

## THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST



## GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

**Founder: Rev. James McKeown**

**P. O. Box 2194**

**Accra - Ghana**

**Our Ref: COP/CO/VOL. 34/0870/17**

**Tel/Fax: 233-302-772193**

**Office of the Chairman**

June 1, 2017

### **Pastoral Letter to all Assemblies**

**The Church of Pentecost**

**Worldwide**

Praise the Lord! Dearly beloved,

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. <sup>18</sup> For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. <sup>19</sup> Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil. The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you (Rom 16:17-20, NIV).

We are grateful to God as a church for the growth, progress and peace that we are experiencing.

At the just ended Extraordinary Council meetings, it was reported that as of December 31, 2016, The Church of Pentecost operated in 91 nations with an overall worldwide total membership of 2,804,861. The growth rate was 7.4% over the previous year membership. The total number of assemblies stood at 19,941. These were distributed across 2,112 administrative districts of the church. 192,243 members were added to the church; this number included those who were baptised in water. 217,762 members were baptised in the Holy Spirit.

In 2016 alone, 766 assemblies benefited from the Community Based Church Building (CBCB) fund in Ghana. The church continued to gain national as well as international recognition. The council accepted an invitation from the Lausanne Movement (a global mission minded movement started by Billy Graham) to be a Founding Member. It was felt that the prophecies uttered during the time of our forefathers that the church would be a light to Africa and also the world were being fulfilled in our very eyes.

God continued to manifest His power in His church in the form of signs and wonders. The reports received from areas show that God's power brought life to the dead, the kidnapped were delivered from their assailants, the paralysed received healing, and the barren were blessed with the fruit of the womb. Some of the notable miracles in the reports include the following:

- In Domwine District, Wa Area, Emmanuel Kyokore, after battling with an unknown illness, died. The church leaders and members on their usual visit to his house were met with the unfortunate news of his death. They resorted to prayers and after about two hours of intensive prayers, Mr. Kyokore came back to life.
- Miriam Gyamfi of James Town Assembly, Merry Villas District, La Area, was miraculously saved from her assailants who had kidnapped her. She was taken to an unknown location after she had boarded the same taxi with them. Even though they tried, they could neither shoot her nor hurt her with the machete they were wielding. Confusion set in among them and they ended up injuring themselves with their own weapons.
- Sister Ernestina Edusei of New Abirem, Akim Oda Area, at her work place heard her name mentioned. She turned to see who had mentioned her name but only saw a human-like figure with a gun; this figure shot at her. She fell on the ground and from that time suffered stroke. Regular prayers were offered and during one of such prayers, she vomited over thirty (30) pellets. During the prayers, some of the pellets fell from her hands without a cut on the body. After falling unconscious and motionless, she got up and was instantly healed.

The growth of the church and the numerous miracles are indications of the loyalty and hard work of church members and ministers. We thank God for your lives, and we pray that He will continue to bless you in all the efforts you are making. May His presence continue to be with you wherever you are!

We must however remind ourselves that it is always in the midst of such blessings, joy and progress that the devil strikes.

Apostle Paul reminds Christians that we must not allow Satan to outwit us, "For we are not unaware of his schemes" (2 Cor 2:11, NIV). This is to say that we are aware of the tricks of the devil. Of late some brothers who claim to have heard from the Lord have been disturbing the church and the general public by hurling insults on some of our leaders, falsely accusing them and even insulting the members of the church. What makes such attacks on the church a concern is the fact that such people had not been provoked in anyway. Some of them are not even known personally by the chairman and some of the Executive Council members. That tells us clearly that it is the devil who is behind what they are doing. I would like to convey to all church members not to follow such people, neither should you be disturbed by what they claim. For there is no truth in what they say. What you witness at the national, area, district and local level are the fruits of the blessing that the Lord has bestowed on the church.

