

# **THE CHURCH OF PENTECOST GENERAL HEADQUARTERS**



THEME:

**A GLORIOUS CHURCH TO POSSESS THE NATIONS**

**KEY VERSES:** Ephesians 3:21; 5:27

SLOGAN:

**POSSESSING THE NATIONS: I AM AN AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION**

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# **A GLORIOUS CHURCH TO POSSESS THE NATIONS**

(Texts: Eph. 3:21; Eph. 5:27)

Apostle Eric Nyamekye

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION – THE GOAL OF THE CHURCH**

The purpose or goal for constructing a building or structure is crucial for determining the processes by which it is built. When designing a building, architects always keep their client's purpose in mind while fixing their eyes firmly upon the finished product as outlined in the original plan of the building until it is completed. To a large extent, the engineering design and aesthetics of a building is determined by the purpose for which it is built.<sup>1</sup> Both the architects and the builders adopt a holistic approach to all their processes and work in particular ways to ensure that what is built meets its purpose or goal. In the same way, the Church God sends into the world to possess the nations has a goal.

However, many Christian congregations across the world appear to have forgotten about the goal of the Church. A typical church calendar of our times is often activity-packed and project oriented: Sunday bible studies, home cell meetings, mid-week Bible studies and prayer services, Friday evening prayer meetings, all night services, dawn meetings, ministry weeks and ministry activities, pastors and wives' conferences and many more. Much of church life today can be seen as a sum total of meetings, activities and projects some of which aim at solving social and physical problems. Even the training that is given in our Bible Schools and Colleges is more of how to perform liturgy, teach, counsel etc. The practical training consist of being given skills to perform certain activities well. Our presbytery meetings do also illustrate the problem solving approach.

This is not to say that the activity and the problem-based approaches to building churches are not important. But rather we are called to build the Church with the ultimate goal in mind: the goal of becoming a beautiful bride prepared for her Bridegroom, which is Christ. The Church is called together to be a special people for the God's own possession (Deut 7:9), She is God's workmanship created for good works. God is always working in His church

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen B. Clark, *Building Christian Communities: Strategy for Renewing the Church* (Notre Dame: Maria Press, 1972), 12.

to prepare her as a glorious bride for Himself and to make her credible before the watching world, in order to make her witness to the nations easy and effective. It is this working of the Spirit of God in the Church to produce this outward beauty that would be attractive to the eyes of the watching world is what is described as the glory of God in the Church.

Paul in his letter to the Ephesian church expresses this profound truth:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless (Eph. 5:25-27 NIV).

The Church today seems to have forgotten the glorious truth expressed in the above scripture. As a result, there often seems to be little concern about the spots and wrinkles which at present undoubtedly exist. The Church is to be committed to the goal of becoming "a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish," a "holy and blameless" bride to Christ, the bridegroom (Rom. 7:4; 2 Cor. 11:1-2; Rev. 21:2&9, Rev. 19:6-9).

To this end Jesus gave "Gifts of men" to the Church. Paul writes;

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13, NIV)

These "Gifts of men" are co-labourers with God, the owner of the Church who works in her (Php. 2:13; Php. 1:6) to get her to the ultimate goal. As co-labourers, Christian workers should have the same goal as God's – "to build something – to work to form a people who live for God. This should be the result of all our pastoral work. Whereas, the goal of the Christian life is to live for the praise of God's glory (Eph. 1:9-12), the goal of the pastoral work by extension the Church, is to build a people of God who live for God's glory"<sup>2</sup> – a

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<sup>2</sup> Clark, *Building Christian Communities: Strategy for Renewing the Church*, p. 22.

glorious bride without stain or wrinkle or any of such things. The Christian worker as an architect or a builder should be able ask himself or herself these questions:

1. What am I building? - the goal
2. Why am I building? – the purpose
3. How am I building? – the process

He or she should be concerned that all the activities and efforts go together in such a way that something is being built. With this understanding we should be able to mobilise the church for real prayers. We need to be praying for the perfecting of the saints as a community developing a beautiful lifestyle in the midst of a corrupt and disintegrating world order (Col. 1:9-14; Eph. 3:14-19).

As God's people, God requires the entire Church to live their life as a fitting tribute to Him (1 Peter 2:9), reflecting His very character and nature. This image of the Church implies that as a people of God we cannot live our life the way we want it. God has interest in how we live our lives as the summoned out group. The watching world too will measure us based on this understanding of the Church as God's possession – a people that is required to simultaneously reflect God's love and holiness. From John 13:34-35, Jesus Christ himself stresses that the world has the right to decide whether we are true disciples of his, on the basis of the love we show to all people. It is this observable love among Christians that will convince the watching world that God sent His Son to save humanity. (Jn. 17:21). This idea is aptly captured by Francis Schaeffer:

The church is constantly on trial before God and before the world. It claims to be God's representative. By its deeds and words it should therefore reveal to all men something of the character of the God who is there – something of God's love and simultaneously something of God's holiness.<sup>3</sup>

Though we may need to build decent places of worship, grow our finances, have our pews reasonably full, and plant more churches, the evangelisation of the world is not the supreme end of the Church. It is only a means towards that end, the end of having a prepared bride,

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<sup>3</sup>See Cover Page of Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Church Before the Watching World* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1972).

reflecting the glory of God.<sup>4</sup> If the Church misses this goal then she runs the risk of running in vain (Gal. 2:2).

## **2.0 THE CHURCH PREPARED AS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST – THE MORAL PURITY OF THE CHURCH**

David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the Lord should be of great magnificence and fame and splendour in the sight of all the nations. Therefore, I will make preparations for it." So David made extensive preparations before his death. Then he called for his son Solomon and charged him to build a house for the Lord, the God of Israel. David said to Solomon: "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house for the Name of the Lord my God (1 Chron. 22:5-7, NIV).

David had it in his heart to build a temple for the Lord to house the Ark of the Covenant. He made extensive preparation for it. But God denied him the opportunity of building the temple. His son Solomon rather was to build the temple. The house David had in mind was to be of great magnificence, fame and splendour in the sight of all the nations.

This temple which was eventually built by Solomon, symbolises the New Testament Church (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). It was a centre of attractions to the nations. Like this temple, the Church should carry great magnificence, fame and splendour in the sight of all the nations. Her aesthetic beauty and excellence should be able to attract people from all walks of life to herself. She must be a point of reference to anything great and beautiful.

It is therefore anticipated that the perfection of the bride should be a moral perfection expressed in a visible holiness. The bride must be beautiful and her holiness, visible and attractive. There are two Greek words used in the New Testament translated as "good": *Agathos* and *Kalos*. *Agathos* refers to that which is morally and ethically good while *Kalos* means aesthetically and beautifully good. This second word, *Kalos* is often used to appreciate physical beauty. It is also used frequently in the New Testament to represent "good works". Thus the Church is to be seen as lovely and beautiful. The people of God are

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<sup>4</sup> Michael Griffiths, *Cinderella with Amnesia: A Practical Discussion of the Relevance of the Church* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976), 66

to be good to look upon. The Church's moral and ethical goodness is to be gorgeous. Just as the individual is to grow in holiness, so also the Christian congregation is to grow in warm generous beauty, a beautiful bride of Christ.

The Church is therefore required to practice purity and not just talk about it. It takes the love of God and the holiness of God together to produce a beautiful bride, the Church of God. Schaefer writes:

If we show either of these without the other, we exhibit not the character, but a caricature of God for the world to see. If we stress the love of God without the holiness of God, it turns out only to be compromise. But if we stress the holiness of God without the love of God, we practice something that is hard and lacks beauty. And it is important to show forth beauty before a lost world and a lost generation.<sup>5</sup>

As we begin to exhibit simultaneously the holiness of God and the love of God, spirituality also begins to have its real meaning in our moment-by-moment lives. The relevance of the Church is also demonstrated as she practices purity and holiness, influencing the world with her godliness and uprightness.

The Church should not be seen as ugly. It is something beautiful and her beauty must be demonstrated to the watching world (Acts 2:42-47).

### **3.0 THE CHURCH GUARDED AND GUIDED BY THE WORD – THE DOCTRINAL PURITY OF THE BRIDE**

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you

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<sup>5</sup> Schaeffer, *The Church*, p. 54.

received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough (2 Cor. 11:2-4)

Apostle Paul in the above Scripture compares the church to a virgin, soon to be presented as a bride to the Redeemer. Having recalled how the first woman was deceived and led astray by the tempter, he was afraid that the church could also be deceived by false teachers and led astray from the truth. He was by this asking the church to guard herself from any gospel alien to what they had heard him preach about.

The Church must always scan within herself to identify false teachings that might have gotten into her ranks to corrupt her that the truth of the gospel be preserved (Gal. 2:5). Jesus rebuked the church in Pergamum (Rev. 2:14) for holding on to the doctrine of Balaam and the church in Thyatira for tolerating the teachings of Jezebel (Rev. 2:20). And he bemoaned the effects of these teachings in these churches.

Jesus in praying for the Church before His departure prayed that the Church will be sanctified by the truth (Jn. 17:17). This implies that what keeps the Church perpetually sanctified is the true word of God. Anything outside this has the propensity to corrupt the Church and lead her astray. The historical teachings and the accepted doctrines of the Church must be jealously guarded and contended for (Jude 3-4). The Church should allow the word of God to set her boundaries and rules.

One distinctive mark of the Church is the purity of her doctrine and the reality of her community. The early Church simultaneously practiced pure doctrinal teachings and developed the right sense of community life among her ever-increasing members for the world to see (Acts 2:42). This was important because their community life was to reflect their teachings. When our community life does not reflect what we teach, the watching world will judge us as hypocrites. The Church therefore, must be known simultaneously for her purity of doctrine and the reality of her community.

Mbiti writes,

The Church as the body of Christ is herself the living channel, par excellence, of communicating the Gospel. Not only does she teach and proclaim the Gospel, but she is the embodiment of that Gospel; and her voice goes forth not only in audible words



but in her very existence and life. As she makes her numerical expansion and spiritual growth, the Gospel is being proclaimed and communicated. She cannot be severed from her message, and neither can that message become meaningful except within the embrace of the Church.<sup>6</sup>

For the Church to remain a faithful bride of Christ, she must take the teachings of scripture seriously. The Church must preach and practice in deeds the teachings of the Bible. The world will also believe the truth the Church claims only if the Church practices all the things she teaches. The world may disagree with our teachings and perhaps persecute us. But through it all, the Church should put the word first, for there is always a price to be paid. Through the Church's teachings and our community life, the watching world should know that Christ is our King and Lord and that we always put him first in our decisions.

### **3.1 The Battle for the Nations – Capturing the Minds through Teachings**

The Church since her inception is confronted with the battle for the nations. The Church is the means by which the rule and the dominion of God is felt in the world. Anytime the Church goes to sleep, the enemy goes about his usual business of "sowing evil seeds" in the world thus making the nations, his kingdom (Mt. 13:24). This however cannot happen when the Church is widely awake and carries on her mandate. When the Church awakes out of slumber, she shall make the kingdom of the world, the kingdom of our God (Rev. 11:15).

"All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him" for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations" (Ps. 22:27-28).

Satan on the other hand seeks to turn the hearts of the nations after him. And he does this by employing the weapon of deception (Rev. 20:1-10; Eze. 28:12-17; Jn. 8:44). Satan in deceiving the nations uses false teachings as the tool to capture the minds of people. The

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<sup>6</sup> John Mbiti, *"The Ways and Means of Communicating the Gospel"* in C. G. Baeta, (ed), *Christianity in Tropical Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 329-350(339).

mind has always been the battle ground because that is where transformation begins (Rom. 12:2).

These deceptive teachings employed by Satan according to Paul, spread like gangrene which have the capacity to destroy and corrupt the heart of many (2 Tim. 2:14-18). Jesus also cautioned the disciples to be careful of the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees which he likened to the spreading effect of yeasts introduced into a flour (Mt. 16:5-12). The agents of these false teachings are hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron; men and women whom Satan himself has taken captive (1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim 2:23-26).

The target of this teaching of demons is the nations and the future world (1 Tim 4:1-2). For instance, the global introduction of secular humanistic sexual ideologies such as the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is a deceptive ideology meant to capture the minds of the future generations towards the globalisation of the LGBTQI+ agenda. These teachings are based on "hollow and deceptive philosophies, which depend on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ" (Col. 2:8).

Teaching is an appeal to the senses and it takes several forms including modelling and music. It is important to note that what is taught gives rise to belief system; and this belief system gives rise to conduct and by extension the culture of a society.

To counter Satan's agenda of deceiving the nations, the Church which is the hope for the manifestation of God's glory, will have to arise and begin to think of the nations and the future world (next generation). Until the Church begins to do this, she has not joined the battle yet. The Church must refute the deception of the devil in the nations with the truth of God. We need to combat darkness with the light of the word which brings liberation through revelation (Jn. 8:30-32; Ps. 19:7-11).

To do this, the Church should diligently avail herself to the following:

- a. The church should be able to teach sound doctrine to break strongholds that hold the minds of her people captive; casting down imaginations - *the various systems of false philosophy and the reasoning/arguments of the enemies of the gospel*; and every pretension - *exalted yet unfounded opinions*, that set themselves up against the knowledge of God in the nations (2 Cor. 10:4-6);

- b. She should take the instructions God gave in Deuteronomy 6:1-15 seriously than ever before and seek to raise godly children who are well equipped to take the future world for our God. The Church should employ all available means to impress the true word of God on the hearts of our children;
- c. The Church should be able to be good advocates of the truth and consciously seek to raise laments against anything within her society that set itself against the will of God. She should not sit unconcerned and close her eyes to the evil happenings around her. She must rise to her prophetic role in the building of the nations. The presence of the Church must be felt in the running of the affairs of the nations;
- d. The Church should be strategic about using her doctrines through good music to possess the nations by penetrating cultures (Eph. 5:19-21). Andrew Fletcher, a Scottish political activist and writer (1655-1716) had said, "let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws." He being the Commissioner of the old Parliament of Scotland together with ancient legislators had the understanding that they could not well reform the manners of any city without the help of a lyric, and sometimes of a dramatic poet.<sup>7</sup>

#### **4.0 THAT THERE MAY BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH**

The Hebrew term which is commonly used in the Old Testament to denote glory is the word, *Kabowd*. Its literal meaning is weight or heaviness, but it is used figuratively in the sense of splendour, abundance, honour or glory. In the Old Testament it is used variously to describe an individual's wealth, power or majesty, or great honour (Gen. 31:1; 45:13).<sup>8</sup> We can deduct from the above that the glory of God is the expression of all the attributes of God.

Today, people commonly use the term *weight* in a similar way. For example, we might say a believer has "spiritual weight" (substance) if he possesses a mature, honourable, humble, and just character. This spiritual weight could be described as his "glory", which makes him stand out from others. This is to say that what will make a church stand out from others is

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Andrew\\_Fletcher](https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Andrew_Fletcher). Accessed on November 8, 2019

<sup>8</sup> Guillermo Maldonado, *The Glory of God* (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 2012), 10.

the “spiritual weight” the church carries; and this weight from the above understanding is the manifestation of the very attributes of God.

The Greek reference to glory is the term *doxa*. The term leads to the notion of reputation, honour, fame, praise, dignity, splendour and brilliance<sup>9</sup>. Later that same word was used in the New Testament verses, including certain reference to Jesus. (Matt. 16:27; Jn. 1:14). Thus, *doxa* speaks of the real majesty, reputation or opinion belonging to God. And it is a sobering truth that God’s reputation in the world, or the world’s opinion of God, will depend, to a large extent, on how far His glory is seen in the Church. For the sake of His great name and the image of the Church, there should be evidence of the reality of the living God in the Church.

The Apostle Paul prayed, “to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (Eph. 3:21). This prayer by Paul is a concluding part of a prayer he was making for the church in Ephesus (Eph. 3:16-20). He had prayed that God out of His glorious riches may strengthen them with power through His Spirit in their inner being, so that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith. The concluding part of the prayer sums up his heartfelt desire for the church, “that there may be God’s glory in the church”. Paul’s prayer here seems to suggest that what is of most importance in God’s church in every generation is His glory (Hag. 2:3-9; 2 Chron. 5:13-14; 7:1-2, 14-22; Eph. 2:18-22; 1 Pet. 2:5).

A reader of Ephesians 3:21 will ask, how can God be glorified in the Church? The answer lies in the next verse that is artificially cut off by the introduction of a fresh chapter heading. “As a prisoner of the Lord, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (Eph. 4:1). This verse answers how God should be glorified in the Church; that is by Christians living a life worthy of the calling they have received (2 Tim. 1:9). The Apostle Paul then spends the rest of the book talking about what it means “to lead a life worthy of the calling you have received”. It is this kind of lifestyle that ensures God’s glory in the midst of His people.

When the glory of God is in the Church, worship and sacrifice is made spontaneously without compulsion (2 Chron. 5:13-14; 7:1-2; Ex. 33:9-10). Also, people respond easily to the gospel

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<sup>9</sup> Maldonado, *The Glory of God*, p. 11

most often where and when the glory and the power of God is demonstrated (Acts 8:6-8; Exo. 3:1-3).

When the Glory of God is in the Church there is also the experience of the supernatural and transformation. The supernatural are the unexplainable manifestations of the power of God in the life of the Church (Acts 5:15-16; 19:12; 8:5-8; 12:5-17); while the transformation in the church rests on the extent the Church is able to radiate the very beauty and holiness of God (Eph. 5:27; 1Pet. 2:9-10).

A further reflection of Paul's prayer for the glory in the church also suggests that the glory of God in the Church can be lost (1 Sam. 4:1-10). As custodians of the Church (1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Sam. 4:13) we must make sure that there is glory in the Church in every generation. The glory should be jealously guarded because it can be pushed out of the Church. When that happens, the Church loses her attraction to the nations (2 Chron. 7:19-22). Where the glory of God is absent in the Church, even though there could be the presence of the priest, the temple, the altar and sacrifices as in the days of Eli the priest, revelation could still be rare, the people cast restraint because the glory of God has been pushed out of the temple (1 Sam. 3:1-2; 4:21-22).

