets seems to give does not tell the whole story. Because the people who were hated or betrayed by their enemies pray against their enemies or wished them evil. Let us use the story of Jesus and Joseph as those are the typical cases used by neo-prophets. From the above analysis it is clear that the Bible seems to support the idea that a person's enemy is a close relation or friend. However, where I think the Bible and the neo-prophets' concept of enemy diverge is the reaction of the victim to the so-called enemy. In Neo-prophetism it is common to hear neo-prophets inciting their clients to pray against their enemies to die or for something evil to befall them. This kind of prayer is referred to as imprecatory prayers by Scholars Omenyo and Arthur (2013: 54). Imprecatory prayers according to them is the kind of prayers that demand divine retribution, vengeance or evil against one's enemies.

Below is an example of such typical prayer from a neo-prophet:

Prophet: ...Look into the face of the person standing beside you and whatever I say likewise to the person. I say even in this church you can get enemies. In the church, even in church you can get enemies. Not only in Obinim's church, but every church in the world. When you go there, and you attend church there, every church in Ghana and in the whole world... I say you can make enemies there. You can find/get somebody there who does not like you. I said look into the face of the person beside you. Say whatever you want to befall me shall come upon you as well.

Congregation: (repeats the prophet's words).

Prophet: Who should I go to and look at his/her face...? Well let me go to my wife. (He now says to the wife: As you have styled yourself looking at me, Florence...) Now look at the face of your neighbour and say... whatever you want to befall me, the same thing should come upon you.

Congregation: (repeats the prophet's words).

Prophet: if you want me to get much blessings, the same should come upon you. **Congregation:** (repeats the prophet's words).

Prophet: if you want any evil to befall me the same should come upon you.

Congregation: (repeats the prophet's words).

Prophet: if you want God to protect me, he should protect you too.

Congregation: (repeats the prophet's words).

Prophet: but if you wish/desire me evil, it should return to you, yourself.

Congregation: (repeats the prophet's words).

Prophet: strike/hit the floor with palm and say "Allah"...

Congregation: (repeats the prophet's words).

Prophet: say my enemies!

Congregation: (repeats the prophet's words).

Prophet: I will not pat/pumper you at all.

Congregation: (repeats the prophet's words).

Prophet: say any person...

Congregation: (repeats the prophet's words).

Prophet: if he/she is a ‘mallam’ he or she is a person. I said, say any person. If you say so you include everybody. If he/she is a traditional priest.
Congregation: he is a person.
Prophet: if he/she is a pastor
Congregation: he is a person.
Prophet: if he/she is a musician.
Congregation: he is a person.
Prophet: if he/she is a D.J.
Congregation: he is a person.
Prophet: if he/she is a presenter...
Congregation: he is a person.
Prophet: if he/she is a police, or a soldier...
Congregation: he is a person.
Prophet: who else..?

But the biblical text did not say Joseph sought the death of his enemies, his brothers as it were. In fact he forgave them and gave them food to eat and accepted them as his brothers (Genesis 42:25; 43:26-34 44:1). He even, pleaded with them to forgive themselves and told them it was the will of God (Genesis 45). He spoke kindly with them and also nourished them (Genesis 50:15-21). Jesus also though he made reference to the scripture in Micah 7:5-6. According to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, he however taught his followers to love their enemies and also pray for those who despitefully uses them and also to be merciful (Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27, 35-36). He also taught his followers to give others the best part of everything (Matthew 5:38-42) and not to fear he who is able to kill the flesh but cannot kill the soul (Matthew 10:38). In fact, he also loved his disciples even without any discrimination. He never prayed against Judas his enemy as it were even when he knew that he was the one to betray him in the end. This is not so in the neo-prophets’ teaching about the enemy and how to relate with the enemy.

Omenyo and Arthur (2013: 54) assert that imprecatory prayers are well known in African traditional religions, especially in curses that are associated with libation. The Akan traditional religion is not an exception. Hence, it seems that the kind of imprecatory prayers in Neo-prophetism is an influence from the Akan traditional culture than from the Bible. This is because though, it becomes clear that in Micah 7:5-6 there is a reference to a person’s enemy being the members of his own household, it never admonished people to pray against their enemies. Neither did Jesus according to the Gospels who referred to this same scripture in the New Testament, admonish his followers to pray against their enemies. Jesus rather admonished his followers to love their enemies and pray for them as discussed above.

Customarily, Omenyo and Atiemo (2006: 63) posit that in the Akan traditional culture witches are held to be *atamfo*, ‘enemies’. Thus, they are seen as a threat to the good life that God has intended for his people and therefore deserve to be destroyed. This leads to

pronouncement of curses of disgrace, barrenness, and death on the so-called enemies during the religious rite of libation. Perhaps, this is why Neo-prophetic churches are accustomed to imprecatory prayers. Therefore, dwelling on some selected scriptures from the Psalms (such as Psalm 35:1-4 and Psalm 109:1-2, 5-19), Neo-prophetic preachers teach that the enemy does not deserve to live, let alone prosper. Their use of imprecatory prayers makes their teaching and practices on the concept of enemy tend to look more like the Traditional Akan Religious' teachings on *Ɔtamfo* than the Bible, especially the New Testament teachings.

Generally, in Ghanaian Pentecostal circles, witchcraft is seen as the source or cause of evil and suffering. Many Pentecostals believe that misfortune is closely connected to the activities of witchcraft, sorcery, bad medicine, and evil activities that always work against less powerful people (Onyinah 2012: 57). This belief is not different from the traditional belief. In this regard, this Pentecostal beliefs demonstrate how Akan traditional religious worldviews continues to influence the Pentecostal understanding and practice of Christianity. Especially among Neo-prophetic churches. It is the fear of witchcraft activities that underpins the search for and use of traditional sources of protection and security among Neo-prophetic churches' adherents. It also, depicts that in Neo-prophetic Christianity in Ghana, the reality of witchcraft and demons is not a savage superstition.

Some scholars claim that the Akan perception that witchcraft offers an explanatory tool for existence of evil is similar to many claims and practices of Pentecostal common believers (Akropong 2005; Onyinah 2002a; Mbiti 1970), since, in the Akan Traditional Religious context curses of barrenness, death, and disgrace associate the *atamfo* with slanders when libation is poured to the ancestors and the gods. It therefore becomes clear that the imprecatory prayers and curses pronounced on the so-called enemies by the neo-prophets and their adherents which are based on some selected scriptures especially from the Psalms is an influence from the Akan traditional culture. Thus, there seems to be a continuity of the traditional Akan religious practice of pronouncing curses on the so-called enemies of believers in the Neo-prophetic churches. This can be seen in the prayers Neo-prophetic churches where curses are pronounced on their enemies during prayers.

In fact, the uses of certain scriptural quotations by neo-prophets during prayers which are aimed at destroying the *atamfo*, 'enemies,' raise questions about their understanding of Jesus'

teaching on love for the neighbour, principally love for the enemy (Matthew 5:43-48). For instance when neo-prophets ask their clients to pray for their enemies to die or whatever evil they have plotted against them to return to the enemy. According to Gifford (2004: 93), it is common to hear neo-prophet say to their clients: “Somebody is going to die... If you refuse to kill them, they will kill you.” Members can therefore be asked to pray against their enemy even if they are their parents whatsoever.

... if members of your family, even your mother, are responsible for your ills and are hurt by your counter-attack, don't pray for them; Let them die, let them die, let them die! Sometimes God chooses to throw both the horse and the rider into the sea (Gifford 2004: 103).

This kind of imprecatory as Gifford has documented above seems to confirm that in both the traditional and Neo-prophetic churches' worldviews the malevolent nature of witches leads to the conception that witches are wicked agents who must be avoided and eliminated, since their existence is hostile to human well-being. They both believe that the activities of witches obstructs the fulfilment of destiny.

According to Quayesi-Amakye (2013: 77-78), Pentecostal belief in witchcraft is in every manner like the traditional religious beliefs. Apart from the above similarities Pentecostals also believe in that the ability to perform witchcraft may be acquired through birth, inheritance, purchase, or contact with certain objects or through dreams. The belief that witches possess *ahoba*, 'witch-spirit animal' which carry anti-social activities against other humans is common to both religious worldviews. The only point of departure in the belief in witchcraft in both worldviews is the belief in *bayiborɔ* or *bayikwasea*, that is, 'destructive witchcraft' or 'foolish witchcraft' and *bayipa*, 'good witchcraft.'