The apostle Peter tells us that some people "in their greed ... will exploit you with stories they have made up..." (2 Peter 2:3, NIV). The reason is for their own self-gratification or self-interest. Apostle Peter continues, "<sup>10</sup>This is especially true of those who follow their corrupt nature along the path of impure desires and who despise the Lord's authority. **These false teachers are bold and arrogant. They aren't afraid to insult the**

**Lord's glory.** <sup>11</sup> Angels, who have more strength and power than these teachers, **don't bring an insulting judgment against them from the Lord.** <sup>12</sup> **These false teachers insult what they don't understand...**" (2 Peter 2:10-13, God's Word Translation). Jude, the brother of our Lord Jesus Christ, adds that these people <sup>8</sup>"reject authority and slander celestial beings. <sup>9</sup> But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" <sup>10</sup> **Yet these men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand;** and what things they do understand by instinct...—these are the very things that destroy them (Jude 8-10, NIV).

Beloved, do not be deceived, using abusive language clearly does not come from the Lord. Both Apostles Peter and Jude condemned such acts and showed that it is a sign of people who reject authority and do not come from the Lord. What they said in their generation is similar to what is happening now. It is even too shameful to repeat the words of insults which come from these people who claim to be servants of the holy God.

The Lord Jesus tells us that while we are not to judge people, we must not be simple minded by quickly accepting people who come to our midst as self-acclaimed prophets or pastors. He warns us to beware of false prophets, who come to us in sheep clothing but inwardly are like wild wolves. By this, he teaches us that we must be very discerning in accepting what people claim to be. We are to know them by their fruits. The lives of such prophets—their character, behaviour, and words—are the fruits that reveal where they come from and the one who is controlling them. A good fruit cannot come out of a bad tree. Neither can a bad tree bear good fruit. "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad". Our Lord Jesus makes it clear to us that we shall know people by their fruits (Mt 7:15-19). In addition, the Scripture exhorts Christians, "Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them" (Eph 4:29, NLT). Furthermore, our Lord Jesus warns, "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire" (Mt 5:22-23, NKJV). Christians are to let their speech be seasoned with salt.

The actions of such self-acclaimed men of God show that the kingdom of Satan has been shaken, and he is fighting back with all his tricks and schemes. It is evident that the progress and success of the church is a worry to the devil, and he is seeking an opportunity to ignite trouble.

We understand from the Bible that sometimes people speak out of their own imaginations, through false visions, dreams or lying spirits to deceive other people (e.g Jer 14:14; 23:26; Ezek 13:2-3, 7-9, 1 Kgs 22:23). Also Satan lurks at the gate of the souls of people in the attempt to steal, kill and destroy. Even after our Lord Jesus Christ had fasted for 40 days and nights, Satan spoke to him with the aim to divert the purpose for which He had come to the world but he defeated him through the application of the Word of God. All these speak to us that we must fully depend on the Word of God, in order not to fall victim to satanic campaigns.

As an individual, you must try not to fall victim to such cunning words from people who have been influenced by Satan through such lying spirits. Those who know their God must

stand. You must not believe what they say; they are all crafty words planned by the devil to throw dust in the eyes of people. These insults come from people who are jealous of the progress of the church. Stand firm in Christ. Christians whose faith is weak, and whose knowledge of God is too limited, cannot follow the Lord wherever He leads; they are often exposed to the enemy and his lies, and he uses them as his prey.

Notwithstanding all what have been said, you are not to retaliate. Rather let your words be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone (Col 4:6, NIV). Don't use foul or abusive language. You should never return insult with insult. Rather, let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. Christians are cultured people who respect and obey the laws of their nations. We must demonstrate love to all, and be an example of Christ in all our endeavours.

The trustees of the church, being aware of the negative effect that such disturbing pronouncements have on some members both emotionally and physically, in consultation with the Executive Council, is considering the lawful ways of restraining people who intentionally attempt to ignite trouble for the church and also tarnish the image of its leaders.

We are grateful to the Lord that He had earlier on through His own ways led the Executive Council to direct the church public to strengthen our prayer life at various levels. Continue to pray for the church, deepen yourself in the Spirit, and let the Word of God dwell in you richly. Continue to "do the work of an evangelist" (2Tim 4:5); win more souls for Christ. Continue to trust the Lord, be loyal to Him and the church. "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom 16:20, NIV).

May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you! May the Lord continue to bless The Church of Pentecost and all other churches who continue to proclaim the Gospel of Christ! The grace of God be with you! Amen.

Yours in Christ

Opoku Onyinah (Apostle Professor)

Chairman