#### **4.1 Pushing God's Glory out of God's House**

In the book of Ezekiel Chapters 8 to 11, the Lord carried Ezekiel from Babylon to Jerusalem in a vision. He revealed to him some terrible examples of the idolatry of the people. He saw an idolatrous image which provoked the Lord to jealousy. He saw the elders of Judah assembled; each with a censer in his hand, worshipping vile portraits on the walls. There were women weeping for a Babylonian deity, Tammuz. The vegetation supposedly dried up when he died. Then he sees about twenty-five men representing the priest worshipping the sun and involving themselves in lewd practices. From there, he sees the glory cloud - representing God's presence lingering out of the temple, grieved away by the idolatry of the temple. By chapter 11:23, the glory cloud had left the temple and exited the city.

MacDonald William comments:

"It retired unwillingly. Its throne was the Most Holy Place, it then withdrew to the threshold, then, above the threshold, then it retired to the Eastern Gate, and finally, to the mountain on the

east side of the city. Thus the God of Israel in lingering love forsake His city and temple, not to return till 43:2.<sup>10</sup>

The above is a wake-up call to the Church to pay close attention to the life of the Spirit within us, so that "... the light within us is not darkness..." (Matt. 6:23).

#### **4.2 Holiness - The Law Of The Temple**

In chapters 40 to 48 of the book of Ezekiel, the prophet sees in a vision the future restoration of Israel and her glory in the kingdom. He describes the restored city and temple, greater than anything Israel has ever known. In 43:1-6, he sees the glory of God return to the temple. After the consecration of this new temple, God pronounces the "law" which was to govern the ordinances of the temple as well as all that was to be associated with the temple, including the people themselves. This was the law of the temple; "all the surrounding area on top of the mountain will be most holy" (Eze. 43:12). This law implies that the entire temple mount and all its associations were to be considered and for that matter kept "most holy". This declaration renders holiness the goal of the temple. This, Ezekiel was to teach the people.

In a related scripture, Exodus 28:36-38, Moses was instructed by way of law to make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as a seal: "Holiness to the Lord". This was to be fastened to a blue cord to mount it on the turban which the high priest was to wear on the forehead. This pure gold with its inscription was always to be on the forehead of the high priest. This diadem was the dignity and authority, the testimony and witness of who and what the high priest stood for, what the temple worship was all about – holiness unto the Lord.

The law of the Temple (Church) worship, is holiness unto the Lord. This is a law and it cannot be compromised!! It is in this atmosphere of holiness that the glory of God will comfortably dwell. This we must teach, ensuring that sin does not have a place in the Church. When sin rules in the Church, the life of God in the Church is suppressed. The whole Church has an essential obligation to press towards perfecting holiness. This is not just an Old Testament phenomenon. Paul instructed the New Testament Church;

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<sup>10</sup> William MacDonald, *Believers Bible Commentary: With the New King James Version* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1995), 1047.

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God (2 Cor. 7:1, NIV).

#### **4.3 Do not Grieve the Holy Spirit**

It's amazing how God could be driven from His temple! In the new creation God dwells in him by His Spirit (Eph.2:18-22) and care should therefore be taken not to stifle the Spirit of God. In his book "*Holy Fire*", R. T Kendall reveals that the Holy Spirit is a very sensitive Spirit; "reverently hypersensitive" he says.<sup>11</sup> Commenting on Ephesians 4:30, "and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption", Kendall teaches that when we grieve the Holy Spirit, although the Spirit never leaves us (Jn. 14:6), the anointing diminishes. That is, the sense of His presence is gone. He seems to have left.

In 1Thessalonians 5:19, Paul likens this to "quenching the Spirit's fire". The Spirit is present but you won't feel His warmth. Some of the things that grieve the Spirit is listed in Ephesians 4:25-31. These although may seem trivial, they can however rob the Church of the glory or the presence of God.

Oswald Chambers warns;

"We have to recognize that sin is a fact of life and not just a short coming. Sin is a blatant mutiny against God, and either sin or the life of God must die in my life. If sin rules in me, God's life in me will be killed; if God rules in me, sin in me will be killed."<sup>12</sup>

Another area that robs us of experiencing the glory of God is the lack of devotion to God. Busy lifestyle will easily rob us of the glory of God. Our primary call is unto God, the source of our strength. "He appointed the twelve that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach" (Mk 3:14). The lack of quality time with the Lord does not take away our titles from us but it could make us lose the *kabowd*, the weight, the glory of God. The sad end of Sampson also leaves us with some lessons for our reflection:

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<sup>11</sup> R. T Kendall, *Holy Fire: A Balanced, Biblical Look at the Holy Spirit's Work in our Lives* (Florida: Charisma House, 2014), 82.

<sup>12</sup>Reimann, James, (ed.), *Oswald Chambers' My Utmost for His Highest* (Michigan: Discovery house books, 1963), June 23 Devotional.

"So he told her everything. No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother's womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man." After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him. And his strength left him. Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had left him."

#### **4.4 Show Me Your Glory!**

The glory of God is an inheritance of the Church and for that matter every child of God. God's glory is not just a theoretical concept to be learned. It is a heavenly reality that can continuously be experienced in the Church.

The fact that God dwells in His creation and is indivisibly present everywhere, is a generally accepted truth of the Christian faith. No point in creation is nearer to or further from God than any other (Acts 17:26-28). Even though the universal presence of God is an assumed teaching of the Church, it remains for us to brood over it until it begins to glow within our spirit man that God is here – maturing from cognitive knowledge of His abiding presence to the experiential knowledge of His presence.

The patriarch Jacob in the howling wilderness saw a vision of God and cried out in wonder "... Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it" (Gen. 28:16). That is the trouble, God is here, but men do not know that God is here. What a difference it would make if we carried this consciousness and went ahead to cultivate this divine presence.

The universal Presence of God and the manifestation of His Presence are not the same, the Shekinah or the manifest Presence exists where He is cultivated. It is this manifest Presence that Moses desired and went ahead to cultivate:

If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people." The Lord replied, "My Presence will go



with you, and I will give you rest." Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" (Exodus 33:13-16).

Moses seems to suggest that the manifest Presence is that which will distinguish God's people from the other nations. That is why he would not move without the "Presence".

The Church that seeks to possess nations should be like Moses who desired to experience the Presence of God - a church that through prayer will cause God to rend the heavens open and descend into our land (Isa. 64:1). A Church that trusts in the Father who is in heaven and thus seeks God Himself and not just His blessings. This is what makes the difference between nominal Christian life and the life radiant with His glory. This makes the difference between generations of believers; it is the difference between denominations; it is the distinction between Ministers. This was how Egypt knew the difference between their gods and the God of Israel.

We need not look at prayer as a means of receiving things for ourselves. The Biblical purpose of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself. Prayer is not primarily a matter of changing things externally, but one of working miracles in a person's life. The scripture says, in Isaiah 40:29-31;

"He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

Peter described this as participating in the very nature of God (2 Pet. 1:4-8). This he said will prevent the Church from corruption and she will be made effective in every way. Against such glorious Church, there is no law (Gal. 5:23). We need to move away from the so called "deliverance" type of prayer and redefine prayer as tarrying for the Spirit and to see prayer as hard work and means of knowing Him (Col 4:12-13).

## **5.0 CONCLUSION - THE GLORIOUS CHURCH TRANSFORMED TO POSSESS NATIONS**

Having established that the goal of the Church is to be presented as a radiant bride without stain or wrinkle to Christ, the Bridegroom, it behooves on us to keep this goal in mind and like the architect, keep our eyes firmly fixed on the outcome. We must avoid building a church that is merely activity-centred without any concrete outcome of her ultimate goal. We should adorn the church with so much beauty and glory that her witness to the nations in every generation becomes easy and effective. As already noted, the world's opinion of God depends largely on the manifestation of His glory in the Church

It is true that the glory of God is a heavenly reality that the Church can experience just as it was experienced under the law. During that era God revealed His glory at Mount Sinai and again, His glory dwelt in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. When Moses worshiped God on the mount, he reflected some of that glory so that his face shone when he returned to the camp (Ex. 34:29-35). Moses was however not radiating the glory from within; he was only reflecting the glory that he had seen on the mount. As a result the glory on Moses' face faded away. Moses had to put a veil over his face so that the people couldn't see the fading glory (2 Cor. 3:13).

The glory of the law was temporary and fading, but the glory of the new covenant (Church) is both permanent and increasing (2 Cor. 3:18). As the Lord's bride adorned with glory and beauty, the Church cannot afford to hide herself in the room. She must go out there with the crown of glory on her head showing the praise of Him who loved her and gave Himself for her both by word and deeds (1 Pet. 2:9). She should be a broken bread and a poured out wine for the world to feed on (Php. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6; Jh. 6:35). She must show forth her garment of righteousness to the world (Ecc. 9:8).

When the Church rightly positions herself to this goal, the nations will set out to look for her just like Nicodemus set out to look for Jesus (Is.2:3; Jh.3:1-2). When the glory of God is in the Church, she will certainly attract the nations of the world to herself. With her transformed life, she will be able to enter into the world and plug sinners from the hands of the enemy without conforming to their standard. Her members with this glory will make every sphere of society such as the family, government, politics, business/economy, education/science, media/culture and sports/entertainment a setting for ministry and a

house of worship. Not only that, but also, these members will demonstrate righteousness in many areas such as:

- a. They will selflessly serve their nation with integrity, hard work and high sense of patriotism;
- b. They will become a voice against any established order or system in their spheres of influence that are not in harmony with God's will;
- c. With the power of the Holy Ghost they will generate creative ideas on issues of society that will contribute immensely to the transformation of our market places and by extension the economy;
- d. They will seek to become the best of everything in the society – best students, best managers, best engineers, best medical doctors, best entrepreneurs, best CEOs, etc.;
- e. They will collectively or at the individual level care for the poor and the needy in the society;
- f. They will willingly commit themselves to environmental care and cleanliness;
- g. They will commit themselves to building healthy family life, where the home is a church and a seminary with the husband as the priest and his wife as his assistant with their children and others as members.

When the Church arises to her goal with the glory of God upon her and the members of the body, willingly avail themselves as salt and light of the world, then it shall be said of our spheres and dwellings, "THE LORD IS THERE" (Eze. 48:35) and it shall be testified of the Church among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." Yes, "the Lord has done great things for us" (Ps. 126:2-3). And in His temple we shall shout Glory!! (Ps. 29:9).

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# **THE CHURCH: CALLED TO A HOLY LIVING**

Daniel Walker (Apostle Dr.)

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Church is generally referred to as a 'called out' people, that is, a people called out of darkness into light (1 Pet. 2:9) or called unto the Lord. The Church is therefore the gathering of people who have been called from various places and backgrounds to belong to God, known as the people of God (Eph. 2:12, 13).

### **1.1 The Call of God in the Old Testament**

In the Old Testament (OT), God called people for specific purposes and assignments. While some were able to fulfil the purpose of their calling fully while others were not. Notable among those who were called are the following:

- Adam – created and called to work and take care of the land (Gen. 2:15)
- Noah – called to preserve life from God's wrath (Gen. 6:11-22)
- Abram – called to be God's nation (Gen. 12)
- Joseph – called to preserve life from starvation (Gen. 45:4-5)
- Moses – called to deliver Israel from bondage (Ex. 3)

The examples cited above are gender insensitive and biased. Kindly give some examples of females who were called and used by God to accomplish his will and purpose for his people.

### **1.2 The Call of God in the New Testament**

When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He called people to follow Him and become His disciples. He designated some as apostles. Those He called were supposed to serve (Matt. 20:25-28); be fishers of men (Matt. 4:18-22); preach the word and heal the sick (Matt. 10:1), among others. Later, others like Paul was also called by the Lord Jesus Christ, through a vision, to proclaim the name of Christ to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel (Acts 9:15).

### **1.3 The Call of God in the Church Age**

In the Church Age, anyone who hears and responds to the gospel message is called (Rev. 3:20; Matt. 11:28; Jn. 6:37; Jn. 7:37; Is. 55:1-3). Paul says in Romans 1:6 (NIV) that "And

you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ". So, the primary purpose of our calling here is to belong to Jesus Christ. The Church is therefore called to belong to Jesus Christ, to be the body of Christ and the bride of Christ.

The New Testament enumerates several other activities or virtues that the Church is called to do or to be. Some of these are:

- called according to God's purpose (Rom. 8:28)
- called to faith in Christ (1 Cor. 7:22)
- called to live in the grace of Christ (Gal. 1:6)
- called to hope in Christ (Eph. 1:18; 4:4)
- called to be justified (Ro. 8:30)
- called to live in peace with others (1 Cor. 7:15; Col. 3:15)
- called into fellowship with Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:9)
- called to liberty or to be free (Gal. 5:13)
- called out of darkness into light (1 Pet. 2:9)
- called to preach the gospel to others (Acts 16:10)
- called to a holy life (2 Tim. 1:9; Ro. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; Heb. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:15-16)
- called to eternal glory in Christ (1 Pet. 5:10; 1 Thess. 2:12)
- called to eternal life (1 Tim. 6:12)
- called to live a worthy life (Eph. 4:1)
- called to suffer with Christ (1 Pet. 2:21)
- called to bless and be blessed (1 Pet. 3:9)

This paper will examine the Church that is called to a holy living.

## **2.0 CALLED TO A HOLY LIVING**

One of the fundamental doctrines of Pentecostalism is the doctrine of holiness. Those who come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ by hearing the gospel message through the power of the Holy Spirit become new creation, the old life gives way to new life (2 Cor. 5:17), and the sinner is turned into a saint to live a holy life. As holy people, we share in the heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1).

Holiness, according to E. F. Harrison, is "a fundamental element in the distinctive nature of God as revealed in Scripture and a basic response to His grace on the part of the people of

God as they become moulded into His likeness.”<sup>13</sup> Holiness, to live a holy life or to be holy, could also mean to be sanctified, consecrated, dedicated or purified. It is to be morally blameless, separated from sin and consecrated to God. Holiness is being set apart from the world and unto God. Explaining further from the principle of first mention, Genesis 2:3 states that “And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy”. Later, God included this as part of His commandments to the children of Israel that “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy” (Ex. 20:8). This means that, the Seventh day or the Sabbath day was to be different from the rest of the days, a day set apart, or set aside where work is not done like the other days, but a day to rest and reflect on God’s goodness and faithfulness.

The Church called to holy living, therefore, is a church, or a people of God, set apart or set aside from the rest of the people. They are meant to be different from the others in lifestyle; a people of God who remember that they have been called and set apart to keep themselves holy. David Powell, Principal of an Assemblies of God Bible College, indicates that “Christians are persons set apart from the sons of men. They are made saints by the atoning blood of Christ positionally, and by an act of regeneration which takes place through the agency of the Holy Spirit”.<sup>14</sup>

## **2.1 The Nature of Holiness or Sanctification**

2.1.1 Instant sanctification: This occurs the moment one is born again and therefore, is the work of God. We instantly become saints (1 Cor. 6:11; Heb. 13:12)

2.1.2 Progressive sanctification: This is the part of the believer. In order to accomplish God’s will in sanctification, believers must participate in the Spirit’s sanctifying work by:

- Ceasing to do evil (Rom. 6:1-2; Php. 2:12-13)
- Purifying themselves from everything that contaminates the body and spirit (2 Cor. 7:1; Rom. 6:12; Gal. 5:16-25)
- Keeping themselves from being polluted by the world (Jas 1:27; Rom 6:13,19; 8:13; 12:1-2; 13:14).

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<sup>13</sup> E. F. Harrison, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised Edition – Volume Two: E-J., (Electronic Version) p. 725

<sup>14</sup> David Powell, “The Doctrine of Holiness” in P. S. Brewster (ed.) *Pentecostal Doctrine* (Harrow: P. S. Brewster, 1976) p. 358

## 2.2 Holiness in the Old Testament

"It is no exaggeration to state that this element of holiness overshadows all others in the character of the deity so far as the OT revelation is concerned".<sup>15</sup> Philadelphia pastor James Montgomery Boice once spoke to a discipleship group on the attributes of God. He began by asking them to list God's qualities in order of importance. They put love first, followed by wisdom, power, mercy, omniscience, and truth. At the end of the list they put holiness. According to Boice, he was surprised because the Bible refers to God's holiness more than any other attribute. The Bible doesn't generally refer to God as *Loving, Loving, Loving!* Or *Wise, Wise, Wise!* Or *Omniscient, Omniscient, Omniscient!* But over and over we read the cry of the angels, *Holy, Holy, Holy*.

In the OT economy, things, places, and times, as well as persons, were sanctified, i.e., consecrated to holy purposes. Consider the following examples:

- The Sabbath (Gen 2:3)
- The first fruit (Ex 13:2)
- The tithe (Lev. 27:30)
- The temple articles and the priests (Ex 40:10-13)
- The vow of the Nazirite (Num. 6:1-12)

Holiness or sanctification was therefore God's will for the Israelites in the OT; they were to live holy or sanctified lives, separated from the lifestyles of the nations around them (Ex. 19:6; Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 2 Chron. 29:5). The clarion call for them was to be holy because God is holy (Ex. 31:13; Lev. 11:44-45; Lev. 19:2; Lev. 20:7, 26; Lev. 21:8; Lev. 22:32; Is. 43:15). God actually chose the children of Israel to be holy as the following text suggests. "You are the children of the LORD your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave the front of your heads for the dead, for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession" (Deut. 14:1-2). Deuteronomy 26:19 continues that, "He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honour high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a

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<sup>15</sup> Harrison, International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 725.



people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised". God, therefore, demanded holy living from his people in the OT times.

### **2.3 Holiness in the New Testament**

In the NT, the Church is called to a high or heavenly calling (Heb. 3:1). This means that the level of holiness required in the NT or by the Church is higher than that of the OT times. For instance, Abraham, "God's friend", would not have been accepted into fellowship of the Church, neither would David, "the man after God's own heart", because both cohabited with more than one woman. Yet these men were able to serve God in their generation. The NT begins with the life of Jesus. The holiness of Christ Jesus has been made abundantly clear in the Bible. He was called "the Holy One of God" (Mark 1:24; Acts 3:14). It was prophesied before His birth that He would be called "the Righteous One" (Isa. 53:11), and the "One who loves righteousness and hates wickedness" (Ps. 45:7). Even the devil and evil spirits confirmed Christ Jesus as "the Holy One" (Lk. 4:34; Mark 1:24). His avowed enemies – the Pharisees and the Herodians – testified about Him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right and are not influenced by what others think. You teach the way of God truthfully" (Lk. 20:21, NLT). All these depict His holiness.

Jesus, on the "Sermon on the Mount", often referred to the OT regulations and insisted that life in the kingdom demanded a higher order of living. The Church is, therefore, called to live a holy life, a life like Christ in our speech, actions, thoughts and walk.