Pentecostals in general are not of the view that there are two types of witchcraft; *bayiborɔ/bayikwasea* and *bayipa*. They cannot conceive of a good witch who may help family members succeed, prosper, protect them, and even enable them to excel at their education. It is not difficult for Pentecostals to think of witchcraft as not intending evil, even against their own children. That is why they pray against them or wish them evil even if they are their parents, as cited from Gifford above. All witchcraft according to Pentecostal way of thinking is *bayiborɔ* or *bayikwasea*, which causes setbacks (see Quayesi-Amakye 2013: 77-78).

From the above discussions it may seem that the imprecatory prayers lead to physical violence or attack on the enemy. Though during my research some of my interviewees attested that there have been instances where there have been physical violence on the enemy.

It is however rare to find victims physically attacking their enemies. Though, the belief seems to be responsible for the mistrust, suspicion and tension in families and among friends and co-workers as some of my interviewees noted. They hardly confirmed that there have been physical violence as a result of this belief. Some of my respondents attest to the fact that there have been instances where people have shed-off their responsibility to their families and also not visiting them as they customarily does. Physical assault on enemies is rare.

Perhaps this also is an influence from the Akan traditional religion, where the strong belief in the potency of spiritual power in dealing with the enemy means that the tensions developed through their belief in the enemy hardly leads to physical violence. Since in Akan Traditional culture there is a concept which forbids the shedding of the blood of witches (Rattray 1929: 313). This concept might have been based on the well-established belief that witches could only bewitch members of their own families.

The Akan *Wotan woni a, womfa no mma dɔm*, “Even if you hate your mother, you do not hand her over to the enemy” (Rattray 1927:151). The mother is the source of one’s own life. It also held that a person is connected to the *abusua*, ‘family or ‘clan’ and the *Nananom Nsamanfo*, ‘ancestors’ through *mogya*, ‘blood’ which in the Akan tradition is held to be given by or comes from the mother (see chapter two). Hence handing one’s mother to the enemy or say harming her yourself is just like handing yourself to the enemy or killing yourself. This proverb can be explained to mean that though an enemy will be in a family it will not be easy for such a person to be handed over to outsiders to be humiliated or persecuted or for one to kill such a person, because killing of a clan member is a taboo in the Akan traditional culture. This is because, the Akan believes that *mogya yeduru sen nsu*, ‘blood is thicker than water’, or *mogya ye sunsum*, ‘blood is spirit’.

Once you are related to a person through *mogya*, ‘blood’ you are one with the person and it is difficult to physically harm or attack that person or betray such a person evil he/she is evil. It will therefore be difficult to kill a member of one’s family, such as a mother or a sister.

Omenyo and Atiemo (2006: 63), therefore posit that people resort to ritual means to protect themselves or to neutralize the effect of the enemy’s diabolic activities. Although, occasionally, accusations have led to heightened anxieties that resulted in violent attacks on the alleged witches. However, it is by ritual means mostly that some Ghanaians seek to protect themselves from the destructive effects of the attacks of the enemy on them.

Quayesi-Amakye (2013: 90-106) discussed extensively how in Neo-propheticism believers seek to have victory and freedom over the diabolic activities of their enemies or be delivered from satanic forces or evil spirits. He designated this act as prophetic rituals or practices. These are rituals of liberation done through what is commonly known among neo-prophets or peripheral prophetism as spiritual warfare. This occurs in the context of militaristic songs, prayers and prophetic practices/ritualism. Prophetic ritualism or practice are rituals which is the main way in which the enemy and evil or satanic forces are dealt with may include the sales of anointing oils, blessed water, blessed herbal substances, deliverance (exorcism) prophetic declaration and rituals.

According to Quayesi-Amakye (2013:90-91), prophetic rituals are believed to put “a stop to the nonsense” of wicked forces. The purpose of carrying out such rituals is for spiritual protection, promotion, success, and security against enemies. According to Quayesi-Amakye, prophetic rituals flourishes on the understanding that victory in Christ is basically spiritual. That is to say the freedom through Christ is into a meaningful life which assumes spiritual characteristics. This freedom may be oral and involve “sending back” evil plots to enemies.

Omenyo and Atiemo (2006:63) also assert that the stress on the enemy as the cause of people’s problems in life is a matter of emphasis and reinterpretation by the Neo-prophetic churches. This is because belief in evil spirits, including witchcraft is recognized in both traditional religion and almost all the strands of renewal in Ghanaian Christianity. The rise of certain novel rituals in the Neo-prophetic churches such as whipping the enemy in prayer, and clapping of hands by believers in prayer as a symbolic way of slapping the ‘enemy’ are both ways of dealing with alleged enemies. Quayesi-Amakye (2013: 94) also posits that hand clapping supernaturally neutralises, subdues, and punishes enemies.

I observed during my research that in these prophetic rituals/practices, the congregation declares their intention before the prayer. The declaration often involves calling on evil such as diseases and problems such as barrenness and impotence to return to the enemy who is believed to be the cause of their problems in life. The members of the congregation can be seen walking about or stamping their feet while praying and clapping their hands. They use certain symbolic or formulaic sayings such as: “Lord Jesus, as I clap my hands and pray, may it become military missiles against my enemies in my father’s clan, my mother’s clan, my workplace, my residence...” These prayers or invocations are held to be “spiritual Bulldozers

or Dangerous prayers” intended to “calling down thundering fire” to deflate and destroy the camouflaged activities of enemies (cf. Quayesi-Amakye 2013: 94).

In certain cases too, they call on the very things planned by the enemy against them to go back to those who sent the evil spells. In Neo-prophetic circles this is popularly known ‘back to sender.’ An example is the scenario documented by Gifford (2004) above. However, below is a typical declaration in such prayers documented by (Omenyo and Atiemo 2006: 64-65 and Atakora 2013: 46-48):

*Awurade e,
Atamfo biara a,
Wɔ mpeseebesi me yie no,
Se me bo me nsa mu bɔ mpae a,
Ma apranaa/ogya nte ngu wɔn so,
Ma animguase a wɔ hyehyɛe maa me no
Nsan nkɔ wɔn so
Memma ensi wɔn yie da,
Se wɔ yɛ m'abusuafo o,
Se wɔ yɛ me nnamfo o,
Twifa wɔn nyinaa so
Wɔ Yesu din mu.*

Lord,
Every enemy,
Who do not want me to prosper,
When I clap my hands and pray,
May they be struck by thunder/fire;
May any disgrace set for me go back to the sender;
Let it not be well with them;
Whether they are my family members,
Whether they are my friends;
Or whoever my enemies are
Let them all be crushed
In Jesus' name.

Sometimes the human enemy may also be symbolically shot or caned in some cases. The following is an example:

*Atamfo biara a
Moreteetee me
Na mompe se ebesi me yie no
Na mo de animguase, ohaw ne amaneeato me so no
Me bɔ motuo – pee/poo!
WoYesu din mu*

The enemies
That are disturbing me
Those who do not want me to prosper
And therefore work against my prosperity
Those that want me to be disgrace/dishonoured
Those that have burdened my life with problems
I shoot you *pee/poo!* [*pee/poo* is an imitation of the sound of a gunshot]
In Jesus' name

I witnessed these symbolic way of dealing with the human enemy in most of the Neo-prophetic churches I visited during my research. Omenyo and Atiemo (2006: 65) postulate that there are testimonies among members of Neo-prophetic churches of the effectiveness of such symbolic acts in prayer. They claim that there are testimonies among Neo-prophetic adherents of how such prayer often leads to bodily injury or sometimes death of suspected enemies. I witnessed such testimonies after such symbolic acts of prayer in most of the Neo-prophetic churches where I went to conduct my research. One man testified of his mother who he had least expected to be the human enemy behind his failures in life, falling down from her bed, crippled and paralysed as a result of praying such a symbolic prayer against his enemies. This confirms what Omenyo and Atiemo also said that, sometimes, “people least suspected to be one’s enemies are believed to have suffered the material result of such specific symbolic acts of violence, thus exposing such people as one’s secret enemies.”

Why do people or Neo-prophetic churches resort to such ritual means which leads to bodily injuries or sometimes death of the suspected enemy, even though they will not physically attack them? I think this also has something to do with the Akan religious beliefs. This can be seen in the proverbs below:

Ɔtan nni aduru
There is no medicine to cure hatred (Rattray, 1927).

In this regard the proverb assume hatred/envy to be a chronic disease which has no cure. Therefore, when one hates another person it will definitely be manifested no matter how the person tries to hide it. It can also be explained to mean that every person in one way or the other has some sort of hatred in him/her. When someone hates you since hatred has no cure, it will be impossible to get the person to like you, no matter how much or what one tries to do to please the person who hates him or her. This can be confirmed by another proverb in Akan which says:

Akokɔ sa kyeree akroma a, ennye no fe.
No matter how the hen tries to dance for the hawk, the hawk does not appreciate it.