### **2.4 Holiness in the Church of Pentecost**

Holiness became the hallmark of The Church of Pentecost (CoP) during the formative years of the church. Pastor James McKeown would often preach on holiness. According to Onyinah, McKeown laid so much emphasis on holiness during his teachings, often times citing Hebrews 12:14b, 'without holiness no one will see God' to the extent that it seemed 'without holiness salvation might be considered absent'.<sup>16</sup> Members adhered to his teachings, and holiness consequently became a life-style of the church. For instance, the slogan of the 'Women's Movement', now the Women's Ministry of the church, which became officially recognised in 1945 by Adam McKeown, the brother of James McKeown,<sup>17</sup> was

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<sup>16</sup> Opoku Onyinah, 'The Man James McKeown' in Opoku Onyinah (ed.) *James McKeown Memorial Lectures: 50 Years of the Church of Pentecost* (Accra: The Church of Pentecost, 2004) p. 77.

<sup>17</sup> Kingsley Larbi, *Pentecostalism: The Eddies of Ghanaian Christianity* Accra: CPCS, 2001) p. 184.

'Holiness! Unto the Lord'. Koduah posits that one of the factors that led to the fast growth of the CoP was its 'strong emphasis on holiness'.<sup>18</sup>

Holiness in character was also expected to be exhibited outwardly. Women especially were required to dress modestly without the use of cosmetics during the McKeown era. Cosmetics or make-up were seen as belonging to the 'world'. At a General Church Council meeting held at Kumasi in 1968, it was directed that 'the wives of elders, overseers and pastors should set good examples by dressing modestly and discarding the wearing of wigs'.<sup>19</sup> Some even referred to wigs as the 'extension hair piece of *Mame Wata*', the water goddess. The men were also discouraged from spending time visiting football stadiums whilst they could use the time to pray. At the same Kumasi meeting in 1968 the church was also instructed that 'football pools, lotteries, raffles, sweep-stakers, horse racing, etc. are classified as gambling and should be discouraged in the Church'.<sup>20</sup>

Several disciplinary actions were therefore instituted for those who fell into such sin and other kinds of behaviour that the church felt would tarnish the image of the church. For instance, children born outside recognized marriages were not to be dedicated,<sup>21</sup> and suspended officers were not to be re-instated into their former position of office after release from suspension.<sup>22</sup> All these were to make sure and emphasize the fact that, the church was called to holy living.

Other areas of discipline that have been enshrined in the church's constitution are:

- habitually visiting questionable places;
- falling into open sin<sup>23</sup>
- embracing or spreading false doctrine
- divorcing wife or husband

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<sup>18</sup> Alfred Koduah, 'The Church in Postmodern Society', in Onyinah (ed.), *James McKeown*, p. 110.

<sup>19</sup> The Church of Pentecost, Working Principles (1962 – 1992), Accra p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> The Church of Pentecost, Working Principles, p. 7. Synan also records similar 'holiness code' in the Church of God and the Pentecostal Holiness Church. Some of which were that wearing of rings, bracelets, and earbobs were sinful and therefore prohibited. Wearing of necktie was not accepted and joining associations like lodges, political parties and labour unions were all seen as "instruments of Satan". Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1971) p. 81.

<sup>21</sup> General Council Meeting decision, 1968, Kumasi, CoP Working Principles, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> General Council Meeting decision, 1974, Asamankese. CoP Working Principles, p.10.

<sup>23</sup> This could be anything from sexual sins to assaulting a neighbour.

- marrying more than one wife
- a sister getting married to a married man
- disobeying and showing disrespect to the church authority at any level
- practising immorality.<sup>24</sup>

These principles were jealously guarded, and every member made the effort to live a holy life. Similar to the teachings of the Holiness Movement, The Church of Pentecost was associated with both 'holiness and power'.<sup>25</sup> Members earnestly prayed for the baptism in the Holy Spirit because it was believed that the Spirit gave the believer the power to live a holy life. But a careful study of the theology of the church during the McKeown era reveals that it was their understanding of the Second Advent that made them more zealous to live Christ-like lives as the following songs suggest.

<i>W̄sakyerekyerew Onyame mma din w̄s soro.</i>	The names of God's children are being written in heaven.
<i>Me din w̄s mu bi, Onyame nhoma no.</i>	My name is also in God's book.
<i>Nea ehia ne s̄e megye Yesu adi,</i>	What I need is to believe in Jesus,
<i>Nea ehia ne s̄e m̄sakra m'adwene,</i>	What I need is to repent,
<i>Nea ehia ne s̄e m̄eb̄s me bra yiye,</i>	What I need is to live holy life,
<i>Na m'afata soro ahemman no.</i> <sup>26</sup>	To inherit God's kingdom
<i>Ahen mu Hen na ̄reba n'ampa;</i>	The King of Kings is indeed coming;
<i>No tum k̄ese n'b̄wosow wiadze nyina:</i>	His great power will shake the entire world:
<i>Ewufo b̄s̄s̄er nye ateasefo nyina</i>	The dead will rise and together with the living
<i>B̄b̄s m'ek̄ehyia No w̄s wim h̄s.</i>	Will go and meet Him in the sky
<i>M'b̄eka ho, Alleluia! Mb̄eka ho bi,</i>	I will be one of them, Alleluia! I will be one

<sup>24</sup> The Church of Pentecost, *Constitution*, p. 75.

<sup>25</sup> Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1987) p. 94.

<sup>26</sup> Church of Pentecost, *Christian Choruses*, p. 41.

<i>No bāgyaa ntsi mo so m'bekā ho.</i>	By His blood I will be one of them.
<i>Ndzebānyefo runntum nnhwe</i>	Sinners will not be able to comprehend
<i>N'enyim hyenhyen n';</i>	His shining, shining face;
<i>Ahotsewfo nye No betseña afebāā.<sup>27</sup></i>	The saints will live with Him forever.

Members of CoP during the McKeown era believed their names were written in the 'Book of Life' and that to be able to inherit the Kingdom of God one had to live a holy life. They sang that they did not only have to pray but also lead a holy life to merit God's Kingdom. It must be noted that prayer meetings were common during the McKeown era; however, when it came to attaining God's Kingdom, holiness was the criteria, because sinners will not be able to stand before God's judgment. Rather, it is only the saints, whether dead or alive, who will be able to meet the soon coming King. In a message delivered at Sunyani, Ghana, in 1971, McKeown emphasised the point that "the church should be holy without spot or wrinkle. This is the church that Jesus will come for. Those who are not clean will not see the face of Jesus".<sup>28</sup> A holy church meant that everyone was in the position to contribute to the mission of the church. Living holy lives, thus, became an aspect of the life of the church.

## 2.5 Living in Holiness as Christians

Christians are expected to demonstrate Christ's character of holiness because He is holy. The Bible clearly states that, the Christian or the Church is called to holy living. 1 Peter 1:15-16 states that "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'". 2 Timothy 1:9 (NIV) adds that Christians are saved and called to holy living. The desire of God is that holiness would reflect in everything that we do as imitators of Christ. The following are a few highlights:

### 2.5.1 Holiness in Thought

There are so many things that go through the human mind everyday which can be good or bad. But as Christians, we need to think about good things that can shape our conduct to be like Christ who is holy. Paul said "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, and whatever is admirable if anything is excellent or praiseworthy think about such things" (Phil. 4:8, NLT). It is

<sup>27</sup> Church of Pentecost, *Christian Choruses*, p. 120.

<sup>28</sup> Notes in F. D. Walker diary, 1971.

important for the Christian to cultivate pure thoughts. This helps to avoid incubating evil thoughts that could hatch an evil action.

### 2.5.2 Holiness in what we See or Watch

Job said, "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman" (Job 31:1). Seeing is powerful and can lead to a lasting impression. According to Edgar Dale, an American educator, we remember more of what we see than hear or read. Seeing is power but seeing correctly is powerful and beneficial. Elisha prayed that the eyes of his servant may be opened and when it did, his servant's attitude changed (2 Ki. 6:17). At another instance, God told Jeremiah that he had seen correctly (Jer. 1:11-12). This implies that Christians must see correctly and see what God wants them to see. Watching pornographic materials and acts of nudity or being involved in voyeurism must be avoided. This was the act that caused David to sin (2 Sam. 11:2-3). Like Job, Christians should make the conscious effort not to sin with their eyes as standards for holy living is higher in the Church age than the OT times. Jesus sums it up this way:

You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell (Mt. 5:27-30).

### 2.5.3 Holiness in Conscience

Demonstrating Christ's holiness is not limited to Sunday within the church premises; it goes beyond the pulpit. We must be able to approach the holy God if our moral conscience is clear. John said: "Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God" (1 Jn. 3:21). Job was resolute about maintaining his righteousness and was sure that his conscience would not reproach him as long as he lived (Job 27:6). When Paul was making his defense before Felix, he concluded that he had always tried to keep a clear conscience before God and man (Acts 24:16). This position made it difficult for the king and the accusers to find any fault against Paul. Clear conscience produces boldness and helps the Christian to live a holy life before God (1 Cor. 4:3-4). 2 Corinthians 1:12 states that, "Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the

world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace". We are therefore to hold on to faith and a good conscience (1 Tim. 1:19; 3:9); serve God with a clear

conscience like our fathers did (2 Tim. 1:3); and keep a clear conscience to be blameless (1 Pet. 3:16).

#### 2.5.4 Holiness in Deeds

Whatever we do, we must know that our deeds are unto the Lord who is holy (Col. 3:17). The Church that is called to holy living will do well if every action is measured by the word of God. Jeremiah chapter 35 tells a beautiful story about the Recabites who obeyed and acted exactly as they were instructed by their grandfather. God was impressed with them and wanted the people of Judah to learn from them. As the church lives to obey every word of God, holiness is revealed in her daily living. This should affect how the Christian transact business (Lev. 19:35-36; Deut. 25:13-16; Pro. 11:1) and portray Christ at the work place.

#### 2.5.5 Holiness in Marriage

Holiness must be seen in our marriages. The Bible says, "Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Heb. 13:4). Marriage and the marital home is one practical area that holy living can be practised to the fullest. Parents have a duty of living holy lives to show God's way to their children whilst children have a duty to obey their parents as they obey the word of God.

#### 2.5.6 Holiness in Ministry

Paul wrote, "For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men" (2 Cor. 8:21). Unlike the children of Eli who could not display holiness in their ministry, Christian leaders should be holy and faithful in all their ministerial functions (Jn. 1:43-45; 1 Tim. 3:3; Titus 1:7-8). Unlike Jacob the supplanter, a man who manipulated the system to be at the top, (Gen. 27:18-27), and used people to "save his skin", (Gen. 32:1-8), church leaders must be sincere in their ministry and exhibit a high level of integrity and holiness. To sum it up, church leaders must exhibit holiness in all their activities.

### **3.0 HOW TO A MAINTAIN A HOLY LIFE**

It is important that the church continues to commit itself to holy living. In the midst of a corrupt world, Noah was found to be righteous.

The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth--men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air--for I am grieved that I have made them." But Noah found favour in the eyes of the LORD. This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God (Gen. 6:5-9).

God expects no less from the church and the following ways could help the Church maintain holy living:

- Maintain intimate communion with Christ (Jn. 15:4)
- Engage in fellowship with believers (Eph. 4:15-16)
- Devote yourself to prayer (Matt. 6:5-13; Col. 4:2)
- Obey God's Word (Jn. 17:17)
- Be sensitive to God's presence and care (Matt. 6:25-34)
- Love righteousness and hate evil (Heb. 1:9)
- Put sin to death (Rom. 6).
- Submit to God's discipline (Heb. 12:5-11)
- Continue to obey and be filled with the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14; Eph 5:18)

### **4.0 BENEFITS FOR HOLY LIVING**

Living for God and living a holy life is not an easy task but it has enormous blessings for the church. The truth of the matter is that God commands and demands holiness from His children (1 Pet. 1:16) and therefore the church can do no less. But the good news is that when we strive for holiness, we get rewarded. A few of them are as follows:

- Holiness brings intimacy with God and builds spiritual strength and stability (Ps. 15:1-6)
- Holiness brings promotion and anointing that leads to joy (Heb. 1:9)
- Holiness makes us useful, effective and set apart for a noble purpose (2 Tim. 2:20-21)
- Holiness makes us a preferred people who have received mercy and given the grace to declare the praises of God. Holy living, therefore, produces a heart full of praise (1 Pet. 2:9-10)
- Holiness avoids the wrath of God and pleases God (Eph. 5:1-7)
- Holiness gives hope and the hope of being part of the next world (2 Pet. 3:10-13)
- Holiness brings preservation of life and generational reward (Jer. 35)
- Those who live holy lives are the delight of the Lord (Ps. 16:3)
- Those who are holy lack nothing because they are in the position to communicate with God always (Ps. 34:9)
- Those who live holy lives are called the redeemed and sought after (Is. 62:12)
- Those who live holy lives have glorious inheritance and the incomparably great power of God working on their behalf (Eph. 1:18-21; Col. 1:12)
- Holiness gives the believer power (Eph. 3:14-19)
- Those who live holy lives enjoy the grace of God (2 Tim. 1:9).

## **5.0 OBSTACLES TO HOLY LIVING AND HOW TO OVERCOME THEM**

There are so many things that make it very difficult for many Christians to demonstrate Christ's character of holiness in their everyday lives. These include postmodern permissiveness, pressure of the people, the media, social activities, hypocrisy, and the notion of living under the canopy of universality. A few of these are examined below:

### **5.1 Postmodern Permissiveness**

If the church is to live a holy life, she must be conscious of postmodern permissiveness and hold on to the truth of God's word as the standard for living. Postmodernism says that truth does not exist and maintains that all viewpoints are equally valid. This leads to relativism, the idea that truth is relative. That is, what is right for one group may not necessarily be right or true for everyone.



The temptation for the Church today, as shown in the example of CoP, is to believe that the understanding of Scripture held by members during the McKeown era was too restrictive and fundamental. For instance, their understanding that Christ may return any moment and therefore members had to live holy lives and not worry about material things or acquiring wealth, may have been too elementary. After all Jesus has said the gospel will reach the ends of the earth as a testimony to all people before the end comes (Matt. 24:14). The argument is that, it was not likely the gospel had actually reached all peoples during the McKeown era and therefore they might have erred in thinking that the Lord was coming the next day. I think that this so-called better interpretation of Scripture is causing the church to lose her holiness. The church universal must, therefore, be sensitive to the over stretched rationalisation of biblical interpretation and take the word of God as it is, and not nullify the word of God for the sake of tradition and our modern understanding and interpretations (Mt. 15:6).

## **5.2 Pressure of the People**

People's pressure has always been one difficult area to deal with. This is because we live as a community and not as individuals. We all have friends, families, work mates, church members, neighbours and relatives who may be interested in our wellbeing or otherwise. We tend to listen to one another. Adam listened to Eve and lost his friendship with God (Gen. 3:12) and King Saul lost his kingship because of the pressure of the people (1 Sam. 13:11-14). Again, the church needs to hold on to its integrity and the truth of God's word. Job offers us a good example in dealing with family pressure.

Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes. His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said (Job 2:8-10).

## **5.3 The Love of the World**

One major obstacle to holy living is the flesh and how to deal with the flesh and self. John the Apostle calls it loving the world:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all

that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 Jn. 2:15-17, ESV).

When one loves the world, the reverse becomes true, and that is, the person does not love the Father. Love for the world or worldliness, affects our response to the love of God and to the will of God. When the love of God reduces in the believer, the desires of the flesh, the eyes and the pride of life set in. Anything in a Christian's life that causes him to lose his enjoyment of the Father's love or his desire to do the Father's will is worldly and must be avoided.

When a person becomes born again, he still lives in this world of wickedness. Jesus said "because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold" (Mt. 24:12) and may abandon the faith. When love of God grows cold, the gospel is adulterated, faith is compromised, morality and virtues are reduced, the word of God

is diluted, Christianity becomes loose and we live in a laissez-faire church where everything and anything is permissible and holy living is de-emphasized.

The Church will have to fight the flesh with prayer, studying and obeying the word of God, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit and fellowship. The Early Church devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. They exhibited love to one another and had favour with God and man (Acts. 2:42-47).

The caution is that, those who think they are standing must be careful they do not fall (1 Cor. 10:1-13). Giving the example of the children of Israel, Paul advises believers to remember that the Israelites were all under the same cloud, passed through the Red Sea, baptized unto Moses, ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink, not all of them pleased the Lord. As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be at the coming of the Lord (Matt. 24:36-51).

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

In the present world in which live in it has consistently become difficult to live holy lives. The church is no longer associated with holiness. But holiness is one of the communicable

or moral attributes of God that He wants the church to share with. Peter admonishes believers to live holy lives because God is holy (1 Pet. 1:16). If the people of old were able to live holy lives in the midst of corruption at their time, the church of today has no excuse but to live holy lives without which no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14). There is power in holy living and the Lord abundantly rewards those who live holy living.

DRAFT

# SECULAR HUMANISM

Alfred Koduah (Apostle Dr)

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The philosophical war appears to be the greatest and fiercest battle being fought in the world today. It is the battle for the minds of the people. It is a battle between worldviews. It is a clash of cultures and ideologies. It is a war that directly or indirectly involves everyone regardless of the person's status or religious orientation. It is without doubt that society has always been, and continues to be shaped by philosophies. Peter Hicks observes, "The world today has been shaped by the philosophy of the past generations."<sup>29</sup> These include deism, nihilism, naturalism, Marxism, existentialism, and Eastern mysticism. In addition to these, contemporary society continues to be shaped by other philosophies such as secular humanism.

Secular humanism belongs to a panoply of "isms", which are shaping the minds of people in the world today. The other key ones are postmodernism, consumerism, hedonism, narcissism, feminism, relativism, and pluralism. Of all these, secular humanism appears to be the most prominent as it has become a literal religion, which Homer Duncan describes as "the most dangerous religion in America".<sup>30</sup>

This paper examines secular humanism with particular emphasis on how it affects Christianity. The paper will specifically look at the emergence, the ultimate objectives, official symbol, and the basic teachings of secular humanism. It will further look at how this idea is disseminated and its impact on Christianity. The paper will conclude with how Christians can respond to secular humanism.

## 2.0 THE EMERGENCE OF SECULAR HUMANISM

Secular humanism takes its roots from ancient Greek philosophers such as the fabulist<sup>31</sup> and story-teller, Aesop (620-564 BC), the pre-Socratic theorist, Democritus (460-370 BC), Epictetus (50-135 AD), Epicurus (341-270 BC), and the pre-Socratic thinker, Protagoras (490-420 BC). The scientific thinking that arose during the period of the Enlightenment also

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<sup>29</sup> Hicks, Peter, *The Journey So Far. Philosophy Through the Ages*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 13.

<sup>30</sup> Duncan, Homer, *Secular Humanism: The Most Dangerous Religion in America*. (Lubbock: Missionary Crusader, 1980).

<sup>31</sup> A person who composes fables or elaborate dishonest stories.

had some elements of secular humanistic ideas. Since then, secular humanistic ideas have permeated virtually every philosophical thought.

The precursors of secular humanism were secularistic and humanistic groups. After George Holyoake (1817-1906) coined the term "secularism" in 1851, the Leicester Secular Society was formed as the first of its kind. This was followed by the formation of several other societies such as the Church of Humanity in 1878 led by the English philosopher, Richard Congreve (1818-1899). The British Humanist Association was established in 1896 with the aim of encouraging people to live good lives without any beliefs in religious or supernatural systems.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a religious crisis in the western world because there was so much debate between religion and science. People were moving away from religious and Christian beliefs into secularism and the Evangelical churches were working hard towards personal piety. It was in the midst of that crisis that the Ethical Movement emerged. To avoid divisions and diversion of attention, the Movement adopted a neutral position on all religious beliefs.

Spearheaded by the famous rationalist and social ethics professor, Felix Adler (1851-1933), in 1877, the Ethical Movement encouraged people to detach morality from theology because it was thought that religion did not have all the answers as far as morality was concerned. In addition to highlighting the need for education for the young people, the movement also encourages active involvement in philanthropic activities.

Eventually, secular humanism was organised into a movement in the 1920s. As a way of unifying the movement's identity, secular humanists put their ideas together and published it as the first *Humanist Manifesto* in 1933. That document was considered as the basis for a new "religion" that did not profess a belief in any deity, but a dynamic one aimed at meeting the day-to-day needs of the people.

By 1943, the American Humanist Association had been established. This was followed by the formation of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) in 1952 with the British evolutionary biologist, Julian Huxley (1887-1975) as its leader. By 1973, it was realised that all the religious aspects of human life had to be completely replaced.

Accordingly, the second *Humanist Manifesto* was drafted by “the father of secular humanism”, Paul Kurtz (1925-2012), and Edwin H. Wilson (1898-1993), and published in 1973 with emphasis on a belief in science, democracy, Marxism, ethics and naturalism. Other manifestos and declarations of secular humanism include a declaration in 1980, a declaration of interdependence in 1988, IHEU minimum statement on humanism in 1996, *Humanist Manifesto* of 2000, Amsterdam Declaration in 2002 and the *Humanism Manifesto III* of 2003.

### **3.0 THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVES OF SECULAR HUMANISM**

Ultimately, secular humanism aims at achieving four main goals. First, it wants to establish a new world religion that would be of ecumenical nature by synchronising the best aspects of all the world’s major religions. That would be referred to as “A common faith”. Second, secular humanism hopes to accomplish a new economic system, which has to completely replace the current one.

Third, because secular humanism considers the current global systems as archaic, it is aiming at achieving a new world order in which there would be no poverty and other social problems. To achieve this, secular humanism thinks that it has to first destroy Christian beliefs and establish an anti-God, anti-Christ and anti-Bible principles globally.

Fourth, secular humanism envisions a new race of people for the new world order who would control their own evolution, control their educational system and promote secular humanistic ideas through the media, legal systems, religion and the state.<sup>32</sup> Thus, secular humanism aims at controlling every sphere of human endeavour.

### **4.0 THE OFFICIAL SYMBOL OF SECULAR HUMANISM**

The official symbol of secular humanism is “the Happy Human” that drives home the humanist teaching, “There is but one life that we know of and we should influence that life by being happy, and the best way to do that is by making others so!” The lyrics of Happy Human song repeatedly states, “I’m happy to be human, happy to be human...”

The Happy Human icon was designed by a boy from North London, Denis Barrington. Out of over 150 others, he won the winning design in a competition organised by the British Humanist Association in 1965.

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<sup>32</sup> Duncan, *Secular Humanism: The Most Dangerous Religion in America*, 15-16.

#### 4.1 The Happy Human Logos



The Happy Human icon, with its various forms is being used by several humanist groups such as the American Humanist Association, British Humanist Association, Council of Australian Humanist Societies, European Humanist Federation, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Humanists in the UK, Humanist Canada, and Council for Secular Humanism. The version being used by the American Humanist Association has the embossed inscription "Good without a God".

This drives home the point that secular humanism aims at creating a happy world with happy and good people without God. The Happy Human logo thus displays the basic tenets of secular humanism that human beings are responsible enough to be moral and good without any religious or supernatural beliefs. Needless to say, the Happy Human logo has given secular humanism its unique identity to the extent that today, wherever the icon is found, secular humanism is also found there.

#### 5.0 BASIC TEACHINGS OF SECULAR HUMANISM

Secular humanism is a non-religious philosophy that rejects religion and the concept of the existence of God. With its main aim of working towards a better and blissful world, the teachings of secular humanism bother on all aspects of human life. These include the concept of God, the Scriptures, how the world came into being, the role of human beings in this world, sin and pleasure. Because secular humanists do not generally believe in the existence of God, afterlife or anything supernatural, they just live for here and now. According to David A. Noebel, "Humanists view God as the creation of man", as "science and scientific process have rendered God obsolete".<sup>33</sup>

As a naturalistic philosophy, secular humanism shares the views of naturalism, which postulates that because only nature exists, any belief in God, heaven, hell, soul, spirit, and

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<sup>33</sup> Noebel, David A., *Understanding the Times: The Religious Worldviews of Our Day and the Search for Truth*. (Manitou Springs: Summit Ministries, 1991), 52.

spirit beings such as Satan, and angels are mere fantasies. With such a position, secular humanism teaches people not to be worried about any concept of salvation or eternal damnation because this life is all that they have to enjoy.

Secular humanists with their atheist mind-set do not believe in the Bible. According to Homer Duncan, "Humanists believe the Bible is nothing more than a compilation of pagan myths and Hebrew folk-tales written by a prescientific people", who thought that they should find a way of determining their moral values.<sup>34</sup> Secular humanists simply think the Bible is the work of some human beings. Noebel quotes the author of the *Humanist Manifesto II*, Paul Kurtz, as saying,

Scientific and scholarly biblical criticism has made it abundantly clear that the Bible is a human document, a thousand-year-old record of the experiences of primitive nomadic and agricultural tribes living on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. There is no evidence that Yahweh spoke to Abraham, Moses, Joseph, or any of the Old Testament prophets. The biblical accounts of their experiences are the records of Hebrew national existence, seeking to sustain itself by the myth of the "chosen people". These books have not been empirically validated; they express an ancient worldview and the moral conceptions of a prescientific culture that invoked deities to sanctify its ideological aspirations... The New Testament presents the incredible tale of Jesus, a man of whom we have very little historical knowledge. Obviously, this is not an objective historical account. The "divinity" of Jesus has never been adequately demonstrated... The tales of Jesus' life and ministry expressed in the Four Gospels and the letters of Paul were written twenty to seventy years after his death. They are riddled with the contradictions implicit in an oral tradition.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Duncan, Homer, *The Religion of Secular Humanism and the Public Schools*. (Lubbock: MC International Publications, no date), 26.

<sup>35</sup> Noebel, *Understanding the Times*, 727-728.



Obviously, these statements by Paul Kurtz are outrageous to well-meaning Christians because the Bible is the pivot on which the Christian faith revolves. Any attack on the validity, authenticity and reliability of the Bible is an attack on the Christian faith itself. However, because believers in secular humanism have discredited any belief in the Bible, they may sometimes mention the name of God just for fun. Believing in human reason rather than divine revelation, secular humanists think that although the Bible offers some moral and spiritual guidance, it does not necessarily mean it is the truth.

Humanists do not believe in Christ Jesus as either God or the Son of God. For them, even if Jesus ever lived on this earth, He was just an ordinary person with some interesting teaching prowess, who died like any other person. They further discredit the virgin birth of Christ Jesus and do not believe that he died to atone for the sins of the world. They also do not believe in the resurrection of Christ. Accordingly, they think that human beings are free to control their own affairs and that everybody should be free to believe whether God exists or not.

Believing strongly in evolution, secular humanists think that the world was not created as the Bible says, but it is existing on its own. They also believe that human beings originated from a continuous process of evolution. Human beings, they believe, have enough capabilities to do whatever is needed to make life worth living without any divine assistance.

Secular humanism aims at literally "dethroning" God and "enthroning" human beings as the supreme masters of this world. It deifies man and dethrones God to become a religion without God. It believes strongly that human beings are capable of solving their own problems without recourse to any form of supernaturalism.

Having rejected the existence of God and supernaturalism, secular humanism believes that human beings can use their knowledge through science and technology to create a blissful world and enjoy a happy life in it without any assistance from any deity. This makes human beings their own saviour.

Having discredited the existence of God and anything supernatural and having "enthroned" human beings as the supreme masters of the world, secular humanism believes that the totality of the human being was not created through any supernatural means as the Bible says, but that they are the products of evolution.

Similarly, contrary to the biblical teaching that through the disobedience of Adam, the human race has become depraved, secular humanism believes that human beings are inherently good or perfect. It, therefore, tends to blame society and a person's environment for any evil behaviour. It postulates that if the people's environments are improved, they would adjust and start doing right things. As believers in evolution, secular humanists even think that human beings are evolving in a continuous progression into better forms of humanness. For them, therefore, until human beings are able to do away with religious and moral beliefs, they cannot progress further.

Because secular humanists have rejected any notion of the existence of God, they do not accept any absolute moral code such as the Ten Commandments that are perceived to have been given by God. They think that human beings are capable of designing their own moral codes devoid of any supernatural input. Accordingly, whatever human beings can do to make themselves happy should be done as long as those actions do not fall foul of state laws. Human beings can also believe in anything they want provided that doing so does not break any law.

Secular humanism is trying to empower human beings to be free from all religious and moral obligations because it thinks that any belief in the existence of God impedes human progress towards the expected utopia. As such, it encourages individuals to develop their own ethical and moral codes. As far as it is concerned, morality and decision-making should be based on humanist values such as reason, personal ethics and justice without reference to any religious or supernatural claims. It encourages human reason, personal ethics and naturalistic tendencies in all aspects of human life. The human-centred ethics and morality have become the driving force behind the various questionable and deviant lifestyles of contemporary society.

Secular humanism teaches that people should not just accept any ideology, dogma and tradition. Rather, every individual has the right to use reason, factual evidence, and scientific method of enquiry to test any belief. As far as secular humanism is concerned, it is incumbent on every individual to search for and develop their own ethical conduct that will bring about a better world. Its reason is that secular humanists think that in this pluralistic world, any absolutistic moral or ethical code designed by any religion should be rejected as unreasonable. The *Humanist Manifesto II* states,

We affirm that moral values derive their sources from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life... Stress that whether a specific action is right or wrong depends on the meaning that a given group attaches to the action... what is considered as right, good, or important in one society may be regarded as wrong, bad or unimportant in another. Also, the cultural values of a particular society may change over time... let each pupil decide for himself how he feels about each. Emphasise that this is not a test, and there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.<sup>36</sup>

In other words, secular humanists promote morality without God or being good without God. Instead of religious beliefs, secular humanism promotes utilitarianism, which teaches that an action is right as long as it is useful and beneficial to the majority. They, therefore, think that because new knowledge is being unearthed every day, people should be allowed to constantly search for their own truths, thus rejecting all forms of predetermined objective truth.

Secular humanism thinks that because human beings are constantly evolving for the better, nothing should be made to appear permanent. While accepting the need for laws to regulate the day-to-day activities of people, it does not accept that religious-oriented laws should be permanently entertained.

For secular humanists, because everybody including criminals are constantly evolving, a criminal today may evolve to become a better person tomorrow. It, therefore, follows that crimes that are punishable by death penalty today may change tomorrow as human beings continue to evolve. As a result, secular humanists are against punishments such as death penalty. Because they believe that whenever criminals receive harsher punishment there is an increase in crime rate, they think the way and means crimes are punished make criminals unwilling to change, thus hindering their evolution for the better.

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<sup>36</sup> "Humanist Manifesto II", cited from <https://americanhumanist.org> Accessed on Friday, January 4, 2019.

Secular humanists promote the use of natural laws because they think that human beings are inherently aware of a correct way to behave, which should not be determined by any deity. For them, that correct way enables them to know that it is unjust to discriminate against others based on their race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, gender, creed, sexual orientation, or physical handicap. In other words, the rights of everybody should be respected and tolerated as long as it does not fall foul of the law.

Accordingly, secular humanism encourages democratic system of governance that emphasises the rights, freedoms and autonomy of the individual. It believes that if all governments would embrace democracy, it will speed up the human quest for a blissful global order. With its interest in globalisation, secular humanism encourages the coming together of all peoples into a global community that goes beyond national borders. In the process, cultures and traditional moral values are compromised into one global culture in which ethics and morality are individually determined.

Concerning marriage and family life, secular humanists believe that marital relationship has not only outlived its usefulness, but it has also become so restrictive that it symbolises social slavery. Noebel cites Lawrence Casler as saying, "Marriage, for most people, has outlived its usefulness and is doing more harm than good. The solution is not to make divorces more difficult to obtain, but to recognise the so-called divorce problem for what it is: a symptom of the marriage problem."<sup>37</sup>

Even though secular humanists celebrate religious-based holidays such as Christmas and Easter, they only consider the secular aspects of those days. They also encourage the celebration of the ancient superstitious Halloween, June 21 as the World Humanist Day, February 12 as Darwin Day, December 10 as Human Rights Day, and December 23 as Human Light Day on which they celebrate ideas and values of secular humanism such as compassion, tolerance, free enquiry, reason, rationalism, honesty, empathy, and tolerance.

Secular humanists perform their own weddings, funerals, child naming ceremonies and the coming of age rituals among others. For example, during secular humanist funerals, the family looks for an officiating officer and agrees with him or her the venue and form the whole ceremony should take without any religious rituals. Simply put, it is a funeral without God or any religious activity. It is, therefore, no surprise that some contemporary people

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<sup>37</sup> Casler, Lawrence, cited by Noebel, *Understanding the Times*, 435.

want their churches to organise funerals for their deceased ones on their own terms and conditions. Similarly, some families sometimes want to put pressure on the church to conduct the funeral for their deceased non-Christian relations and friends even though that may be against church traditions.

Because they perceive a funeral as a celebration of life and not death, secular humanists believe that the ceremony should not be used as a means to convert anyone or promote any religious belief, but to celebrate the life of the deceased person. Thus, the term “celebration of life”, which has now become popular is a secular humanistic one.

Actually, because secular humanism believes that there is no life after death, it accepts euthanasia and suicide in some circumstances. *Humanist Manifesto II* notes,

Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful... There is no credible evidence that life survives the death of the body. The individual must experience a full range of civil liberties in all societies... It also includes a recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.<sup>38</sup>

Many secular humanists include in their wills that their property or funds should be donated to a particular charity or organisation. During the funerals of such persons, their family members and friends may also want to donate to such organisations and charities to honour the memory of that deceased person.

Secular humanist weddings are non-religious. The concerned couple decides the venue (either outdoor or indoor), the date, time, and how the whole ceremony should be conducted. In other words, it is personalised or customised to suit the desire of the couple involved. The couple have to determine what they want to say during the exchange of vows in line with their personal values and aspirations. In brief, the couple concerned determine every aspect of the wedding ceremony without any laid down rules.

No wonder, in the church today, some people want to organise their weddings on their own terms even if that goes against laid-down church rules and practices. In some churches, the traditional marriage vows have been modified where “for better for worse” has been

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<sup>38</sup> “Humanist Manifesto II”, cited from <https://americanhumanist.org> Accessed on Friday, January 4, 2019.

replaced with “for better for better”, “for richer for poorer” has been replaced with “for richer for richer” and “in sickness and in health” has also been replaced with “in health and in health”. The general notion now is that during wedding ceremonies, no negative words are to be uttered.

Child-naming ceremonies within secular humanism is also non-religious. It is aimed at introducing the baby into the nuclear and extended families, friends and the community. During the ceremony, parents, siblings and friends make goodwill pledges to the baby. It is usually held with music, reading of poems, story-telling, the eating of special foods including cakes. As with other related ceremonies of secular humanism, child-naming is personalised or customised to suit the desires and aspirations of the parents concerned.

Possibly taking inspirations from the personalised or customised mode of child naming ceremonies, some Christian parents sometimes want to put pressure on their pastors to customise the naming of their babies according to their taste and format.

Secular humanists have their version of coming-of-age ceremonies. This non-religious ceremony is aimed at preparing adolescents for adulthood. It is just like the Christian confirmation rites except that the humanist one does not include any religious rites. The youngsters are taken through short courses before the actual ceremony in which they are taught history, nature, worldviews, technology, culture, civil rights and responsibilities, gender equality, multi-culturalism, job or career opportunities, human sexuality, environmental issues, interpersonal relations and lifestyles. Needless to say, most of the youngsters graduate from the courses having consciously or unconsciously imbibed the teachings of secular humanism.

A comparative<sup>39</sup> analysis of the basic teachings of secular humanism and that of Christianity can be summed up in Table 1.

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<sup>39</sup> Duncan, *The Religion of Secular Humanism and the Public Schools*, 35-36, 86.