The hawk will catch the hen and its chicks whenever it has the opportunity no matter how the hen tries to please it, because the hawk has hatred for the hen. In fact Prophet Ebenezer Darko (personal interview, 2015) opines that the concept of enemy stems out of hatred or envy. He says sometimes it is not because of what one might have done against someone that may cause one to attract the hatred or envy of that person, but one’s success in life or wealth that one may have can attract envy or hatred him/herself, thereby having enemies. Though,

Prophet Isaac Owusu Bempa (sermon, 2015) agrees to this observation made by Prophet Darko he also believes that though one may be poor or a ‘nobody’ yet such a person can attract the envy or hatred of others. This is because the enemy might foresee the future of such a person to be bright, though the person for now might be poor.

From the above proverbs it can be seen why prophetic rituals will be sought to neutralize the diabolic activities of enemy even though such rituals may lead to bodily injuries or even the death of the so-called enemy as testimonies among Neo-prophetic churches has shown.

Because, one other proverb in the Akan traditional culture says:

Dua a enya wo a ebewɔ w’ani no, yetu asee; yensensene ano
The stick that would pierce your eyes, is uprooted; we do not sharpen it.

Though this proverb in a general sense speaks about the attitude or practice of getting rid of potential dangers early, rather than encouraging them to grow. Just as one will not sharpen the stick that would like to pierce his eye, but uproots it. This proverb is likely to be interpreted as getting rid of an enemy and his attack before that enemy gets you. In the religious rite of libation, *apaeɛ*, such as the one below, it can be observed that *mmusu*, ‘evil’ sent by an enemy against a community or family are prayed to be sent back to the enemy. Or whatever ‘evil’ an enemy has thought of sending against anybody or group is asked to return to that person.

Me Nananom Nsamanfo, nne ye Awukudae (or Akwesidae, as the case may be), mo mmegye ɔto nni, na mo mma kurow yi nye yiye; na momma mma nwo mma, na Nnipa a ewɔ kurow yi mu nyina nya sika. Ma w’koa ho nye no den, ma ɔman yi nyina ho nye wɔn den. Mma mmusu bi mma kurow yi so; Na obiara a ɔmppe kurow yi yiye no mma ɔnnye yiye da.

Spirits of my ancestors, today is Awukudae, (or Akwesidae as the case may be), come and eat Ɔtɔ (mashed yam mixed with palm oil): Let this town prosper: let those who bear children do so and let all the people in this town become rich. Let your servant be in good health. Let the whole state be in good health; Keep evil away from our town. Let anyone who wishes evil for this town suffer evil (Atiemo 1995: 39).

This kind of prayer can be seen in the pattern of Neo-prophetic type of prayer often termed as imprecatory prayers and the prophetic rituals as those in the above. The above proverb can therefore be used to warn people to get rid of their enemy before the enemy gets rid of them. It is therefore not surprising when neo-prophets make statements such as “Somebody is going to die tonight... if you refuse to kill them, they will kill you.” They will incite member to pray against their enemies who may be held to be responsible for their illness, as a counter-attack to their attacks. Even if such enemies are their family member (cf. Gifford 2004: 93, 105).

From the above the symbolic act of prayer (imprecatory prayers) as said before seems to be an influence of the declarations or pronouncements which are made in the traditional prayer when libation is poured to the ancestors and gods. Their prophetic ritual appears to be a revival and expansion of the practice of using material items (*asuman*, ‘charms and amulets’) for healing and exorcism, protection, success and security against evil intents in the Akan traditional religion. The Spiritual Churches Studied by Baeta (1962/2004) are also noted for the use of material or sanctified items such as lavender called ‘florida water’ used by the Spiritual Churches in prayer. But the way it is used by neo-prophets today is so elaborated. It stretches to the use of other items like lime juice, porridge, toilet soap and handkerchief which they consecrate and sell (cf. Omenyo and Atiemo 2006: 66-67). These were not used by the Spiritual churches studied by Baeta.

So it can be said from all the above analysis of the Neo-prophetic practices that there is a direct link between Neo-prophetic beliefs and practices and the traditional Akan religious beliefs and practice. I also argue that their source of authority or influence is not the Bible but the Akan traditional culture. Their interpretation of the concepts of enemy and evil and divinatory consultation as it were from the Bible seems convincing but there they do more of biblical literalism and proof texting.

According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005: 215), proof texting is “the practise of using selected biblical texts to support arguments, regardless of the literary or historical context.” It seems neo-prophets in Ghana in their hermeneutics of the Bible select texts in isolation, treating them almost exclusively as propositional truths. Biblical literalism is also the art of interpreting the Bible literally. Charges of literal interpretation and over-spiritualisation have been levelled against Pentecostal hermeneutics, particularly Neo-prophetic preachers. This is because according to Omenyo and Arthur (2013: 51) many African Christians regard the Bible as God’s inspired word and the final authority in all matters relating to faith and conduct.

Adherents of Neo-prophetic churches are no exception. Omenyo and Arthur (2013:51-52) argue that Pentecostals in particular believe that they boldly reveal the truth in the Bible and make it relevant to the critical human condition in Africa. Hence, Pentecostals seek for the best opportunity or available means and principles for concretising their messages in the everyday lives of the fold. It appears that this is what neo-prophets are doing in the hermeneutics. Omenyo (2006: 221) asserts that in Ghana, charismatics are often accused of being

fundamentalists, in the sense that they interpret the Bible literally. Larbi (2001: 32) also postulates that biblical literalism is one characteristics of charismatic churches.

It appears from the hermeneutics and use of some selected texts and stories from the Bible that the concept of enemy as proposed by neo-prophet shows that they do biblical literalism and proof texting. This to me seems to be more of a cultural influence. One can then say that neo-prophets rather selects some quotations from the Bible to support their teaching on the enemy.

From the above it may appear that these do not understand or believe in forgiveness. But a personal conversation with one Neo-prophetic church member (Harriet Dogbe, personal interview July, 2015) and the neo-prophets (Antwi, personal interview July 2015) who I engaged shows that they do. However, I found out that their forgiveness will depend on the attitude of the so-called enemy. If he/she is willing to repent, then they will have mercy and pardon him/her and pray for his/her deliverance. In this case alleged witches (human enemies) will be shown mercy, love and considered as victims who need deliverance. On the other hand, if the enemy is not willing to repent then they will also not allow him or her to live. They will normally refer to the scripture which says “suffer not a witch to live” to deal with such enemies (Exodus 22:18). This is because witches who are generally seen as enemies are held to possess a malicious nature. This therefore, leads to the conception of them as wicked agents who must be avoided or eliminated. Also, because the so-called enemies in question attack the most valuable natural properties of people, it makes them enemies who should not be allowed to reproduce them or live in peace until they forsake their evil ways or are completely destroyed. Perhaps, that is why they are dealt with in very radical ritualistic ways even though such rituals are held to be dangerous.

The socio-religious implication of this concept of enemy

The concept of enemy and manner of dealing with the enemy appears to be problematic. One elder whom I interviewed from one of the classical Pentecostal churches tells how people who came to him from Neo-prophetic churches to his prayer camp testified of how they have shed off their responsibilities to their families and had some kind of hatred for them. This is because the neo-prophets they have visited accused and named such family members as the cause of their failure in life.

One neo-prophet (Eric Addo, personal interview July 2015) also testified that the concept of enemy is problematic and he had come to this realization ten years ago when he had revealed the enemy of one of his client. He said what happened after he has disclosed the client’s enemy

has made him vow not to reveal the enemy of a person to people anymore. He do not agree that people should pray against their enemies. But they should be shown mercy because, the enemy to him actually is the evil spirit that possesses and uses the person to do evil and not the person per se. He also agrees that the concept of enemy in Neo-prophetism is an influence from the Akan traditional culture.

The suppositions about the concept of enemy and how the enemy is treated implies that: (i) the enemies are human persons who are in one's family or close friends, (ii) people will live in fear and suspicion of one another, (iii) all failures and mishaps in life will be attributed to an enemy, (iv) any act of mismanagement or carelessness is the responsibility of an enemy; (v) all sorts of bad behavioural practices will be attributed to the scheme of enemies. This whole concept causes confusion and suspicion among family members and friends or even members in the same church, since everyone will have the cause to suspect or see each member as a potential enemy.

Therefore, any kind of mishap, failure or disease will call for consultation from a powerful or spiritual-person for supernatural knowledge of the causation of the problem. The consequences of this assumption is that it leaves room for dubious people to deceive the populace and cause confusion in society. For instance, when a prognosis given includes naming a family member, which it often does, it creates family problems. Undeniably, it can be said that the concept of enemy usually becomes the source of family tension, which often causes some family members to shed-off their responsibilities towards their other members especially those who are alleged to be the enemies of such people. Also, the kind of symbolic or ritualistic prayers which often results in the bodily injuries and death of suspected enemies can lead to the extinction of a family if care is not taken.

Neo-prophets claim if one does not have enemies then one is a useless and it is a sign that such a person has no bright future, like in the case of Joseph. It is commonly believed that anyone who attracts enemies has a bright future. Then it is good to have enemies in this sense. Why then do neo-prophets pray for their enemies to die or something evil to befall them? It can also be seen that in both Akan traditional religion and Pentecostalism there is a search for a "cosmological balance of power." This is balance according to Larbi (2001: 426) is made possible through the provision of a supernatural succour outside the believer.

In Pentecostalism, Larbi (2001: 425) posits that the supernatural succour is in Jesus Christ, the redeemer of humanity. Through his redemption the believer is seated far above all intimidating

satanic forces. For instance a sermon of one prophet analysed below the prophet said "... understand that your enemies can plot against you. But God will not let it come to pass." If this is a core belief in Pentecostalism why then do Neo-prophetic churches seem to fear the diabolic works of their human enemies? Perhaps this is an indication of a lack of faith in the succouring power of Christ or their traditional beliefs still have influence on their faith in Christ or power of God to thwart the plots of their enemies.

Analysing a Neo-prophetic sermon on enemy

This section is an analysis of a sermon by a neo-prophet (see appendix 1a for my translation of the sermon). The following are the summary of the main points emphasized by the prophet. I made an attempt to indicate which aspects/parts of the book that the prophet emphasizes and those that he leaves out. I also attempted to state why he did that vis-à-vis his audience. In the sermon of the prophet it can be seen that the prophet's main interest is in the phrase, "Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy." The prophet did not touch on the story of the Jews in his sermon: what incident brought the Jews to Babylon or how and when they came there. Nonetheless he refers to the story of Queen Esther and the Mordechai and Haman the enemy of the Jews to show that one needs favour and spiritual backing no matter how experienced one might be in life. He also used the story to show that one can attract enemies whether he/she is a non-entity like in the case of Mordechai or has a good social standing.

It appears to me that the prophet only selected these phrases and aspects of the story from the book of Esther to emphasize his point. Though he did not state why he did that, but it seems he is not interested in biblical exegesis or that he knows nothing about it. However, to address some of the existential needs of his audience he selected the portion of the text that stresses or highlights his points and also appears to explain the situation of his audience. He therefore referred to the story of Joseph to drive home his thought. This suggests or confirms the use of proof texting in Neo-prophetism as discussed above.

From the sermon the following can be stated as the main points emphasized by the prophet: Firstly, God can make the plots of a person's enemies vain. Secondly, the favour of God will shine upon a believer enabling him/her to prosper despite the circumstances. Thirdly, the prophet indicated from the story above that people can attract enemies even if one does nothing wrong to people. That is to say an innocent or free-minded person who thinks no evil

for other can attract enemies. Hence, not everyone that smiles with a person is a good person. Fourthly, he made it clear that it is normal for a rich person to attract enemies but is not just ordinary for a poor and dejected person to attract enemies. Hence, should such a person attract enemies then it shows that other people can have insight into other people's lives and foresee their future. According to him this is possible through witchcraft in a person's family or an observant person who studies the attitude of a person carefully. Fifthly, the prophet made it clear that if a person has enemies, then it is a sign that God has a purpose for such a person's life. However, a person who has no enemies is a useless or miserable person and has no bright future. The prophet also stated that a person will be successful depending on who his/her advisor is. He further made it clear that the operation of angels is vital in the life of believers. Since, they bestow the favour of God upon people who are qualified: who is a virgin, is fair, and has beauty.

He constantly pointed out that a person needs spiritual backings or support in order to be successful in life. That is to say apart from a person having favour with God and also having some experiences in life one still needs a spiritually inclined person to intercede on his/her behalf to facilitate his success story. Nonetheless the prophet also pointed out that a person must be well organised and prepared to face life and must not build false hopes or have some kind of a bias faith. According to him failure in a believer's life is not an excuse. There is still an opportunity for one to make headways in life once one has the great God on his/her side. Believers therefore need to strive for excellence and do more than those who do not have the great God.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This project has attempted to examine the Neo-prophetic teachings of enemy, evil and the practice of divinatory consultation and shown that it is an influence from the Akan traditional cultural and religious beliefs. This became clear after an examination of the Akan traditional culture and religious belief was done and compared with the teachings and practices of the Neo-prophetic churches. The study first examined the Akan traditional culture, then prophetism in Ghana. It shows that the phenomenon of prophetism exists in the Akan traditional culture as divination. The early African prophets such as Wade Harris adopted the traditional idea of divination into Christianity as prophetism, to fill the gap between the traditional spirituality and Christianity as a result of their understanding of the African religious quest to know the future, destiny or the source of a problem. The Western Christian missionaries who came to Ghana, though profited from the Christian version of prophetism displayed by the African prophets, they did not put into practice prophetism in their churches due to the association of the practice with the indigenous religion. They therefore attempted to expunge prophetism in both the traditional and Christian forms from their converts but failed. This made them irrelevant to the African, particularly Ghanaian Christians.

The study has also shown that prophetism is a tough phenomenon in Africa which cannot be easily erased. It reoccurs time after time, particularly in Ghana. A continuity of the practice of prophetism can be established from the indigenous religion to the current renewal movements, due to the intrinsic nature of the phenomenon in African religious worldview. This phenomenon, the recurrent nature of prophetism is now seen in the African indigenous churches, Classical Pentecostal churches and the current Pentecostal renewal, Neo-prophetism in Ghana. Hence, prophetism, which was shunned by Western missionary churches have taken on a new form as Neo-prophetism and it is now being accepted and practised by many Ghanaians.

Furthermore, the study has given a history of Neo-prophetism and also discussed some of the teachings and practices that are emphasized by them such the concept of enemy, prophetic guidance (*akwankyerε*) and divinatory consultation (*abisa*) and also the Pentecostal understanding of salvation. It has been shown that these teachings and practices of the neo-

prophets are influenced from the Akan traditional culture and religious beliefs. The Neo-prophetic movement is a reflection of African Christianity. It is currently experiencing an era that makes room for the prophetic ministry or the style of ministry that allows the ability to foretell hidden things and future events about persons or a group. The neo-prophets believe that they have answers to all problems and have power to perform extra-ordinary feats. They claim to know and can tell the sources and causes of the woes and fortunes of a person and offer directives to prevent misfortune through what is called the prophetic ritual or practices. The neo-prophets seem to understand and take seriously the worldview of their people. These directives and prophetic rituals are however not done for free; there are charges allotted to them.

The study has shown the problems associated with the prophetic phenomenon and shown how the phenomenon is a challenge to the Christian and Pentecostal councils in Ghana and the Ghanaian public as a whole. The study also analysed a sermon by prophets and shows how some of his statements are influenced by the Akan religious worldviews.

Findings

The study examined prophetism in the Akan traditional culture, its variant in the African Indigenous Churches and the current Pentecostal renewal; Neo-prophetism in Ghana. It examined briefly prophetism but considered Neo-prophetism in detail. Under prophetism we noticed that the earlier prophets were more or less non-denominational in the sense that they did not establish churches for themselves. They could be described as itinerant evangelists who moved from one village to the other converting people to Christianity, chiefly to the mission-established churches.

Although the mission-established churches were sometimes sceptical about the style of ministries of these prophets, yet they took advantage of the mass movement that emerged as a result of the work of the prophets which led to an increment in the number of converts who came into their various churches. Despite the odds attached to Neo-prophetism in Ghana, the phenomenon continues to attract sections of the Ghanaian society including people of low and high social status who shunned it in the past. This is partly because the prophets are, in a way, able to assist those who approach them for spiritual help. People who go to them seem to have their problems solved or minimized. It is better to have one's problem solved or minimized than to keep on wallowing in it without any solution. The people also seem to have a gap filled

in their lives when they go to the neo-prophets who seem to understand the traditional worldview of the people and give them something similar to it in Christianity.

The study found that Neo-prophetism should be considered as a form of renewal in Pentecostalism Christianity in Ghana. It should therefore be considered as a movement that needs attention and direction. Hence, it is important to check and control the phenomenon rather than undermine and reject it since it is filling a vacuum that was left unfilled by the other Pentecostal and charismatic renewal movements in Ghana.