**TABLE ONE**

<b>SECULAR HUMANISM</b>	<b>CHRISTIANITY</b>
Based on human reasoning and scientific investigations	Based on divine revelation
Belief that the universe is self-existing	Belief that God is in control of the world
Perceives the Bible as a concoction of myths and Hebrew folktales	Perceives the Bible as the word of God
Promotes individually-determined values	Promotes biblical standards of values
Belief in relativism	Belief in biblical absolutes
Belief in human beings as the best and perfect product of evolution	Belief in the depraved human nature in need of salvation from Christ Jesus
Belief in evolutionism	Belief in creationism
Belief in the autonomous human being who should be allowed to control his own destiny	Belief in the sovereignty of God to whom all humans should submit and render accounts
Belief that God does not answer prayer	Belief in the prayer-answering God
Belief in the principle that the human being is the product of his environment and so should not be blamed for his failures.	Belief in the notion that human beings are accountable for their actions before the Almighty God.
Belief that trust in God is a hinderance to human development	Belief that human beings need God for survival
Promotes unrestrained pleasure enjoyment and self-indulgence	Promotes restraint of natural appetites
Belief that the human being is self-sufficient and does not need God	Belief that the human being has to depend on God for survival
Belief in heaven, hell and eternity is foolish	Belief in the reality and existence of heaven, hell and eternity

## 6.0 DISSEMINATION OF SECULAR HUMANISTIC IDEAS

Humanistic ideas are being disseminated through several ways. The first is through educational institutions where children and students are subtly indoctrinated with the secular humanistic philosophy. Because secular humanists uphold the theory of evolution, they have used the classroom to indoctrinate children to reject creationism. Today, many educational textbooks promote the theory of evolution and discredit the notion of creationism. Considering the critical role textbooks play in shaping the values of young people, Duncan cites some publishers as thinking that they could control the minds of the people if only they were permitted to publish the textbooks of their nations.<sup>40</sup>

Secular humanists believe that, any faith in God is misguided and harmful to Children. They, therefore, seek to replace the children's dependence and trust in God by making them think that unless they save themselves, no deity will save them. They also believe that as the child is the "clay" in the hands of the educator, they can be moulded as the educator wants. As such, they are doing all things possible to ensure that they train and educate the educators and teachers to enable them to teach the children the values of secularism.

The process of using the classroom to indoctrinate children in secular humanism was led by intellectuals such as the philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer, John Dewey (1859-1952). He is known globally as "the father of modern American education", who became a secular humanist later in his life and was one of the 34 signatories of the first *Humanist Manifesto* in 1933.

The agenda of secular humanism to manipulate the educational systems to propagate its ideas is summed up in the statement that,

The battle for the hearts and minds of children is being fought in the classrooms. The new religion of humanism will win that battle for the children over the rotting corpse of Christianity... Faith in any kind of god is harmful to children. Children must be taught to depend on themselves and their community of mankind to find their happiness and fulfilment. There is no god to do it for them. We are doing them a favour to

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<sup>40</sup> Duncan, *Secular Humanism: The Most Dangerous Religion in America*, 19.



reprogram their minds. After all we know that there is no soul, only a bundle of nerves and muscles that can be programmed as we like to believe in the evolving values of humanity.<sup>41</sup>

In 1930, Charles Francis Potter wrote in his book, *Humanism: A New Religion* that,

Education and science are on the side of humanism... Education is thus a most powerful ally of humanism, and every American public school is a school of humanism. What can the theistic Sunday schools, meeting for an hour once a week, and teaching only a fraction of the children, do to stem the tide of a five-day program of humanistic teaching?<sup>42</sup>

In his books such as the *Brave New World*, the English writer, philosopher, novelist and popular humanist, Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), who became the first Director General of UNESCO, cleverly used BF (Before Ford) and AF (After Ford) to replace the generally accepted calendar dating system that uses BC (Before Christ) and AD (After Christ). Instead of using "Our Lord" in his writings, he rather used "Our Ford" to refer to Henry Ford, the founder of the American Ford automobile company, who revolutionised factory production through the modern assembly line. Huxley also used other expressions such as "Oh, Ford", "For Ford's sake", "My Ford", "Ford help him", "Year of Our Ford", "Ford helps those who help themselves", and "Ford help you!". Ford, therefore, became the surrogate and the surrogate word for God in Huxley's anticipated *Brave New World*. In the process, he tried to delete the Lord's name from the vocabulary of his readers, especially the young people, and replace religion with a worship of technology.<sup>43</sup>

No wonder, because the writings of Huxley and other related factors have influenced generations, many writers and educational systems in many Western countries now prefer the use of non-religious dating systems such as BCE (Before Common Era) and CE (Common Era) in textbooks to demonstrate sensitivity to non-Christians. Considering the way secular humanism has impacted the educational systems, Duncan asserts, "Secular humanism is a dangerous religion because of its tenets and because it is being propagated through our

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<sup>41</sup> Rice, Larry A., "A Christian Light on Humanism in our Children's Schools", cited from <http://www.christianparents.com/hmsumiii.htm> Accessed on July 27, 2007.

<sup>42</sup> Potter, Charles Francis, *Humanism: A New Religion*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930), 128.

<sup>43</sup> Huxley, Aldous, [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brave\\_New\\_World](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brave_New_World) Accessed on Saturday, October 26, 2019.

educational system.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, it can be said that secular humanists through the educational systems have succeeded in kicking the Bible, prayers and everything Christian-related from the schools, especially in the Western world.

Quite ironically, when some of the children grow up and end up in jail because of lack of biblical influence, the prison authorities encourage them to read and study the Bible as a means of helping them to reform.

The second mode of transmitting secular humanistic ideas is through the media. Secular humanistic ideas have permeated the media landscape to the extent that radio programs, television advertisements, talk shows, magazines, the internet, films, the social media platforms, movies, and other cultural-shaping fields have all been saturated with secular humanistic themes. A typical example is seen in the enthusiasm with which international media houses publicize issues concerning LGBTs especially when a country legalises their activities.

The third means by which the ideas of secular humanism are disseminated is through publication of books, articles, magazines, websites and other literature. An example is *TheHumanist.com*, which is a daily online news site of the American Humanist Association established in 2014. Secular humanists have several publishing houses that promote their teachings to the public and educational institutions. An example is the Prometheus Books, a publishing company with its headquarters in Amherst, New York, USA that was founded in 1969 by the philosopher Paul Kurtz, who also founded the Council of Secular Humanism. It mainly publishes books on secularism, humanism, scepticism, science and freethought.

The fourth means by which secular humanistic ideas are disseminated is through the movement's numerous agencies such as the North-eastern Florida based First Coast Freethought Society, founded in 1998 to promote science and reason over dogma, faith, and belief in the supernatural. Other key agencies promoting humanistic ideas include the American Humanist Association (AHA), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Planned Parenthood Association, and the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS).

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<sup>44</sup> Duncan, *Secular Humanism: The Most Dangerous Religion in America*, 14.

In fact, secular humanism has local, national and international agencies in virtually every area of human endeavour. They include foundation for ministers of the gospel who no longer accept supernatural beliefs, ethical unions and organisations, freethinkers of different shapes and sizes, social engineering groups, human rights groups, rationalists and sceptics' associations, heathen societies, humanity fellowships, inquiry centres, as well as agnostics, atheists, humanists and non-theistic groups. Through these agencies, secular humanists are able to influence local, national and international decisions to fall in line with their theories and ideas.

The fifth means by which secular humanism propagates its message is through its numerous local, national and international NGOs, advocacy and civil society groups. In fact, secular humanists have NGOs for virtually every aspect of human life. These have been organised under the global umbrella body, the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), which operates in over 40 countries and has a special consultative status at the United Nations. Founded in Amsterdam in 1952, IHEU serves humanistic, atheist, rationalist, secular, sceptic, freethought, ethical, and cultural organisations globally.

Its sponsored non-religious NGOs are involved in humanitarian and poverty alleviation activities, as well as relief, women's health, gender equality, education, health, agriculture, conservation, animal rights, children's rights, gay rights, HIV/AIDS, anti-discrimination support, and economic empowerment programs. This makes it difficult to know their true intentions and identities. Through these NGOs and advocacy programs, they are able to gain attention to lobby or pressurise governments and institutions to accept the secular humanistic philosophy. Christians are to be careful of the NGOs they work with.

They even sometimes persuade governments to pass laws and regulations that may be culturally alien, but favours their humanistic agenda. The developing countries have suffered greatly in this regard as they are made to make cultural concessions and compromises in order to receive financial assistance. For example, many developing countries are now under pressure from their advanced Western developing partners to accept, respect, and even pass laws recognising the rights of homosexuals before they can qualify for financial assistance.

The sixth means by which secular humanistic ideas are disseminated is through the United Nations and its agencies. Under the guise of promoting human rights, the United Nations

has knowingly or unknowingly been transmitting the ideas of secular humanism to its member nations. The UNESCO has been at the forefront in disseminating secular humanistic views to educational institutions all over the world. It has succeeded in injecting secular humanistic ideas into the curricula of schools from kindergarten to universities. It has cleverly eliminated religious and Christian values from school curricula. Regrettable, it has been done so subtly that not many teachers and educators are aware of the secular humanistic ideas they are teaching.

Thus, the ideals of secular humanism are being propagated through educational institutions, the media, literature, secular humanistic agencies and NGO's and international agencies such as the United Nations and its agency, UNESCO.

## **7.0 THE IMPACT OF SECULAR HUMANISM ON CHRISTIANITY**

The impact of secular humanism on Christianity is mindboggling. First, secular humanism has continuously attacked and discredited the Christian faith itself. Because the teachings of secular humanism are diametrically opposed to that of the Christian faith, it simply aims at destroying Christianity. Duncan asserts that, "If secular humanists are to accomplish their goals, biblical Christianity would be completely obliterated."<sup>45</sup> Richard Bozart also wrote,

Finally, it is irresistible – we must ask how we can kill the god of Christianity. We need only insure that our schools teach only secular knowledge; that they teach children to constantly examine and question all theories and truths put before them in any form; and that they teach nothing is proven by the number of persons who believe a thing to be true. If we could achieve this, god would indeed be shortly due for a funeral service.<sup>46</sup>

Having attacked and discredited Christian values, secular humanism is trying to destroy all the virtues Christianity has sought to promote from time immemorial. It also seeks to erode all forms of morality being taught and practised by Christians. Whereas Christianity is promoting moral absolutism as prescribed by the Bible, secular humanism is encouraging moral relativism and permissiveness. Whereas the Bible is teaching creation, secular

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<sup>45</sup> Duncan, *The Religion of Secular Humanism and the Public Schools*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> Bozarth, Richard G., "On Keeping God Alive" in *American Atheist*. (Nov. 1977), 9.

humanism is preaching evolution. Through the indoctrination of children in evolution theory and moral relativism, secular humanism has become a major challenge to Christianity.

The second way by which secular humanism has impacted Christianity is that even though the Bible teaches high standards of sexual purity, secular humanism has promoted sexual promiscuity in an unprecedented manner. It helped to spark the sexual revolution that has had a profound negative impact on the world today. Section six of the *Humanist Manifesto II* states the position of secular humanism on sexuality that,

In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognised... Neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behaviour between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered "evil"... A civilized society should be tolerant one. Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their lifestyles as they desire."<sup>47</sup>

With this position, the world was ushered into the sexual revolution. Although sexual issues have always been held sacred in most cultures, in the 1960s and the early 1970s, the sex revolution was launched in the Western world, which granted unlimited sexual freedom to consenting adults to do whatever pleased them sexually as long as it did not fall foul of the law. It enabled people to break away from the long-held notion of the sacredness of sexuality and caused them to experiment with free sex in and outside of marriage. The only exception is rape and other forms of sexual abuses.

Secular humanism has, therefore, succeeded in removing sacredness from sexual activities. It simply states that all forms of sexual expression are acceptable and that public sexual education are considered necessary provided it is taught without Judeo-Christian morals.<sup>48</sup> No wonder, Charles Colson states, "Sex is no longer a sacred covenant, but a mere vehicle

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<sup>47</sup> "Humanist Manifesto II", cited from <https://americanhumanist.org> Accessed on Friday, January 4, 2019.

<sup>48</sup> Duncan, *The Religion of Secular Humanism and the Public Schools*, 72.

of self-expression and pleasure.”<sup>49</sup> In addition to enabling women to take control over their sexual reproductive rights and functions including the right to abortion, secular humanism also encourages sexual minorities such as homosexuals, queers, bisexuals and transgenders to boldly come out to fight for their rights and recognition.

The unrestrained sexual freedoms paved way for the emergence of the multi-billion-dollar pornographic business that sprang up in the 1970s and 1980s. Since then, people have had access to pornography in an unprecedented manner through television, the internet, mobile phones, magazines, billboards, films, sex talks and sexually-provocative dressing. In other words, the sexual revolution has helped move sex from the bedroom into the open.

In addition to emboldening people to talk freely about sex, the sexual revolution has also encouraged people to display their sexuality openly without shame or remorse. Through the sexual revolution, pre-marital sex, which was once seriously considered unacceptable became readily acceptable and accessible.

The basic motto of secular humanism promotes unrestrained sexual freedom. It states,

Premarital sex is not only joyous but healthy, and that as long as there is a mutual feeling, it's perfectly okay; and if you get caught with an unwanted pregnancy, don't worry – just have an abortion... The more you consume, the happier you become. Have a lot of sex. If you choose to get married and it does not work, do not worry, you can easily get a divorce.<sup>50</sup>

Under the guise of sex education, secular humanists have managed to compel the educational institutions to modify their curricula to teach sexuality to students at all levels. Today, under the pretence of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), secular humanism is communicating its permissive culture on unrestraint sexual pleasure to students. Secular humanists believe that young people should have much sexual education as a way of managing their sexuality. This approach is tantamount to putting petrol on already ignited fire.

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<sup>49</sup> Colson, Charles, *Collection: The Good Life. How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 2004), 304.

<sup>50</sup> Duncan, *The Religion of Secular Humanism and the Public Schools*, 79.

Duncan has chronicled the cardinal issues of sex education that have been taught from various textbooks of public schools that,

Adolescent petting is an important opportunity to learn about sexual responses and to gratify sexual and emotional desires without a more serious commitment... A person with variant sexual interests is not necessarily bad, sick, or mentally ill... Sex urges can be fun for an adolescent... Venereal diseases are easily treated... Wife exchanging for short periods often takes place... Husbands have a very free hand in their married life and it is considered to be a quite in order for them to have intercourse with any woman whenever there is an opportunity... Contrary to past belief, masturbation is completely harmless and in fact can be quite useful in training oneself to respond sexually... Divorce is considered an acceptable way of solving a problem... Everyone must develop his own set of principles to govern his own sexual behaviour.<sup>51</sup>

Homosexual themes have now been introduced to children's cartoons in the hope that as the children watch those cartoons, they will grow up with the feeling that being gay or lesbian is normal. Canada has introduced Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Education (SOGIE) into its academic curriculum starting from kindergarten level. It is an educational resource on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity, which is aimed at tackling discrimination and violence against lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans-genders, queers, intersexs, asexuals, pansexuals and kinks (LGBTQIAPKs). This is aimed at addressing misinformation and dispelling harmful myths and stigmas against people with these sexual orientations.

Today, sex has virtually become a god, which is literally being worshipped through orgies, licentious revels, debauchery and various types of sexual rituals. Sex is everywhere and it is being encouraged. Because personal pleasure and instant gratification are some of the basic tenets of secular humanists, they think it is not right for anyone to place any restraints on the sexual freedoms of another person.

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<sup>51</sup> Duncan, *The Religion of Secular Humanism and the Public Schools*, 73-74, 88.

Consequently, they believe that if anyone in any situation decides that fornication, pornography, exhibitionism, voyeurism, nudity, adultery, incest, bestiality, homosexuality or lesbianism is right, that should be accepted. With such an omni-tolerant position on sexual freedoms, secular humanists generally permit total freedom from sexual restraints, as long as it is between consenting adults.

They also encourage separations, sex tourism, divorces, same-sex marriages or civil unions, wife swapping and homosexual relationships. Because some countries have imbibed the tenets of secular humanism, they have enacted very liberal laws concerning sexuality. For example, in some countries, it is now permissible for human beings to have sexual relations with animals. Incest has also been decriminalised in some Western countries.

In this generation, sex has become a commercial item. Virtually every saleable item seems to have been tagged with sex in order to make maximum profit. Sex together with other forms of convenience, comfort and security are being marketed and consumed as products to settle some internal "dissatisfaction". By means of pornography, sexuality has been turned into a marketable product.

In this sex-crazed world where unrestrained and free marketing of sexual activity has become almost the norm, researchers estimate that an average young person's thoughts turn to the opposite sex approximately once every fourteen minutes.<sup>52</sup>

Having possibly imbibed the permissive tenets of secular humanism, some television stations in Ghana started showing hard-core pornography in 2017. When two seasoned journalists petitioned the National Media Commission and the Ministry of Information, some of the television stations defiantly came out to insist that they would continue to show those films. They thought they had a right to do that because they claimed that some of their viewers were enjoying those films.

The prevailing permissive world with numerous deviant lifestyles is being driven by the philosophy of secular humanism. In today's society, sex is everywhere. Even if you do not want to see sex, it will try to meet you somewhere – on television, in the newspapers, in music, magazines, in adverts, on the internet, on mobile phones, on iPads, on billboards, in the way people dress, on the streets and in fact, anywhere.

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<sup>52</sup> Chalke, Steve, *The Complete Youth Manual*. Vol. 1. (Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications, 1987), 27-30.



Users of the internet, social media, and even the mobile phone are constantly bombarded by sexual scenes. Indeed, sex and sexual fantasy are now just-a-click away. Considering the way some women are willing to take naked photographs and videos of themselves and splash it on social media platforms with impunity and without any form of shame or remorse is simply incomprehensible. The advent of selfie-ism where people can now take photos of their nudity and post them on the internet, their mobile phones or the social media has also worsened the already stressful situation. It is very difficult to avoid seeing sexual scenes in our day-to-day activities in this generation.

Although sexual sins have always been a serious problem in every generation, the proportion and the sophistication they are taking in our present generation calls for a critical concern from all well-meaning citizens, especially Christians. All these imply that as far as sexual purity is concerned, Christianity and secular humanism are at two opposing sides with no end in sight.

The third way secular humanism has impacted Christianity is in the area of the sanctity of human life. Whereas Christianity is promoting pro-life and the sanctity of human life, secular humanism is sponsoring pro-choice. Because secular humanists believe that human life has no inherent value, they teach that abortion, infanticide and euthanasia could be permitted in certain circumstances. They have made it appear as if abortion is a trivial issue. Unfortunately, some Christians have fallen into that false notion.

The fourth way secular humanism has negatively impacted Christianity is through the promotion of permissiveness, moral relativism and omni-tolerance. In line with the permissive culture of secular humanism, even some Christians want to be allowed to do things their own way even if that violates the teachings of the Bible. When the church does not want to allow them to have their way, they think the church is becoming intolerant or judgmental.

The fifth way secular humanism has impacted Christianity is by promoting pluralism of all kinds including religious pluralism, which promotes equality of all religions. This poses a great challenge to Christianity as its proposition confronts the exclusivist "Jesus only" message of the Christian faith.