Neo-prophetism however creates problems. Some of their teachings and practices such the concept of *Ɔtamfo* is resulting in the breakdown of some family ties and interpersonal relationships since it creates hatred and suspicions for the next person. For example when person is told that a family member or a friend or co-tenant, or worker is behind their problems in life. Mostly in the family settings it results in the withdrawal of family responsibilities, complete cut-off from the family, and even in the murder of the suspected relative.

This is a major problem confronting the Neo-prophetic churches in Ghana. Although the I did not come across such incidence in the study, it will do a lot of good to the Christian and Pentecostal councils in Ghana if religious authorities come out and declare their stand on the teachings and practices of the phenomenon and also educate the Christian community and the general public about the phenomenon. This will help prevent any ‘dubious’ individuals or a group from bringing any form of teachings and practices which may be contrary to the biblical teachings. There must be a way to make sure that the neo-prophets acquire some kind of theological studies and also be made to belong to one of the council overseeing bodies so as to control their activities.

Notwithstanding some problems such as extortion of money, engaging prophetic rituals, allegations of obtaining spiritual powers from traditional priests and competitions or challenge of power among neo-prophets and publicly insulting ministers of the gospel associated with the prophetic ministry, the study found that neo-prophets will survive the future so long as they continue to provide answers or solutions and directives (healing for the sick, relief for the distressed, deliverance for the captive) to their stranded clients in their problems. Though there are and may be theological and liturgical challenges to be confronted with, if the contemporary prophets are able to continue to provide solutions to the problems of their peoples, their ministries shall survive. It is however, the responsibility of the council overseeing bodies such as the Christian Council and the Ghana Pentecostal councils to come out with the necessary

responses or answers to the theological and liturgical challenges posed to them by Neo-prophetism.

I observed in the study that Neo-prophetism is a phenomenon in contemporary times, which emphasizes and indicates the re-visitation of a form of Christianity that specializes in the ministry to spiritual and socio-economic needs of adherents or people. This is an attractive feature to be identified with in Ghana. It can be said that Neo-prophetism accentuates the fact that the worldview of a people impacts on all aspects of their lives (religious, social, economic and political). Neo-prophetism studied in this work is an influence enormously of the beliefs of traditional Akan worldview.

However, I would like to also indicate that though it can be observed from the older works and this current work that the messages of neo-prophets centre mainly on the individual's well-being, in that the neo-prophets believe and maintain that any experience of pain and suffering, especially ill-health and poverty, in a person's life is not of God. Prosperity, which is understood in terms of good health and acquisition of abundant wealth and the best way of dealing with problems such as ill-health and poverty is to identify one's *atamfo*, 'enemies' who may be a close relative or neighbours. These *atamfo* may totally be destroyed through prayers and/or prophetic direction (*akwankyerε*) and rituals.

This kind of Neo-prophetic messages truly advocate and revisit a form of Christianity that focusses in ministering to the spiritual needs of its adherents. In this regard Neo-prophetism emphasises the fact that the worldview of a people influences all aspects of their lives. It therefore clearly shows that neo-prophets are under the influence of the Akan Traditional culture and religious worldviews. However, though there are still instance of such messages and practices in Neo-prophetic churches, the analysis of the sermon of the prophet above and the interviews with some of the neo-prophets and the adherent I encountered suggests to me that neo-prophets are refining their theologies on the concept of enemy. Though, it seems hard to totally avoid the idea of attributing pain and suffering to causes outsider one's self, neo-prophets seems to be finding some more scientific explanations to mishaps in people's lives, such as the lack of preparing and planning for and in life. People not having 'spiritual backings' may also a reason why people may fail or have problems in life.

I will conclude my findings by saying that the study was not done without any difficulty. It was a very difficult task for me to acquire knowledge about the phenomenon under investigation. The Neo-prophetic churches I visited did not have much materials like literature outline their teachings and practices, the history of the church and also video and tape recordings of their previous sermons. Some were also suspicious of me and labelled me as a fraudster and a journalist in disguise. I was not allowed to record the church services of the churches I visited. Even those who promised to give me a record tape of their church activities failed. To be able to get some data, I had to attend most of the churches services of the prophets. Most of the churches organises their church service on the same day and at the same time. This was a challenge to me because I to be present at each sessions to be able to acquire the necessary information needed for the study.

Finally, I had some challenges getting respondents to interview, especially the prophets during the period of the data collection from the field. Most of the prophets I was supposed to interview were having many schedules and had many people they were attending to especially at the Mispa Prayer centre of the Great Fire Pentecostal church. I did not have the chance of interview the prophet and that made me to stop going to his church and turned elsewhere where I had the opportunity interview some other prophets who disclosed the kind of information that were significant to the study.

Recommendations

After studying about Neo-prophetism in Ghana, I would like to suggest that the various churches concerned should be able to document their activities (books, videos or audios). This will be of help for people outside the churches to have access to certain relevant information either for academic/other purposes. Particular information related on their teaching on the enemy should be documented or recorded. This is because it is very difficult to get access to past sermons on the concept of enemy and also to know really what they themselves teaches about the enemy in plain languages. Else, scholars and research will continue to infer and make conclusions on what they hear the say or preach.

Also, it is clear that concepts such *Ɔtamfo*, ‘enemy’, evil and practices such as *abisa*, ‘divinatory consultation’, *akwankyerɛ*, ‘prophetic direction’, the ‘favoured’ and ‘unfavoured’ life, *yiedie*, ‘prosperity’, spiritual warfare, are emphasized by neo-prophets. These concepts

and the others not mentioned here but explained in this study need scholarly and theological attention.

Again, an interview with a church of Pentecost elder seems to show that there is a difference between the classical Pentecostal understanding of the concept of enemy and that of the neo-prophets. I was confronted with this issue and could have been very interested to do a comparison of the two Pentecostal churches. However, I could not take this issue up and address it in this study. I think it will be in place to suggest this for a future study that a comparative study of neo-prophets' and classical Pentecostal churches understanding of the enemy be done. This is because I noticed that in the course of the research that there seem to be some form of similarities and differences in the teachings of the enemy by the neo-prophets and the Church of Pentecost which is a classical Pentecostal church in Ghana that will need an in-depth study. For instance, whereas both groups teach about *Dtamfo*, 'enemy', from the research there seem to be differences and similarities in their understanding about the concept. Neo-prophets appear to be of the view that the enemy must be eliminated whereas the church of Pentecost teaches that they must be shown mercy no matter what.

Also, though I will agree that Neo-prophetism should also be considered as representing authentic African Christianity. I will say that it also poses a challenge to African Christianity. For instance, in responding to the material/physical and social needs of adherents, neo-prophets unintentionally tend to exploit the existing Akan religio-cultural worldview. It is also a challenge in the sense that it will require the council overseeing bodies to define clearly the role of the prophet, thereby giving full recognition to Neo-prophetic movement developing and spreading within their midst. However, it seems to be clear that until the Churches have been able to absorb 'prophetism', especially *abisa* into their structure, and offer theological framework for the operations of prophets in the Ghanaian Churches, prophetic ministry will continue to be a major problem for Christianity in Ghana.

It is clear that the position of the neo-prophets is more or less established in their set up despite the theological debates. The clients of the neo-prophets will still go to them irrespective of what they refer to as the moral weaknesses or inconsistencies of their teachings and practices when put side-by-side the teachings of the Bible. This is because the clients of the prophets are not much concerned about the inconsistencies in the teachings and practices of the Neo-prophetic movement. Neither are they concerned about the perceived moral weaknesses that

critics attribute to the neo-prophets. So long as the prophet is able to help them overcome whatever difficulty they are encountering in life, they are all right. In fact, the clients are not bothered about the theological issues involved in the teachings of the prophets. Whether a prophet is teaching right or wrongly is not their concern. Their main concern has to do with the search for relief from pain and suffering or the problems they are going through. I think the observation and advice of Quayesi-Amakye (2009: 2-3) is worth mentioning here:

“Prophetism poses a challenge and yet offers hope to Christianity due to its ability to respond to soteriological and pastoral needs amidst its ‘unexplained’ nature and ‘unconventional’ operations. Indeed, many are they who find problems with the ethos and theology of contemporary Ghanaian Pentecostal prophets. Pentecostal prophets are often accused of being pecuniary-motivated in their cause. Yet despite the criticisms, that include media reports, the phenomenon is becoming more and more appealing to many Ghanaians, Christians and non-Christians alike. One thing is clear. We do not have to pretend to be unconcerned with issues on prophetism. Neither should we think we can eradicate it simply because we have problems with it”.

This is because the early Christian missionaries failed to eradicate it and could not become appealing to the Ghanaian. Since, they could not offer anything like the traditional type of prophetism (Onyinah 2004a). So it will be in place for the council overseeing bodies to quickly find a way of rather enrolling these neo-prophets in a Bible seminar to educate them in an in-depth understanding of what the Bible teaches about prophetism and the teachings and practice that they so much emphasize.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Translation of Sermons

A

This second sermon is a translation of Reverend Isaac Owusu Bempa of the Glorious Word Power Ministry, formerly known as End Time Power Ministry. He is commonly known in Ghana as Rev. Owusu Bempa. I obtained this recorded sermon on a CD given to me by a colleague, James Kwesi Kwateng-Yeboah. The title of his sermon is IT SHALL BE IN YOUR FAVOR. (PART II). The Bempa spoke in the Twi dialect of the Akan language and was translated by a translator to the English language by a translator. Below is the sermon.

Hallelujah...I want you to be up standing and take your Bible with you as you stand. Please we will wrap our Bibles open to the Book of Esther. The book of Esther chapter 3:8-15. [The Bible reader Rev. Amoh reads in one of the Akan languages, Akuapem-Twi, as the congregation stands]

(Esther 3:8-15)

And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries. And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee. Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. And the letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people,

that they should be ready against that day. The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.).

Hallelujah. Please, you may be seated. God bless Rev. Amoh and our Mother Judith (the bible readers). Hallelujah. Now I want you to look into the face of your neighbour. Now this is my theme, "IT SHALL BE IN YOUR FAVOUR- PART TWO". Now I want you to hold your neighbour's hands and tell him/her, "It shall be in your favour". The favour shall be upon you. If you want to make notes, today my preaching will be like a story telling. But I believe that the Holy Ghost will give you a deeper insight. I think we started the book of Esther last week. Ehhhhh...and I made you to understand that your enemies can plot against you. But God will not let it come to pass. Hallelujah! You can put your hands together for Jesus Christ. And I also made you to understand that God shall make his face to shine upon you. I believe I mentioned about four or five people who are the main characters in this scripture. You will find King *Ahasuerus*, *Queen Vashti*, you will also find *Queen Esther*, *Mordechai* and you will also find *Haman*.

Hallelujah! I believe that as you move about innocently thinking that no-one is conspiring against you, you are making a very big mistake. If you think nobody is scheming against you or that no-one thinks evil you. I want you to pay attention to this preaching and be very cautious. So that you will never perceive that you don't have any enemy. Don't be enticed and enthused by the sweet words of people and praises from your family, that you don't have an enemy in the family. The reason why you have enemy is because God has got a purpose in your life.

Someone may say "oh, but me...am a non-entity", another may say, "am just a watchman", someone may also say, "am only a trader", another person may say, "oh, as for me am only a tro-tro driver" [i.e. a public transport driver]..."how do I make enemies...whilst am poor?" Let me tell you something. If you find out that you are poor or have nothing in life to be envious of and you find out that you have enemies. Then understand that, it is because you have a bright future. Because I cannot fathom, that Mordechai was a watchman and has no special position, in the Kingdom of Ahasuerus. He was an errand boy.

In fact he was a gateman [i.e. a gatekeeper]. He is one of the people who attends to the king at the gate; who opens the gate for the chariots and horses of the king, so that the king enters as he comes or leaves the palace. So can a man of this calibre attract someone's attention? So can someone like this be hated by someone else? I thought it is a person who is well-to-do that should be envied. Someone who own houses and has his own cars...who is a billionaire?

A person of this kind is the one who I thought should attract people's attention. That he/she may be envied. But I was surprised when I read this scripture. That a mere watchman could attract the attention of someone. And is able to get an enemy even as a pauper.

One thing I know on this earth is that, a person who is higher or greater than you, is the one that is worthy of envy. That will be normal. But it's not someone who you are greater or higher than, who is under you, which you have to envy? But in the case of Mordechai's this is how it happened. I want to announce this to you today, that perhaps you think that you are a pauper. But you feel it within yourself that you have enemies; through the kind of attacks that you get in your dreams. At point even your senses notify you that you are battling. It looks as if, when some people see you they 'bat their eyes' at you (it is a local expression which means: turning down on/despising someone, through a strange look by turning and blinking the eyes in a certain manner).

It looks as if wherever you go you attract enemies there. Your clothing are not even nice. You have to beg before you get something to eat. So how come a person of this calibre could attract enemies? The answer is one: it is because of your future. Not because of your now but your future. Oh, give a round of applause for Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! Errh...the witch in your family has discovered and seen your future. The house in which you live, the co-tenants you live with have seen your future. The area in which you live, your neighbours have seen your future. And they've seen that your future is bright. But you see yourself as a no-body. You see yourself now in your present state. But they have seen your future and they know that your future is brighter than theirs. That's why they hate/envy you.

Let's see something in the scriptures. Errhh... Let us take Joseph for example. Because, that is quiet normal and it is also a very popular scripture. When the brothers of Joseph were hating him, he wasn't the prime minister yet. So what at all developed that hatred? Because of his dream. So your dreams/visions can attract enemies for you. Even your manner of speech can make someone hate you. Because, you speak with faith. If you are here and you have no enemies, then your life is miserable. Am telling you that such a person you don't have a good future. Show me someone who has many enemies and I will show a person who has a good future.

Why is it that there are many well-to-do people and you are 'empty', however you are envied. Ehhhh...in fact this is the story. It is about a Queen called Vashti, just as I told you last week. It's about a Queen by name Vashti, just as I told you last week. King Ahasuerus, was organising a feast and has invited one hundred and twenty nations which were under his jurisdiction or in his kingdom. I made you to understand that King Ahasuerus inherited the

throne of King Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar also inherited the throne of his father, Napoponezarr. That was a very powerful throne at the time.

Its domain stretched from India to Ethiopia. All of the provinces in that domain were under his jurisdiction. And Queen Vashti has been disobedient. I would not give much details because I did that last week. The elders of the King gave him [the King] an advice, and their advice was well pleasing to him. May I just pause for a while and tell you something. Ehhmmmm....I always ask this that, “Who is your advisor?” In fact your greatness is dependent on your advisor. Hence, be very careful not to allow a person or a failure or anyone who don’t have a vision to give you counsel. Don’t allow a faithless person to counsel you. If you need someone to give you counsel look for a person who has breakthrough [i.e. a person who has step or leap forward] in life. Seek a God fearing man. Look out for someone who has made an impact and let such a person counsel you. But a failure in life and a person who has not achieved anything, someone who has no aim in life, never allow such a person to counsel you in life.

The counsel of the elders pleased the king. He said, I have hided to your advised; let us do it that way. So they went through the one hundred and twenty seven nations and they made selections. However, they did not choose at random. They first looked out for *a virgin*. Second, *a fair person*. Third is *a beautiful person*. If you possess any of these qualities; virgin, fair and beauty, then you are qualified. Hehehe...Hallelujah! Who is a qualified person in this room? Am telling you that 2015, God has sent his angels to make divine selections. And God wants to bless those people. God wants to anoint those people. God wants to do something in the lives of those people. But ask yourself whether you are part of those people?

When we say virgin, it has a meaning. Virgin means a person who is not defiled. Someone who has sanctified him/herself, is the one who can call him/herself as a virgin. So you who are in this room, have you sanctified yourself? Are you sure?

When we say fair...it means someone who is attractive. What have you done to attract the attention of God and his angels? Are you an instrumentalist? Or an usher? A chorister? Or you are a part of the intercessory and prayer towers group? Or you are a church elder? What have you done so that you have attracted Jehovah and his angels’ attention?

When we say beauty, it means someone who does clean things, so that he is singled out wherever he/she goes. What outstanding thing have you done in the house of God so that you are singled out? You should be able to do something in the house of God so that in your absence, it would be said that, “should this so-and-so person were to be here...”

Looking at yourself and the criteria are you part of such group? Ask yourself, “am I part?” So have I been selected? So Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel; so are sure that when God’s angels descend into this room and are making a divine selection are you really a part of it? All by the grace of God, Mordechai, had a lady who was his niece. The Bible said, this lady Hadassah, had no mother and father and her name was Esther. This shows that if God will bless you, it doesn’t matter whether you have a mother or father, or whether you have a good background. God could bless someone who has no mother or father, even a person who has no good background.

Applaud this God. God can bless someone who don’t have a good beginning. God can bless someone even who don’t have any people he/she depends on. God can bless someone who has been rejected by family, whose nation has rejected, even which friends have rejected. She had no mother nor father, but she had Jehovah’s favour. The most important thing is the favour of God. I said that which is most important that you need is God’s favour.