The sixth way secular humanism has impacted Christianity is through its rejection of absolute truth. Whereas the Bible teaches absolute truth, secular humanism thinks that

there is no absolute truth and that everyone's truth is equally valid and should be accepted. In that sense, the notion of "Your truth versus my truth" becomes the rule. Such a position is an affront to all that the Bible teaches.

It can be noted that secular humanism has negatively impacted Christianity in a profound way. In addition to opposing the Christian faith itself, secular humanism has been promoting sexual freedoms and instant gratification with the view to destroying all the virtues Christianity stands for. While Christianity teaches the sanctity of human life, secular humanity thinks that the human life has no inherent value. Furthermore, secular humanism has not only been promoting permissiveness, moral relativism, omni-tolerance and religious pluralism, but it has also rejected absolute truth as taught in the Bible. By implication, therefore, secular humanism has been a bitter enemy to Christianity.

## **8.0 CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO SECULAR HUMANISM**

In view of the serious negative impact secular humanism has had (and continues to have) on Christianity, it is imperative for Christians to find appropriate response to the philosophy. Duncan quotes L. Nelson Bell as saying, "Christians need to recognise the solemn fact that humanism is not an ally in making the world a better place in which to live. It is a deadly enemy, for it is a religion without God and without hope in this world or the next."<sup>53</sup>

Quite regrettably, however, there are many Christians who are ignorant of secular humanism and what it stands for. Whereas some Christians have ignorantly allowed themselves to be negatively impacted by the teachings and practices of secular humanism, others have accommodated and incorporated aspects of the philosophy such as relativism, permissiveness, pluralism, and reliance on human potentialities into the Christian faith. Some Christians who are aware of the havoc being caused by secular humanism appear to have given up in despair thinking that there is nothing they can do about it.

As a result, the teachings of secular humanism continue to bombard Christians on daily basis. Even though other religions such as Islam would not tolerate secular humanism in any way, Christianity has regrettably made some compromises with it. This has to be corrected.

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<sup>53</sup> Cited in Duncan, *Secular Humanism: The Most Dangerous Religion in America*, ii.

To counteract secular humanism, it is imperative for Christians to engage in certain activities. First, they must study to understand secular humanism and all that it teaches and practices. The reason is that without proper understanding of the philosophy, there is no way Christians can respond adequately to it. This has to be taken seriously because ignorance of any kind is not only dangerous, but expensive. This underscores why Paul and Peter did not want the early Christians to be ignorant about so many things (Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 10:1; 12:1; 2 Cor. 2:11; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 Pet. 3:8).

In line with this, Christians must learn lessons from the ministry of the apostle Paul and how he dealt with the various groups of people he ministered to. He understood their culture and philosophy. This enabled him to “become all things to all men” so that he could win some to the Lord (1 Cor. 9:20-23). To the Jews with their Old Testament background, Paul drew lessons from the Old Testament to present Christ Jesus to them. To the idol-worshipping Gentiles, he directly persuaded them to “turn from these worthless things to the living God” (Acts 14:15). To the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers of Athens, he capitalised on the inscription “To an unknown God” to present the gospel to them (Acts 17:18-34).

The question is: How could Paul have argued persuasively with the philosophers of his time if he did not understand their philosophies? Surely, he understood the prevailing philosophies of his time such as Epicureanism and Stoicism (Acts 17:18) as well as the popular poets of his time such as Epimenides of Crete (Tit. 1:12). Paul also understood the philosophical teachings that were creeping into the church in Colossae and, therefore, admonished the Christians, “See to it that no one takes you captive through **hollow and deceptive philosophy**, which **depends on human tradition** and the **basic principles of this world** rather than on Christ” (Col. 2:8 Emphasis mine).

Similarly, Paul understood the faulty reasoning and hollow arguments the “super apostles” were trying to use to shake the faith of the Christians in Corinth. He, therefore, stated, “The weapons we fight with are not of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We **demolish arguments** and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take **captive every thought** to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor. 10:4-5 Emphasis mine). When Paul was referring to “demolish strongholds”, “demolish arguments” and taking “captive every thought”, he was making reference to the philosophical ideas and thoughts that had been built into their minds.

Second, Christians must continue to pray and emphasize moral purity in the face the moral permissiveness being promoted by secular humanism. Historically, Christianity has proved to have the most effective ability to manage sexual promiscuity. William Barclay rightly observes that "Christianity came into a world where sexual immorality was not only condoned, but was regarded as essential to the ordinary working of life." However, one great thing Christianity has brought into this world is the introduction of chastity.<sup>54</sup> It stands to reason, therefore, that if the early church was able to manage the sex-crazed world of its time, then the church today, with better resources, should be able to manage this contemporary sex-crazed world.

Third, since biblical absolutes have come under so much attack by secular humanism, Christians will have to develop skills in apologetics and theology. This would enable them to defend biblical doctrines and the Christian faith. This will also prevent Christians from uncritically accommodating doctrinal errors that abound in this generation. Bible schools and seminaries should adequately prepare pastors to defend the faith. In-service courses should periodically be organised for pastors to enable them apply Scripture to respond to new trends that affect Christianity. Short term courses in apologetics should also be organised for church leaders, the youth and other segments of the church to empower them to adequately respond to the numerous strange and anti-biblical teachings being propagated by secular humanism.

Fourth, since the church is a microcosm within the macrocosm of the larger society, there are certain contemporary issues that the church will have to deal with from outside its environment. These include responding to political, legal, social, moral and bioethical issues, as well as its relationship with other religious faiths.

The permissive nature of secular humanism is compelling governments to enact liberal laws that allow for moral relativism. In the process, some government officials are advocating for the legalisation of prostitution, homosexuality, same-sex marriages and related issues that are considered perverse lifestyles and abomination to biblical Christianity. Since the laws of the country affect everyone, it is important for Christians everywhere to make conscious efforts to influence the decision-making process at all levels so that Christian values are protected. Christians should not take it for granted that there may be many Christians in

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<sup>54</sup> Barclay, William, *The letter to the Galatians*. (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1954), 51.

parliament. Even though that may be the case, it cannot be ascertained whether they are there fundamentally to promote Christian values.

Churches may, therefore, have to consider identifying, encouraging and even sponsoring tried-and-tested Christians they consider mature and trustworthy to enter politics with a specific agenda to help consolidate good governance, and also influence decision-making that will promote Christian values and aspirations.

The church can further form Christian morality advocacy groups to lobby the government and other legislative bodies to enact laws that will protect and promote Christian standards of morality.

Fifth, because the teachings and practices of secular humanism and most emerging ideas are transmitted mainly through the media, the churches must establish and operate radio and television stations, staffed with trained and matured Christian journalists to propagate the gospel so that biblical standards of morality will be promoted. The Christian-owned media houses can also be used to counteract the anti-Christian teachings and practices of secular humanism and other related philosophies. The churches can further run online Bible classes and programs as well as discuss Bible-based issues on all social media platforms.

Sixth, Christians must place emphasis on the knowledge and application of Scripture as a means of withstanding the onslaught of the prevailing permissive culture being promoted by secular humanism. The reason is that Scripture is useful for teaching in righteousness and holy lifestyles (2 Tim. 3:16). It is also useful for rebuking and making people aware of their sins. Additionally, because Scripture is useful for correcting, it makes it possible for people to want to change their evil ways of living for righteous lifestyles. Being useful for training in righteousness, Scripture is the only means by which depraved human beings can change their evil ways and adopt lifestyles of godliness, integrity, holiness and faithfulness.

Without Scripture, Christians have no guide in their walk with the Lord. Without it, it is difficult to differentiate between truth and error. No wonder, the inadequate teaching in some churches today has led to some Christians embracing and literally glorifying heresy, syncretism and philosophical ideas such as that of secular humanism. It is also logical to state that it is only by prayer and application of Scripture that some contemporary Christians who have been overtaken by the wiles of the prevailing permissive culture of secular humanism may be corrected and restored.

Furthermore, Christians are to use Scripture to refute false teachings, correct errors propounded by secular humanism and other philosophies. In that way, they would train themselves in order to be equipped for every good work. Perhaps, contemporary Christians would have to heed the warning of the former President of Princeton University, Dr. Francis L. Patton, who said in the 1900s, "The only hope of Christianity is in the rehabilitation of the Pauline theology. It is back, back, back, to an incarnate Christ and the atoning blood, or it is on, on, on to atheism and despair."<sup>55</sup> When this warning is heeded together with the proper application of the word of God, then Christians can rest assured in the sufficiency of Scripture to deal with the dangers of secular humanism.

Thus, to be able to adequately respond to the onslaught of secular humanism, Christians must study to understand what this philosophy is all about. In addition to continuously praying and emphasizing moral purity in the face of the permissive secular humanism, Christians must also develop appropriate skills in apologetics and theology to enable them to defend biblical doctrines. Christians should also use the Bible to address contemporary legal, socio-economic, moral and bioethical issues. They must form advocacy groups to pressurise the governments to enact biblical and morally enhancing laws. Furthermore, Christians must establish media houses that would promote biblical values. Finally, to be able to counteract the teachings of secular humanism, it is imperative for Christians to emphasize the study and application of Scripture in all aspects of human life.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

The paper has shown that secular humanism, which is a non-religious philosophy, has rejected religion, supernaturalism, and the concept as well as the existence of God or gods. As secular humanists think that human beings are capable of managing their own affairs without any recourse to any deity, they are trying to dethrone God and enthrone human beings as supreme masters of this world. Believing that morality and decision-making should be based on humanist values such as reason, personal ethics and justice without reference to any religious or supernatural claims, secular humanism encourages human reason, personal ethics and naturalistic tendencies in all aspects of human life.

With such a belief system, secular humanism has been using political, legal and educational systems to promote personal pleasure and unrestrained sexual freedom, which has resulted

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<sup>55</sup> Duncan, *Secular Humanism: The Most Dangerous Religion in America*, 38.

in the general sex-crazed contemporary society. In view of its emphasis on moral relativism, permissiveness, religious pluralism, rejection of absolute truth as taught in the Bible, and avowed opposition to the Christian faith itself, secular humanism has become a major challenge to Christianity.

Accordingly, the discussion has recommended that Christians must try to understand all that secular humanism is all about so that they can develop right apologetics to it. In addition to continuously insisting on sexual purity and biblical absolutes, Christians must also try to influence decision-making processes at all levels. They must further train matured Christians in journalism so that they can impact positively on the media landscape.

Finally, since Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, it is important for Christians to use the word of God to refute the errors of secular humanism. After all, if the apostle Paul was able to use Scripture to confront the philosophers of his time (Acts 17), then contemporary Christians with better resources should be able to deal with the dangers of secular humanism.

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# **LIVING A LIFE OF INTEGRITY AS A CHRISTIAN**

A. N. Y. Kumi-Larbi (Apostle)

"... The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen. 27:22).

'People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed" (Prov. 10:9).

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Vision 2023 of The Church of Pentecost dubbed "Possessing the Nations", is geared towards equipping the Church to transform every sphere of society with values and principles of the Kingdom of God. As part of rolling out the broader vision, the theme for the year 2019 was "I will build my Church" (Mt. 6:18). It highlights the dual purpose of the Church, as those called out of the world to belong to God and sent back into the world to transform it with the gospel, to reflect the glory of Christ.

The theme for the year 2020 is "A Glorious Church to Possess the Nations" (Eph. 3:21; 5:27). This means having a church where the glory of Christ is revealed. The question is, what preparation does the church need and in what way should the church present herself to reveal the glory of Christ to the world, consequently transforming societies? One way the church can cause Christ-glorifying societal transformation is to ensure that each member is **Living a Life of Integrity as a Christian**. This paper examines how the Christian life of integrity engages corrupt practices, which seem to be an endemic societal canker. It seeks to raise some critical issues for consideration to help position the Christian as an agent of transformation, especially in resisting corruption in their everyday lives, to the glory of Christ. The paper discusses themes including: the dire need for Christians of integrity; the dynamics of corruption in society; a review of the Old Testament and New Testament perspectives on God's people and corruption; integrity crisis in the Church; the Christian life; the concept of integrity; and practical Christian integrity as the salt against corruption.

In 2020 and beyond, we seek to be **"a Glorious Church"** filled with Christians who bear testimonies which challenge a corrupt world to turn to Christ and be transformed like the following:

"Noah was a righteous man, the only blameless person living on earth at the time, and he walked in close fellowship with God" (Gen. 6:9b, NLT).

"The LORD and his anointed one are my witnesses today," Samuel declared, "that my hands are clean." "Yes, he is a witness," they replied" (1 Sam. 12:5, NLT).

"Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. Finally, these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God" (Dan. 6:3-5, NIV).

"I will not speak much more with you, for the ruler of the world is coming, and he has nothing in me" (Jn. 14:30, NASB).

"I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing" (Acts 20:33, NIV).

## **2.0 THE DIRE NEED FOR CHRISTIANS OF INTEGRITY**

The word "integrity" from its Latin derivation, *integritas* indicates, wholeness, perfection, soundness, simplicity, completeness and sincerity. Integrity is also the root word for "integer" and expresses completeness, as opposed to mixed fraction, which is not complete.

In engineering, a structure such as a bridge or a building would be described as having "structural integrity" when it is sound and fit for purpose. In the same way, the Christian who has integrity is sound, reliable, trustworthy and therefore could be described as dependable. This is an important virtue of the Kingdom of God which Christians are called to be and demonstrate to the world as they encounter us.

Our generation critically needs leaders with integrity – people who cannot be bought, will not compromise with wrong, will walk the talk, and will be completely honest in small things as in great things. Unfortunately, integrity seems to be a critical aspect of leadership which are mostly found wanting, both in the church and society as a whole. God expects his children to stand out and be counted as a people who do not yield to corrupt practices but always upholding ethical values in every area of their lives – at home, in the work place and in the church. This is what informs Paul's admonishing in choosing leaders for the church and ministry (Acts 6:3-5; 1 Timothy 3:1-2). Leaders must be above reproach.

### **3.0 THE DYNAMICS OF CORRUPTION IN SOCIETY**

In this paper, Corruption is used in reference to depravity of humankind. the innate corruption of human nature; moral corruption and wickedness. In effect corruption is not limited to giving or receiving bribe.

According to Vorster (2011:1), corruption is the misuse of a public office or authority for private or personal gain. Bauer (2000:218) identifies bribery, nepotism and resource misappropriation in explaining corruption.

Our society is bedevilled with corrupt practices. including cronyism and nepotism, over and under invoicing, wrongful and inappropriate acquisition of academic accolades for vain glory and acquisition of power.

The 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) as presented by Transparency International (TI) indicate that more than two-thirds of the 180 countries scored below 50, with an average score of just 43, (where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is highly clean). Only 6 African countries scored 50 or above (Seychelles 66, Botswana 61, Cape Verde 57, Rwanda 56, Namibia 53, and Mauritius 51) and 6 out of the 10 least ranking countries are from Africa with Somalia in the last place (TI 2018).

Despite the huge presence of churches in Africa and especially West Africa, the 2018 CPI showed that, Burkina Faso and Ghana tied at 78<sup>th</sup> position with 41 points, Ivory Coast 105<sup>th</sup> (35), Togo 129<sup>th</sup> (30) and Nigeria 144<sup>th</sup> (27). Also, in a survey conducted by the Ghana Integrity Initiative consortium (GII), the following were presented as forms of corruption: Bribery, embezzlement, fraud, favouritism, extortion, illegal contribution, nepotism, conflict of interest, abuse of discretion, and payment of facilitation fees (GII, 2017).

These statistics and information are very disturbing and is a wake up call for the Church of God to demonstrate its prophetic role as salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16).

#### **4.0 OLD TESTAMENT (OT) REVIEW/PERSPECTIVE ON GOD'S PEOPLE AND CORRUPTION**

Our God values honesty and truthfulness because they ensure a just society (Ex 23:1; Walton & Matthews 1997:117; Ryken 2005:746). In Leviticus 19:1, God's people are instructed not to steal, lie or deceive one another, because He says, "I am the Lord". The repetition of "I YHWH" in Leviticus 19 stresses that violation of these laws may escape human detection, but God will assuredly punish such offenders (Milgrom 2004:226).

In the OT, "bribery" is regularly used as the Hebrew word for corruption. Any benefit given or accepted to influence decisions is a bribe. Bribery is an offence against God, the weak, the innocent and the community (Walton & Matthews 1997:117-118, 241). Customarily, ancient Israelites offered gifts as a sign of respect. However, such gifts could easily be distorted to become bribes to influence judicial procedures (Clements 2001:75). Moses therefore cautioned the Israelites against bribery to prevent abuses in their legal system. He instructed, "Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous" (Ex 23:8; Deut 16:19). True justice cannot co-exist with bribery because bribery blindfolds the eyes to the truth resulting in blind justice.

Corruption jeopardizes righteousness and justice in society (Ryken 2005:749; Nsiku 2010:811). In Proverbs 17:23, Solomon portrays the evil intent of bribery and how it depraves justice: "a wicked man accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the course of justice" (Clifford 1999:167; Murphy & Huwiler 1999:88). The practice where, "you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours" may seem to achieve certain results for one's benefit but this is grossly unacceptable before God because it overrides justice.

Generally, a position of authority may entitle a person to certain rights and privileges. However, just as Daniel remained faithful to God in all aspects of his life, believers are encouraged to be loyal citizens and conscientious, faithful workers, especially when in a privileged position of authority.

Also, Nehemiah used the privileges associated with his position to serve his people.

Nehemiah 5:14-17

"Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor. But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we did not acquire any land. Furthermore, a hundred and fifty Jews and officials ate at my table, as well as those who came to us from the surrounding nations."

## **5.0 NEW TESTAMENT (NT) REVIEW ON GOD'S PEOPLE (THE CHURCH) AND CORRUPTION**

In Luke 3:10-14, John the Baptist underscores contentment with one's pay as the way to live, to demonstrate genuine love and justice. Contentment restrains us from yielding to temptations in our professions, even as Ministers of God (Harvey 2004:36; Blight 2007:127-130). Paul admonishes that content people are happier than those with insatiable desires (1 Tim. 6:6-10). The latter are more susceptible to sin due to their constant craving for more (Andria 2010:1476). Christians are encouraged not to love money but to be content with what we have, because God has promised He will never leave nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5). Christians should therefore be the first to fight materialism and greed, because we have God who fights for us, and His favour which is more valuable than money (Arthur 2003:223; Harvey 2004:716; Guthrie 2007:991).