Ahhhh...she has been selected and is part of it. Just as God has added you to the selected people this 2015... Today if you are here and hears my voice, God says I should tell you that in this year, 2015, he is going to move with his blessing. He is about to release a category of his angels called ‘virtues’, who blessed Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Solomon. These angels will fall upon you. They will bless your life, in 2015 and your enemies shall see that you are blessed. Say, “I am blessed” [The congregation, shout, “I am blessed”]. “I am blessed”. [The congregation, shout, “I am blessed”]. Clap your hands for Jesus. [The congregation claps]. That’s right.

Hallelujah! Oh, wonderful. [The congregation applauds]. Wonderful. Now, these selected people, has been given twelve months as a period of preparation. The first six months they were given perfumes and spices which have pleasant fragrance. They were to use these to bath themselves in order to have a sweet fragrance on themselves. The remaining six months were to be used to tidy-up and make-up their hairs and also shave nicely in order to be good-looking. They should trim both finger and toe nails; manicure and pedicure. They should also have a well-fitting dress sewn for them from their seamstress. They should learn how to model like ladies.

All these together in twelve months, one year. Now, why is that, even the “worldly people” have some kind of wisdom. Ehhhh... That before they take any step, they first prepare themselves. Don’t do anything, until you have first sat down to plan, before. Don’t go into marriage but, sit down and make an assessment and study the person before you marry him/her. Don’t say, “This so-and-so person did this kind of business and prospered so I am

also going to engage myself in the same”. No! But first sit down and analyse your strength and manner of activity is, before you engage in any business. The Bible says, “Who will build a house without sitting down to make an assessment?”

Don't rush into any activity. Take your time, reason, prepare before you take a step. Be patient. Think deeply about it. Find out what the outcome will be. This journey I want to embark on, what will be the outcome? This step I want to take, how will the outcome be? Sit down. Have a deep thought about it. Before you do it. If it happens so it will be hard for you to make a mistake. But if you fail to make an assessment, and because of anxiety you rush...you will fail. So before you go to write the exams sit at home and study, make your corrections before you go and write your exams. This is the downfall of many Christians. We have replaced faith with anxiety.

Instead of a person to sit down and reason when he/she is doing something, then he/she will say, “By faith...” But “faith without works is vain”. Do not substitute faith with anxiety and rushing. At a point in time put your faith aside and evaluate yourself whether you are able to do it, first. God is not a magician. So don't presume that, “I am doing it with my faith and it will be well with me”. Most people never sit down to reason, so they failed and are blaming God for disappointing them. But they rather, didn't organise thing well.

The women have been well organised. But the good news of the story is this. When you go before the king or into his chamber and come out and you are not called; that is an indication that you have been disqualified. The woman who first went into the chamber of King Ahasuerus was not longer called so she was knocked out. It is a knockout method and not a knock-in. Hallelujah!... Ehhh...it is a knockout. It is very serious. All the women went before the king. Every one of them went and never returned. Do you know the reason why it happened so? It because, the women were beautiful but had no spiritual backing.

You may have some experience, but without any spiritual backing it is useless. Perhaps you are very talented, but without spiritual backing it is useless. Whatever thing you are doing, you need a spiritual backing. When you get a divine-spiritual backing, come what may you will succeed. You'll win. You need divine spiritual backing. Oooooo...so haven't you seen a person who is so beautiful but her marriage is in shambles? Whenever, she gets married the man will divorce and send her away. She has beauty but has no spiritual support. Haven't you seen a person who happened to be very wealthy? Who was a car dealer and owned a great deal houses? But because the person had no spiritual support, he has lose his houses and cars. That person lacks spiritual backing.

If you came to this room today, by the grace of God, through the authority of Jehovah, I command as a prophet, I release spiritual backing to follow you all the days of your life. In the mighty name of Jesus Christ. You will move with spiritual backing from Jehovah. Say, “I receive it”. [The congregation says, “I receive it”]. Whatever thing that you will do without spiritual backing you can never succeed. You need spiritual support. And thank God that the God who is able to support a person is here in this room. Why should everyone start life and the life of some went well but the life of others never went well. The one whose own doesn't go well has no spiritual support. The thing is, it is not about your strength neither is it about your skills. But it is God who shows mercy. What you need is spiritual backing.

Oh! Shushan! In the palace of Ahasuerus, there were beautiful women there. But they had no spiritual support. So they could not attract the attention of the king. Point number two: the King was making comparison. When any of the women come to lie on his bed, he compares her to Vashti. He compares your beauty with Vashti. When he finds out that your beautiful cannot be comparable to that of Vashti, then you are disqualified. As a person you need to have a point of reference.

What is your hope? What is your vision for the future? So that when anything falls short of that vision you can say to yourself, “I will never accept it”...? Have it in mind that the person who was able to have a breakthrough in your family, when you make assessment of the person's breakthrough, have it in mind that...and tell yourself that you have to breakthrough more than him/her. Because even though he did not get the support of your God, he was able to reach that realm...then you who have the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob should be able to do more than what your family member did. Beat him/her. The violent takes it by force. Bear it in mind that anyone who became great in your family, you shall be greater than that person.

You have no excuse. You can do it. It's not too late. You can do it. Because, when you look at the miracles performed by Elijah; and Elisha was not scared but said he wanted a double portion of that kind...look let me tell you something. That uncle of yours who has about thirty-two house, have it in mind that your houses shall be more than seventy. Exceed him. Whosoever is ahead of you exceed that person. If your father built five houses...you must own ten house. Anything that anyone who is in your family did that he/she thinks he is supreme, overtake that person. Because Ahasuerus needed something more than Vashti. Some years ago, he had Vashti. But now he wants to advance.

Go forward. Go forward. Go forward. In this life, move forward. Where you feel that you are staying now, if that is where you want to stay, then you are useless. Without excuse [I say

this without any apology]. Go higher. Go higher. Tell your neighbour, “go higher”. Put your hands together for Jesus. Thank God for that. Be leap forward than the one who is ahead of you. You should take lessons from his/her mistakes. Your master or head or leader’s mistakes is where you are to learn your lessons. The level that your father attained and fell, if you should also attain that level and fall then you are foolish. You have no sense. Where he fell, take lessons from there and when you get there crossover.

This is what made me like Solomon so much. The kingdom of his father was so powerful. But Solomon was so determined to be more powerful than his father, David. Do you know something? God said, “David, you are my heart, you are my heart”. But Solomon said, “I will not let the mercies my father had before God intimidate me, but I will overtake him”. Now for Solomon God didn’t say, “you are my heart”, oooo. God said, “Solomon you are my son, you are my son, you are my son”. It is only two people recorded in the Bible which God said, “you are my son”. Jesus Christ when he was baptised by John, then God said, “This is my Son”. In Gibeon, when Solomon made sacrifices and the blood of animals flowed like water, God said, “You are my son”. Go higher than them. Go higher than them.

This is what I have determined for myself. That I have told myself, “I will not die” o matter the councils of Jehovah or the councils of Satan and his demons. I will not accept it. I will not die. If I don’t attain certain realms on this earth, if I don’t make some impacts on this earth, I will never accept death. God forbid. It shall never come to pass. Hallelujah! Do you know? I have my targets. When I reach my target and achieve them, then will I call heavens that now you can come and take me. Until I reach there, no heavens, no powers, no principalities can take my life. It is impossible. Never! Never! Put your hands together for Jesus. Oh, my God! When you are laying on the bed of Ahasuerus, then he pictures Vashti, and then pictures you. [That is to say he imagines what Vashti was like and then compares you to that mental picture of Vashti: meaning translation by translator]. Then [when] he realises that, the smile and brightness of Vashti is better than you. Then he will say no! When you leave, you will come back no more. All the women went. They go there every month. Then it got to the tenth month. That was the turn of Esther. It doesn’t matters who has gone ahead of you. You allow some people to rush and go ahead of you. Your time will come. Your time will come. Your time will come. Your time will come. Your appointed time will come. Say, “thank you Jehovah”.

So don’t be worried when someone has gone ahead of you. It doesn’t mean he/she has won because he has gone ahead of you. It got to the turn of Esther. She also went into the bedroom of Ahasuerus. Ahasuerus compared Esther with Vashti. And he said, no, no, no, this one is

more powerful than Vashti. The beauty of this one is more powerful than Vashti. Had I met this one earlier, I would not even have taken Vashti. I have not seen this kind before. In all my nations, my one hundred and twenty-seven nations I have not seen this kind of a woman before.

Do you know Esther's secret? Because she had the favour of God. Because she had the support of God. Because she had God's backing. Oh, my God! You need God's favour. You need God's support. You need God's push. He will push you in order for you to get there. Tell your neighbour, "God will push me". Say, "I will arise". Say, "I will get there". Say, "It doesn't matter the circumstances, I will get there". Oh, Jesus!

That night, Ahasuerus did something. He took Queen Vashti's crown, and crowned Esther. Then he put the Queen garment upon Esther. Right in his chamber. He did not meet with his elders to seek their counsel. Look, when the blessings of God fall upon you, men will not think about what they do for you. This kind of blessings should fall upon you. He/she will finish doing it for you before he/she will go and think about it. What it is, is that normally, cash, we think about it before we do it. But when God notices you and God's favour falls upon you, people will be doing it for you without any thought about it. They will finish doing it for you before they will realise what they have done.

Say, "Jehovah, do such for me". Say, "God give me this kind of favour". The man will perform your marriage customs before he will come to himself. The helper shall help you and go home before he will realise it.

There and then Ahasuerus took a ring and put it on Esther and embraced her. And said, "You are my Queen, you are my sweetheart". "You're my Queen, you are my bright morning star". Hallelujah! Then early in the morning, they found out that Ahasuerus was over joyed. He came out from his chambers with much laughter. He was filled with joy. Look, in 2015, we will not even get to the eighth month, you are going to come out with laughter. I said you are coming out with joy. I said you are coming out with laughter. Because God is going to favour you. Say, "Yes!!!" [Congregation says "yes!!!" and applauds].

Oh, my God! Then his elders asked, "what has happened to the king today?" "The king is really in a good mood". When you get what you want joy fills your heart. "Sorrow kills the spirit" [a local proverb]. May God fill you with joy. May God cause you to receive what you are looking for. So that you will be filled with joy. Someone's in six months' time, another's in seven months' time. You are going to be happy. Because, God is coming to do something for you. Because something good is going to happen in your life.

Now come and see Ahasuerus. His shoulders were lifted high. In this world, when you get that which you want, it even changes how you walk. Look, may that kind of sorrowful walking leave you. Immediately the king came out he held and lifted Esther's hand up and said, "This is my chosen one, everybody shout!" And everyone roared, "yeeeeee..."

God is going to lift your hand. Because you are the chosen one of God. You are the chosen one. Many are called but few are chosen. Hallelujah! [congregation responds, Amen!]. Then immediately, the king organised a party and made Esther the reason for the party. "Queen Esther's party". The king 'threw' [i.e. arranged or organised] a party and people enjoyed. God is coming to set a table before you. And the Lord God shall prepare you a table, [The congregation screams and applauds] in the presence of your enemies. And Jehovah God is going to anoint your hair with oil. Your head. Jehovah God is going to anoint your head with oil. And your cup, it shall run over. It will run, run, run, run and run overdose, overlapping. And goodness and mercies shall follow you. Not sadness. Not death. Not sicknesses and diseases. Not poverty. Not failures. But goodness and mercy, it shall follow. Prosperity it shall follow you. Enlargement it shall follow you, up-liftment it shall follow you. Long life it shall follow you. Good health it shall follow you. Oh, good husband, good wife it shall follow you. All the days of your life. Not some of the days, but all the days of your life.

Hallelujah! Party, party, party. [Congregation is charged; clapping and cheering]. Someone without any mother and father. Someone without hope. Look at what the Lord had made her. Someone who was not even numbered, look at what the Lord has made her. Someone who struggles to make ends meet, look at what the lord has made her. Folks let me tell you something, maybe you think you have nothing. Maybe you think you have no helper. God is coming to do something. I say, God is coming to do something. It will happen like a dream. So the Bible says, "when God brought us out of captivity, it was as they that dreamt, because our enemies took our harps, and hanged them upon the trees in Babylon and asked us to sing the songs of our God. And we replied them 'how can we sing the Lord's song in captivity and in a strange land?', but in the fullness of time, when God brought us out of captivity, we were like they which dream".

God is going to surprise you. In 2015 God will surprise you. Oh, he will surprise you. In your business he will surprise you. In your finances he will surprise you. In your marriage he will surprise you. In your health he will surprise you. Long life he will surprise you. My God! [Congregation applauds]. Oh, Jesus!

Give me just two minutes and I will end my preaching.

Huh! It shall be in your favour. It shall be in your favour. It shall be in your favour. It shall be in your favour. Look, many were called, but only Esther was chosen by the king. Look, you have many family members, but you are the only one that God has chosen. You have a lot of classmates, but you are the only person chosen by God. You have many co-equals, but you are the only one whom God has favoured. God has favoured you. Prophetically; am prophesying, God has favoured you.

Immediately, the residence of Esther changed. Her dwelling place changed. Sometime ago, he used to sleep in his uncle, Mordechai, the watchman's room. Watchman's room.

Watchman's room. Maybe you are here and you are a watchman. Don't be offended with me. Because am surprised. Sometimes Jehovah God, does some [i.e. certain] things, it baffles my mind. From a watchman's house. Now, have you thought about this at all? In watchman's house there is no refrigerator. And in the watchman's house no air-conditioner. Watchman's house no car. Watchman's over there are only left foods from their neighbours. In the house of the watchman you can wear a brand new made dress, with a designer logo, like 'Georgio Amani', or 'Kelvin Klein' and errhh...'Obama's'.

Hahahaha...come on shout, "yeeeee!!!" Be happy, be happy. Because I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of the Lord, the house of the Lord. My, God!

[Congregation applauds].

In the house of a watchman, what will you find over there, Brother Seth? [Point to one church member; he responds bedbugs]. In the house of the watchman...only bedbugs, bedbugs.

[Hahahahaha...congregation laughs]. Thank you my brother. Bedbugs. Or Bishop Ronnie? What do you find in a watchman's house? [To a Bishop; he responds, cockroaches]. There are a lot of cockroaches. I like that. Cockroaches. There are many cockroaches.

Ehhhhh...Bishop Amo, in watchman's house what do you find there? [To another Bishop who also responds cobwebs]. Only cobwebs, only cobwebs.

Aaaba! Watchman's house. From watchman's house, from cockroaches, bedbugs to cobwebs; to... God is going to change your dwelling place. Oh, from 'Chorkor' [one of the slummy and congested towns in the capital, Accra, where the poor lives] to 'East-Legon' [The most beautiful scenery in the capital, Accra, where only the rich lives]. From 'Mallam' [Also one of the congested places in the capital] to 'Trousaco' [also one of the well planned and industrial areas in the capital].

Say, "yeeeeee..!" Say, "favour, faovor, favour!" Say, "Jehovah-God favour me". I say favour, favour, favour! (Congregation shout and applauds). Watchman's house. Jesus said something. He said, "In my father's house, there are so many mansions in my father's house". Because

Jesus is rich and his father is also rich. In the house of a rich person there are good things. But watchman? Am talking about a watchman. And not only just a watchman, but a watchman who was also a slave. Oh, there were some other Babylonians who were also slaves. For example, Memucan. They were Babylonians and were also in the king's palace as boy-boys [i.e. slaves or errand boys].

But as for Mordechai he was a typical slave. So slave cum watchman. That very day, that tenth month, God changed the dwelling place of Esther. Mordechai cautioned her not to tell king Ahasuerus about her background. She should not tell the Babylonians. She should keep it secret. Because, of poverty, he felt ashamed to disclose his background.

Most of you because of poverty, when you are even asked of your father's name you feel shy to disclose it. Because your father was owing/in debts before he died. But God is going to change it. Change it. Esther has been undressed of her tattered clothing. Her chains of slavery has been taken away. When God blesses you, he changes you make-up. When God blesses you he even changes the food you used to eat. When God blesses you he changes your accommodation. When God bless you, he even changes your clothing. Today, Jehovah says I should tell you that he has blessed you. My, God! 2015, you are going to experience the blessing of God. It shall favour you.

Now Esther, has become a Queen. The niece of a watchman. Now she has become a Queen-Mother. From the watchman's house to Ahasuerus' house, as a Queen-Mother, of Babylon; one hundred and twenty-seven nations. She was the Queen-Mother, whether you like it or not. It's God who has made it so. In fact God blessed Joseph. But in fact, that of Esther was strange. Hallelujah!

Next week I will continue. Hallelujah! So bear this in mind; from watchman's house to the palace. Keep this also in mind; from your poverty to your riches. From your unmarried status to a good marriage. From your sickness to your healing. From death to long life. From shame to favour. From crises to up-liftment. From calamity to grace. Jesus Christ! God will favour you. It shall be in your favour.

God bless you. I will talk to you again next week.