James advises Christians in a corrupt and perverse world to rid themselves of all moral filth and evil and humbly accept the Word planted in them which can save them (Jas 1:21). The lifestyle of Christians should demonstrate their obedience to God's word, which is their authority and guide (Moo 2000:85-88). Christians must exercise self-control and remain alert in anticipation of the schemes of the devil; we are to resist him, standing firm in the faith (1 Pet 5:8-9). In this scripture, Peter refers to the individual's state of mind: spiritual soberness, clear-mindedness and self-control. Freedom of the soul from confusion and consuming passions raises one's alertness and watchfulness against the devil's moral threats

and attacks. By holding fast to the gospel and the Christian community, one stands firm against the evil one. The individual is encouraged by the fact that they are not isolated, but forms part of God's holy nation – **the Glorious Church**.

So far, it has been established that from both the Old and New Testaments, believers are expected to be people of integrity; honest and truthful. Those who live such lives glorifies God and receives his blessings, whilst those who are corrupt; shrewd, greedy, dishonest, unfaithful and abuse their office, receive God's punishment. The church must work to produce people of integrity, in order to make it a glorious one.

## **6.0 INTEGRITY CRISIS IN THE CHURCH**

Christians are expected to be upright and "whole" without the stain of corruption and vile.

Warren Buffet has said "Look for three things in a person – intelligence, energy, and integrity. If they don't have the last one, don't even bother with the first two."

Ecclesiastes 7:29 states: "See, this alone I found, that God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes". Schemers circumvent policies, rules and regulations. Scheming only results in more obsession, delusion, frustrations and dissatisfaction. God abhors schemers in His vineyard; He is sovereign— sees all things and has power to break every scheme of men that frustrate His counsel for His church and His people. We must not be obsessed with material things such as power, wealth, honor, vehicles, food, and houses.

Scheming is a sign of covetousness (Gen 27:21-24). Christians who live simple and contented lives are not schemers; they are straightforward and upright in their dealings because their trust is in the Lord (1 Tim 6:6-10). What schemes are we plotting in our various ministries? When reporting, do we seek to show off by reporting inaccurately, do we pay all designated monies in full to the appropriate quarters, do we massage figures? How transparent are we? Are we people of integrity? When we carry out these evil traits or do not keep our word, we are misrepresenting Christ's good name upon us.

"I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."  
— Mahatma Gandhi

The Christian becomes a mixed fraction (corrupt), or a person without integrity, when he or she exhibits any of the following: Hypocrisy, Dishonesty and Duplicity.

From the story in Gen 27, involving Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau, we see the people, who lacked integrity; people full of hypocrisy, dishonesty and Duplicity.

Let us observe the some of the things that happened in this family as a result of corruption.

- 1-4 Isaac meets 'secretly' with Esau because he knew that Rebekah would object to Isaac's plan of blessing Jacob. Because God had already said Esau would serve Jacob. Now Isaac, the father demanded meat to eat before blessing his own son; according to GII definition, this is either a bribe or facilitation fee.
- 5 Rebekah spied on them and heard the conversation.
- 8 Rebekah and Jacob scheme to deceive their husband and father;
- 19 Jacob, the son, acted deceptively to take the blessings.
- 41 There was animosity between the brothers . . . even thoughts of murder!
- 43-46 There is separation in the family

Jacob got the promised blessing but look at the cost! The whole family is messed up.

Interestingly, Isaac though, doubted the person standing before him, he blessed him anyway, because his intention was wrong and was also deceived by a hypocrite.

The statement in Genesis 27:22 is very striking and sad, "Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau."" This should serve as a check on Christians. What is the correlation between your voice and your hands?

Honesty is a direct reflection of inner character. Actions are a reflection on a person's faith, and reflecting the truth in your actions is a part of being a good witness. Learning how to be more honest will also help you keep a clear conscious.

**Hypocrisy** means deliberately pretending, it is pretence, like leven or yeast it grows and gives false impression. It means to play act, to pretend. To make yourself appear to be more than you are. In other words, a sinner pretending to be pious and perfect.

How much "religion" there is in Christianity and how little of God and true holiness!

And this outward profession of "a form of godliness but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy 3:5) has become the order of the day (1 Timothy 4:1-2).



W W Wiersbe has said "...hypocrisy is lying to other people about our fellowship with the Lord. There are many ways we do this: preaching what we don't practice, praying things we don't mean, pretending to do what we don't do..."

He continues to suggest that hypocrisy becomes **duplicity** when we lie to ourselves and believe it ourselves. He observes that "when hypocrisy (lying to others) and duplicity (lying to oneself) start to take over, integrity is gradually eroded, until it is finally destroyed".

Webster defines duplicity as "deception by pretending to feel and act one way while acting another." Duplicity is related to insincerity and dishonesty.

### **Some critical issues for consideration**

- Paul's farewell message to the Ephesian Elders (Acts 20:17-35)

When it comes to ministry making yourself a servant and also being faithful to the Lord are basic requirements. These were highlighted in the words which Paul spoke in v.19 – "I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested..." (v.19). In v.24, he reveals how willing he was to deny self in serving the Lord. He said,

...I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me..." In v.22,23 Paul says, "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me." And in verses v.33 and 34 he says, "I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions."

In the church today, it is difficult to find people who are loyal to the Lord, the church and leaders. Also, getting people who genuinely serve with humility, and willingly accept sufferings and trials for the sake of the gospel as Paul did is gradually fading. We are faced with people coveting others money, properties, spouse, etc., all in the name of the gospel.

- **The preacher and his message**

Ezra 7:10 says "For Ezra had **set his heart to study** the Law of the Lord, and to **do it** and **to teach** his statutes and rules in Israel.'

Christians are expected to study the word of God for themselves first, believe in it and practice it before teaching others. Unfortunately, most of us prepare sermons with other people in mind. This has made it difficult for the members to follow the teachings leaders offer.

"I can't believe what you say. Because I see what you do." James Baldwin.

Paul advising his son Timothy said, "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers." 1 Timothy 4:16.

To "Watch your life and doctrine closely", requires us to pay equally close attention to both; Our life and what we teach. You can't teach virtue and practice vice.

- **The abuse of relationship, authority and power (Matt 20:25-30)**

The first thing we note in this text is a mother's request. The mother of James and John comes to Jesus. From Mark's account we find that the first request was that Jesus would do for them whatever they asked of Him. Jesus prompted them to be more specific and that is when this specific request comes, "Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left."

This is a very bold request to make. She was asking that Jesus make her two sons the two highest ranking officials in the kingdom under Jesus. In Akan custom, we call them "Benkumhene and Nifahene"

How could this woman be so bold to ask such a thing? This is sheer abuse of relationship and favour. It is suggested that her name is Salome, and she is the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Therefore, she is Jesus' aunt, and James and John are Jesus' first cousins. This closeness of relationship explains to some degree the boldness she has in coming to Jesus with this request. It is common in the church for people to use their relatives or other relationships they have developed as a means to achieve some greater position for themselves.

Verse 24 tells us that when the other ten disciples heard what James, John and their mother had done, they became indignant. There is so much confusion and tension in the system as a result of some of these attitudes. So, Jesus called all 12 around Him, and advised them on how Christian leaders should conduct themselves.

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matt 20:25-28).

Our society has a saying that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely". When man is authorized a certain amount of power, the temptation and tendency has always been to abuse that power or authority in favor of selfish gain, i.e., money, influence, prestige, control, etc.

Sometimes, the behaviour and conduct of some church leaders are even worse than what happens outside, to the extent that sometimes they are worshiped out of fear; Giving instructions and commanding people here and there, just because they are church leaders.

Leading people is never an easy task. It takes great skill and character to lead people effectively. It also takes time, effort, and patience to work with people and to lead them well.

Hebrews 13:17 is an interesting passage. Although it says, "obey your leaders and submit to them," it also gives the reason for this. The rest of the verse says "for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

The burden of responsibility is placed more on the leaders and how they lead rather than on the followers and how they respond to the leaders. It even says that the leaders will give an account to the Lord. How amazing this statement changes the whole meaning of the passage!

Some other critical areas that should engage our attention are immorality; handling of the opposite sex, misappropriation of church funds, testimonies given during farewell and retirement services, Annual Appraisal of Ministers and Staff. The use of bill boards to

advertise programmes; projecting personal image as against lifting up the name of the Lord and many others. Why do we do the things, the way we do them?

## **7.0 THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

The word “Christian” is used three times in the NT (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16) to denote a “follower of Christ.” Unfortunately, over time, it has lost a great deal of its significance and meaning. It is now often used to denote someone who is religious but may or may not be a true follower of Jesus Christ. Nowadays, simply attending a church or living in a “Christian” nation is enough justification to be called a Christian. Just as going to a garage does not make one an automobile, going to church, serving the less fortunate, attending services regularly, giving to the church or being a good person does not make one a Christian.

The new creation is described in 2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! The word “therefore” refers us to verses 14-16 where Paul asserts that all believers have died with Christ and no longer live for themselves. Our lives are no longer worldly; they are now spiritual. Our “death” is that of the old sin nature nailed to the cross with Christ. It was buried with Him, and just as He was raised up by the Father, so are we raised up to “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4). That new person that was raised up is what Paul refers to in 2 Corinthians 5:17 as the “new creation.” The true Christian life is a life of repentance — completely turning from self to focus on living a life that brings the glory to Christ.

## **8.0 THE CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY**

Integrity is a mark of a true repentant life. Our conduct as children and representatives of God must be in integrity, truthfulness, and honesty! Consistent integrity is essential for the person who claims Christ as his/her Lord! Integrity produces honour, truth, and reliability. It deepens relationships, and develops the confidence of others in you and Christianity. So, the question is, are we people of integrity? Integrity as faithful believers means placing godly character ahead of our ambition without excuse. Our focus must be to glorify God and not ourselves. In so doing, we will do the right thing every time without guilt or fear or anything to hide. We can reflect on integrity in the following terms. Integrity is:

- maintaining a consistent lifestyle whether people are watching or not

- maintaining a pure conscience before God and man
- having pure motives in all that we do
- doing everything without prioritising personal gain
- having no hidden agenda in our actions
- having no ill-motive in our conduct
- keeping “clean hands”
- walking in innocence towards our conscience, others, and God
- having “no yeast” in our lives; having “no fermentation” in our lives
- living above reproach
- sticking to the rules of engagement in every area of our lives
- living such that no one can have legitimate grounds to accuse us
- being “wise as serpent” and “innocent as dove”
- living such that Satan gets frustrated because – as the prince of this age, he gets no hold over you
- pausing to ask the question, “If what I’m going to say or do comes to light, will it glorify Christ or disgrace me?”
- living as if you are on live TV globally
- having no skeletons in our cupboard
- having no ungodly secrets with anyone
- being transparent and forthright in your dealings
- living a life of “what you see is what you get”; your “yes” is yes”, and your “no”, “no”;

## **9.0 PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN INTEGRITY – THE SALT AGAINST CORRUPTION**

Theron and Lotter (2009:467, 487) suggests Christians should not withdraw from the world but should actively participate and transform all areas of society. They should, out of

responsibility rise against political, social and economic evils by applying biblical principles. To achieve this, Christians need discipleship to resist and speak out against unethical practices through a life of integrity. A church without integrity, like salt without saltiness, lacks glory and honour/respect. The world will give glory to God the Father (that is, surrender their lives to Him) when they witness a **Life of Integrity** exhibited in believers. However, we must be prepared to stand against ungodly arguments, passionate pleas, peer pressure, rationalizations, and ridicule that frustrate our efforts to maintain our integrity and character (Job 2:3, 2:9, Pro. 29:10; 1 Cor. 15:33). Do not fret when opposition rises against your defence for the truth or when you keep your word; because of your integrity, you will be doing the right thing and you will be rewarded (1 Kings 9:4-5, Neh. 7:2, Ps. 41:11-12). To maintain a life of integrity, we must know who we are in Christ – that, we are priceless and complete in Him! We are His! He bought us at a price so nothing can buy our conscience. That said, we can exert integrity and heal society of corruption at both **Personal and Public Levels**.

At the personal level, we must not think that we are immune to corruption; if we trust in our flesh without relying on the Holy Spirit, we can fall into the temptation to be corrupt (cf. 1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 6:1). True transformation resulting in practical Christian living and a willingness to break with the sinful world is only possible when the Christian allows the Holy Spirit to redirect and renew their minds (Campbell-Lane & Lotter 2007:376, 383; Rom 12:1; Eph 4:22). Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the source, the norm and the power of the Christian's moral conduct (Johnson 1999:337; Harvey 2004:607-608).

In the Christian's fight against the temptation of corruption, Jesus Christ's golden rule is a very powerful tool; "...do to others what you would have them do to you..." (Matt 7:12). Living according to the golden rule of Jesus Christ exposes any hint of greed and selfishness in the life of the Christian and will promote integrity and personal honesty. As highlighted earlier, Nehemiah applied the golden rule to preserve his integrity. Undoubtedly, God's favour and the right relationship with Him are more valuable than temporary earthly riches.

At the public level, Christians must be ready to blow the whistle in love, damning the consequences and be ready to suffer persecution, for God is able to rescue; He will deliver us from the powers of darkness; we are to fear God rather than man; we are not to fear those who can only destroy the body and not the soul. Jesus Christ uses the metaphor of

salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16) to illustrate that his followers must have a distinct influence on society and fight corruption and moral decay (Theron & Lotter 2008b:301).

Christians have no choice but to be whistle—blowers when justice and righteousness are being jeopardised. Thus, when people take the law into their own hands to “rectify” a “wrong” action (say, insufficient salary) by another wrong action (stealing/corruption); justify corruption with “the end justifies the means” (saying, corruption increases efficiency); justify corruption with, “corruption is one of the lesser evils”; justify corruption with, “everybody does it”.

Christians must be critically and constructively involved in all spheres of life in order to make the world a better place (Theron & Lotter 2009:488). The church must also create awareness of the negative consequences of corruption, e.g. financial drain on the state; rise in public debt; growing tax burden on citizens; capital flight; lower levels of investment; hindrance to administrative development and efficiency; weak public service delivery; misdirection of public resources, and the inhibition of growth.

We must continually ask ourselves if our walk is in sincere conformity with what we profess as Christians.

## **10.0 CONCLUSION**

In the introduction to this paper, it was shown that people all over the world are living and working in corrupt societies. It was also shown that government programmes and legislation are not always so effective in the battle against corruption. The problem should therefore be tackled at the grass root level by involving ordinary citizens, including Christians, who are to exemplify integrity to resist corruption and be willing to act as whistle-blowers. Christians should not be satisfied with the “culture of silence”. Without this, the name of the Lord and His church are brought into disrepute and potential converts also remain in their sins. It is therefore necessary to resolve to be men and women of integrity. Church structures are tailored in such a way as to make it possible for leaders to live lives of integrity, while at the same time making it difficult for corruption to thrive. Rather than seeing such structure as nuisance, we must see them as tools to help in walking in integrity. According to Proverbs 10:9, ‘People with integrity walk safely, but those who follow crooked paths will be exposed’. We must endeavour to live lives devoid of Hypocrisy, Dishonesty and Duplicity. People should not struggle to know who we are; the voice of the Christian,

should march his hands. What is inside must reflect what is outside. That said, "If we walk in the Spirit (of Integrity), we won't come under the law" (Gal. 5:18, brackets mine).

Charles Spurgeon writes,

"Do right if heaven itself should grieve. If the skies should not be propped except by a lie, let them fall. Come what may, you never must in any degree or in any shape depart from the honest, the true, the right, the Christ-like, that which God commands, that which alone God will approve."



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# THE CHRISTIAN AND THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

Emmanuel Gyesei-Addo (Apostle)

Texts: Acts 2:36; Rom. 10:9-10; Romans 14:8-9; Phil 2:9-11

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In some Christian circles today, there is the teaching that we can enjoy the benefits of salvation through Christ without having to accept the “inconvenient” challenge of His lordship over our lives. Such an unbalanced notion is not found in the Bible. Many Christians today are therefore, very comfortable with Jesus in a manger and Jesus crucified on the cross. But not how we may share in his suffering (Gal. 2:20) The reality of the reign and lordship of Christ over their lives seems foreign. Many of us have not settled the question of “Who” is the lord of their lives and therefore continue to wallow in sin and despondency. There is no doubt that there are teeming numbers of Christians who claim that Jesus is their Lord and Saviour, but their lifestyles, attitudes and deeds do not support such claims. Living a victorious Christian life calls for a life of commitment to the Lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no argument that a life that is yielded to the lordship of Christ produces fruitfulness and glows with the glory of God. This life begins with the adoption as children of God.

This paper seeks to explain what the lordship of Christ is, building from a historical perspective and how Christians can submit to His lordship. We would continue with what it means to accept Christ as Lord, reasons for submission to His lordship and the benefits of submitting to the lordship of Christ. A brief look will be taken at how we can use the understanding of His lordship to possess the nations.

## 2.0 OUR ADOPTION AS CHILDREN OF GOD

Our adoption as children of God begins with the confession of faith in the words, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He died for my sins and resurrected for my justification. Therefore, I accept Him as my **Lord** and **personal Saviour**”. By this confession, converts are delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13). This confession brings the convert into a special relationship with Jesus Christ and is ushered into the family of God. The Apostle Paul writes:

If you declare with your mouth, **Jesus is Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved (Rom. 10:9-10 emphasis mine).

*The idea here is that, having made this declaration or confession, one receives salvation through Jesus Christ the Saviour, as it places the believer in a position to receive pardon for his or her sins and salvation of the soul from the punishment and wrath of God. That notwithstanding, Jesus wants to do more than (just) save us from sin. He wants to have a place as Lord of the believer's life so that we would be his true representatives in the world, then we can reflect his glory and be transformed to possess the nations. To do this, a right foundation and understanding of lordship is necessary.*

### **3.0 THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST**

#### **3.1 Historical Perspective: Who is Lord Christ or Caesar?**

**Jesus is Lord** is one of the earliest known confessions of the Early Church. Those were the days when Imperial Rome demanded of its citizens to say 'Caesar is lord'. To confess Christ as Lord then, was considered an act of treason which was punishable by death. We know from Church history that Polycarp the Bishop of Smyrna in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century and disciple of the Apostle John, at the age of 86 was brought before the Roman authorities and ordered to confess that Caesar is lord. Although making such a confess would have saved his life, Polycarp refused and was murdered. This situation although very difficult also inspired other Christians to remain faithful.

Nevertheless, members of the Early Church did not flinch. They could not give Caesar their first allegiance, because they had already given it to Christ Jesus.

'Lord' is a title that is applied to both God and humans; and is used to express varied degrees of honour, dignity, and majesty.<sup>56</sup> It appears in the Aramaic portion of the book of Daniel as *mārē* which means an 'exalted one', often used for kings or God (Dan. 2:47; 5:23). In the Hebrew context, LORD (from the plural form *ādōnai* applies to God, and it the owner of all things (Ps. 97:5; 114:7; Isa. 1:24). However, the Greek term *Kyrios*, rendered in

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<sup>56</sup> Merrill C. Tenney (ed.), *New International Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1987), p.599.

English as 'lord', is the term often used in reference to someone who owns everything and has absolute power, and is used in the New Testament (NT) for God the Father or Jesus Christ.

In the Hellenistic world where there were many gods and lords, the challenge faced by the scattered disciples as they suffered persecution was how to preach Jesus in Greek terms for the Greeks to embrace Him, not as a Messiah because that would not make much sense to them, but as *Kyrios* (Lord). The *Kyrios* understanding of Christ is synonymous to the Messiah Christology, only under different contexts; whilst the Greeks prefer Lord, the Jews prefer Messiah.

### **3.2 The Lordship of Christ — What it means**

The Lordship of Christ became very prominent as the gospel began to enter the Hellenistic world. Though Christ on some occasions referred to himself as Lord Mk. 5:19; Lk. 19:31; Jn. 13:13), he appeared to have only given admission to this in private among His disciples, until Peter, on the Day of Pentecost boldly responded to the Hellenistic Jews in an open declaration of Jesus' Lordship. "Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36, NIV).

The Apostle Peter introduced for the first time in the New Testament, the term 'Lord' (*Kyrios*) to refer to Jesus in his first sermon to the Hellenistic Jews who might have been familiar with the term as they lived in the Hellenistic world. The Greeks knew many lords, chief among which was lord *Serapis*, a Greco-Egyptian deity. *Kyrios*, which is used in the New Testament for Christ, denotes someone with absolute power and someone who is the owner of all things. The Apostle John, in his gospel, made this clear when he states that "through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:3, NIV). The Apostle Paul also adds that,

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Col. 1:16-17, NIV).

Therefore, calling Jesus "Lord" reiterates His oneness with God and reaffirms His deity. As title for the exalted one, "Lord" has special reference to Christ's redemptive work on the cross. Paul makes this clear in Romans 14:8-9 (NIV):

If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

The point is not that lordship is not ascribed to Jesus' earthly ministry, instead, Paul reinforces that the title's significance is linked to Christ's exaltation — the reason why Psalm 110:1 was cited frequently in the Gospels and other NT texts to underscore the point (Matt 22:44; 26:64; Mk. 14:62; -Lk 20:43; Acts 2:34-35; Heb. 1:13). Daniel J. Treier and Walter A. Elwell, editors of the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, support this assertion that:

During his earthly ministry his lordship is obscured for the sake of redemptive servanthood, but after his resurrection he is declared openly to be what he has been: one with God in power and person.<sup>57</sup>

By reference, to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord means that He is ruler, boss, owner of all things, master of one's whole life, one who exercises authority, power and influence over others. He cannot be Lord of a part — He must be given control of one's entire life. S.M. Zwemer makes an important statement about the lordship of Jesus Christ: "Unless Jesus is Lord of all, He is not Lord at all".<sup>58</sup> This is a challenge to all Christians to submit to Christ, bringing every area of our lives under His sovereign rule, and thereby leading the rest of the world to do the same in order that Jesus Christ would be Lord of all. This brings us to the issue of submission to His Lordship.

#### **4.0 SUBMISSION TO CHRIST AS LORD**

A pastor once observed that when we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, it involves a recognition of His Lordship, for we cannot receive Him as Saviour only, but as Saviour and Lord.<sup>59</sup> He argued that for some people, yielding to Jesus as Lord is subsequent to conversion after a few months or years. According to this pastor's own experience, when he accepted Jesus Christ into his life, it was after some years before he was introduced to Him as Lord. According to him, he did not wilfully reject the Lordship of Christ but simply knew nothing

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<sup>57</sup> Treier Daniel J. & Elwell Walter A., (eds), *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids), 2017. Pp 499-500

<sup>58</sup> Zwemer S.M., *The Solitary Throne* (Pickering and Inglis, London), 1937, p 1.

<sup>59</sup> Dr Roger D. Willmore, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Boaz, Alabama, "The Lordship of Jesus Christ". Accessed from [www.gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org) on August 4, 2019 at 5:00 pm.

about His Lordship because Jesus was presented to him as Saviour at the time of his conversion. Can we reflect on this deeply as Christians? Has this been the case for some of our members or even for some of us? Is Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord? Let us take note of what the Apostle Peter said on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36), that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ. If He is, then how do we submit to His Lordship?

#### 4.1 What is submission, how do we submit?

In the New Testament where the word submit occurs (For example Eph. 3, Heb. 3, 1 Cor. 5 and 1 Pet. 6) it is translated from the Greek word *hupotasso*. The *hupo* means "under" and the *tasso* means "to arrange". *Hupotasso* is the root of the English word translated **subject** and **subjection**. Its full meaning implies **obedience, put under or be subject to**. In the military, the word is used as a term to mean, "to arrange in order under". This would mean to arrange a troop under a commander. This word gives us a good and profound understanding of the term "to submit". In our case, we are called to put ourselves under the command of Christ as Lord of our lives.

The first inkling into how to submit to Christ as Lord was in Jesus' own words as He addressed a multitude of people along with his disciples in the plain, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord', and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). If anyone recognizes Jesus Christ as Lord, then the first requirement from such a person is utter and total obedience. Obedience must be immediate and not delayed because obedience delayed is the same as disobedience. Are you doing what the Lord has instructed you to do? Are you doing it immediately and exactly? Are you obeying God? Do you shun evil? Are you given to doing things that please God? The Apostle Paul writes that, "So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it" (2 Cor. 5:9, NIV).

- We also submit to Jesus by denying ourselves. Jesus told the disciples in Matthew 16:24, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me". The early disciples of Jesus left all that they had, including their professions and homes and followed Jesus. The Gospel according to Luke writes, "when Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!' So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him" (Luke 5:8, 11, NIV).



The Apostle Paul also wrote:

But whatever to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish that I may gain Christ" (Phl. 3:7-8).

What is it that we are still holding on to which is preventing us from submitting fully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?

- Submission also involves taking our hands off the controls of our lives and allowing Him to be in control. We submit by absolutely surrendering everything we have and own. Paul addresses the subject of ownership regarding our bodies in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20:

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (NJKV).

- We submit to the Lordship of Christ through the services we render both in the Church and in the world of work. We are entreated to serve Christ all the time, in all of life, with all our hearts. As believers we should differ radically from unbelievers in the inclination of our hearts towards work and service. This radical difference gets expressed in different ways in every area of life. We have motivations that differ from unbelievers. We look at the law and the world differently, because we acknowledge that law comes from God and the world is providentially governed by God. We look at ourselves differently, because we know that we are made in God's image and we belong to Him. We serve God and His Kingdom as Colossians 3:17 reads, "and whatever you do whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the father through him".
- A helpful point in our submission to Christ is the determination in our sub consciousness never to say 'no' to Him. The disciple Peter, after confessing Jesus' Lordship rebukes Jesus by telling him what he can and cannot do (Matt 16:21-22).

Peter told the Lord 'no', because he misunderstood the meaning of 'Lord'. Jeff Lorg, in his book *Seasons of a Leader's Life*, points out that, "when someone is Lord, you cannot and do not tell them 'no'. They are in charge. Your responsibility is to obey with steely resolve; you don't resist with subtle arrogance".<sup>60</sup> That means we forfeit any right to ever tell the Lord Jesus 'no', again.

- In submission, we are careful not to take credit for our spiritual victories and successes, but give all the glory to Jesus who empowers, guides and enables us through our everyday life processes. As Christians and as a Church body, we must never fall short of giving the glory to Jesus for bringing us thus far, because it falls in line with our submission to Him as the Lord of our lives.
- Traditions are subject to the Lordship of Christ. According to the Webster's dictionary, traditions are inherited, established or customary pattern of thought, actions, behaviour, religious practices, social customs or beliefs. They are inherited or handed down from one generation to another, mostly without written instruction. When Jesus said that "...The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Luke 6:5), I believe what He meant was that the Jewish tradition of the Sabbath, and for that matter all human, social, religious and church traditions were to be brought under subjection to Him as Lord. We must view all traditions, whether ethnic, colour or race, continental, gender, written and unwritten, etc., in the lens of God's word and examine those that are obsolete for abolishing, and those that can be held onto in all reverence because of the Lordship of Christ.
- Finally, in our submission, we must develop sensitivity to recognise any signs of self-sufficiency and repent of them quickly. To be self-sufficient means to have an extreme confidence in one's own ability or worth. Paul writes that, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5, NKJV). God wants humanity to live on earth, bearing in mind that we are not independent of ourselves, but under some authority (be it human or divine) or under His supreme watch. In his book, *The Kingdom Agenda*, Tony Evans writes, "Whenever God looks at human independence—which is— living as if He doesn't exist, it reminds Him of the rebellion in heaven that took place in

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<sup>60</sup> Lorg, Jeff, *Seasons of A Leader's Life*, (B& H Publishing Group, Nashville, Tennessee, 2013), p 45-49

eternity past”.<sup>61</sup> We must vehemently resist any tendencies to live independent of our Lord and remember His solemn words in John 15:5, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing” (NKJV).

Having understood the meaning of submission and how the Christian believer could submit under the authority of Christ, it is also necessary that we understand why we must do so.

## **4.2 Reason for submitting to Christ’s Lordship**

The fact that ‘Jesus is Lord’ is an acknowledgement which has lost weight in some Christian minds. When lifestyles, deeds and actions do not support the fact that Jesus is Lord, how can we reflect Christ’s glory and bring transformation in our world in order to possess the nations? The heart of the problem is that the human heart is sinful and self-centred (even after we have become ‘Christians’). God has, therefore, established institutions on earth with varying degrees of authority over mankind, to help humanity in God’s work of transformation.

For example, God has established the home (Gen 2:18-25), government (Gen 9:1-17, Rom. 13:1) and the Church (Eph. 4:11-16) as institutions to bring the Kingdom of God on earth. As we submit to and obey the rules and regulations of these institutions we are submitting to Christ’s lordship, because the authority of these institutions has been ordained by God (Rom. 13:1).

The Apostle Paul in Romans 13 refutes the position of some believers who teach riot and rebellion **in the name of Christ** and believe that the ‘Christian thing’ to do is to disobey the law, rebel against authorities and permit people to do what is right in their own eyes. He does this by explaining four reasons why the Christian must submit to the authority of these institutions, and most especially to Christ.

### **4.2.1 Submit for wrath’s sake (Rom. 13:1-4)**

The governments of the world have been established by God (Acts 17:24-28), because the authority to rule originates from God. However, God is in no way responsible for their tyrant deeds. To resist the law is to resist God who established the government, and thereby invite

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<sup>61</sup> Tony Evans, *The Kingdom Agenda*, The Moody Publishers, Chicago, 2006 p 43

punishment on oneself. Within state institutions for example, God has given the sword to rulers, and with it the authority to punish and even to execute. In the home for example, parents are to pull the rod (Prov. 13:24) for disciplinary measures only when children disobey authority, but not when they display childishness and negligence. In the Church, and by practice in the Church of Pentecost (CoP), ministers, officers and members are disciplined for various offences as enshrined in the CoP constitution, including flouting policies.<sup>62</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Submit for conscience's sake (Rom. 13:5-7)

Citizens have to obey the law for fear of punishment, but the Christian has to obey because of conscience that, they are under the lordship of Christ. With conscience, we move a bit higher in our motivation. Of course, if the government interferes with conscience, then the Christian must obey his Lord rather than human (Acts 5:29). But when the law is right, the Christian must obey if they are to maintain a good conscience because of the lordship of Christ (1 Tim. 1:5, 19; 3:9; 4:2). As Christians, Romans 13:7 commands us to pay what they owe: taxes, revenue, respect and honour. Failure to pay is not only a disrespect to the officials in government, but to the Lord; and we dare not violate our conscience by refusing to pay.

#### **Submit for love's sake (Rom. 13:8-10)**

Our motive for submitting should now be motivated by the love for Christ in our hearts (1 Jn. 4:19; 2 Cor. 5:14). The Apostle Paul enlarges the circle of responsibility by including love for others. "Love for God and one another" is the basic principle of the Christian life, and the "new command" given to us by Christ (Jn. 13:34). When we practice love, there is no need for any other laws because love covers it all, and in love we do not sin against ourselves.

#### 4.2.3 Submit for Jesus' sake (Rom. 13:11-14)

Having analysed reasons why we must obey and submit to Christ's lordship as ordained by God in the aforementioned institutions — from fear, to conscience, to love and to our devotion to Christ, we would move the emphasis higher to the imminent return of Christ. As servants, we want to be found faithful when He returns, bearing in mind that our

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<sup>62</sup> The Church of Pentecost (2016) Constitution, p 105

salvation is near. Having this in mind, "...we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it" (2 Cor. 5:9, NIV).

An understanding of authority and lordship will guard against rebellion and promote moral, good and ethical behaviours in institutions. When Lucifer raised himself and attempted to snatch God's throne (Is. 14:12-14), he was defeated and hurled down, and thus, became the ruler of a rival kingdom. Like Lucifer, the Christian (in fact every individual) stands to suffer defeat eventually, when he rebels against the instituted authority because God hates rebellion and opposes people who do so (James 4:6-7).

## **5.0 BENEFITS OF THE CHRISTIAN'S SUBMISSION TO CHRIST**

Christ is Lord and Head of the Church because He founded and owns it. It is therefore imperative for Christians to submit to him. In our submission to Christ we stand to benefit enormously. **As Head and Lord, Jesus Directs both the Church and the Work**

**As the head and Lord** (Commander-in-Chief) of His Church and work, especially throughout the book of Acts of the Apostles, Jesus reveals himself or works by the Holy Spirit to direct affairs. A few examples will suffice:

- Jesus worked with the members of His church, confirming their message with signs (Mark 16:20).
- The Holy Spirit led Philip to join the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:29).
- Jesus appeared to Paul and called him into ministry (Acts 9:1–10).
- Jesus appeared to Ananias in a vision and instructed him to help Paul (Acts 9:11–16).
- The Holy Spirit spoke to Peter about three men who were looking for him (Acts 10:19).
- The Holy Spirit told Peter to go see Cornelius in Caesarea (Acts 11:12).
- The Holy Spirit instructed the church in Antioch to set apart Barnabas and Paul for the work (Acts 13:2).
- The Holy Spirit forbade Paul to preach the gospel in Asia (Acts 16:6).

### **5.1 As Head and Lord, Jesus Nourishes His Body (The Church)**

Jesus does the same with His body, of which we are a part. Christ, then, is our caretaker. He nourishes and cherishes His body "for No one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church" (Eph. 5:29). Christ, the head, feeds His body through the ministry and functioning of each of its members (Eph. 4:16). Similarly, it is important that we, as Leaders and Ministers play our roles effectively by feeding the sheep in the Lord's fold both in and outside the church walls. Nourishment provides strength and vitality for the work, so when that happens, we can confidently say with Paul that we are well able to do all things through Christ who strengthens us (Phil. 4:13).

### **5.2 As Head and Lord, Jesus is the source of the Church's success**

General success is one of the gains of submitting to Jesus' lordship. Though Jesus reserved the ultimate responsibility for the Church's future to himself, saying, "...I will build my Church..." (Matt. 16:18), he said this in conjunction to use Peter in the process. The Lord promised Peter that the Church would be sustained against the forces of hell, and gave the church the keys to the Kingdom useful for binding and loosing spiritual forces. As a Church, our continued success and future usefulness depends on how well we obey the Lord and submit to His Lordship as individuals and as leaders.

### **5.3 As Lord and Head, He Gives fresh Revelations**

Submission to His Lordship will lead to fresh and continual insight and revelations from the Lord. Immediately after Peter's confession (Matt 16:6), Jesus Christ responded with insight about himself, insight into following Him and insight about Peter's role in accomplishing God's purpose. The idea of the Church was first revealed after Peter's confession of Christ's Lordship. The Church will be confronted with new challenges and we cannot employ the same solutions we applied yesterday to solve today's problems. We need fresh insight and revelation today, and this is made possible when Christ is exalted as Lord.

### **5.4 As Lord and Head, He gives Grace in Difficult Places**

People who are submitted to His lordship receive outpourings of his grace for difficult assignments in difficult terrains. There are occasions when the Lord has accomplished so much through us, in spite of our limitations in amazing ways all because we humbled

ourselves before Him Scripture says, "...God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5, ESV).

### **5.5. As Lord and Head, He is the Source of our Prosperity**

Prosperity comes when the believer gives first place to Christ and His Kingdom (Matt. 6:33-34). Favour is released and many a time you receive even without asking. Christ is our prosperity and in Him is everything we will ever need. If we have him, we have all things. This should safeguard us from unnecessary worries and sorrows (Pro. 10:22).

### **5.6. As Lord and Head, He Performs Wonders**

Peter and the miraculous catch of fish is testimony of what the Lord does when we submit and allow Him to exercise His Lordship in spite of our limited experience and inadequate technical knowledge (Lk. 5:1-11). Peter's obedience and the subsequent events that followed, caused a change in his perspective by addressing Jesus Christ not as *master* or *rabbi* (Lk. 5:5) but now as *Lord* (Lk. 5:8).

## **6.0 IMPACT OF LORDSHIP ON THE CHRISTIAN'S DAILY LIFE**

The Christian life is what we do outside the "walls of the Church building". The Bible does not say we are the salt of the Church or the light of the Church. Rather, we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13, 14). Our understanding of Christ's Lordship, that He owns us (Ps. 24:1), that we are His sheep (Ps 100:3), that we are His subjects and live under His authority should help to maintain a certain identity of us as examples of Christ in this perverted world. Our lifestyles and actions must show the Christ in us as Lord who exercises authority and influence over us.

If Jesus is Lord, it affects our work ethics, our worldviews and values. The need for all Christians to bring every area of our lives under the sovereign rule of Jesus Christ cannot be downplayed forthwith.

The Christian should demonstrate that there is no distinction between their private and public life because the public expresses the inner life. The inner life is 'Christ in you' and the outer life is the 'glory' that is lived out for people to see (Col. 1:27). The public life involves our eyes, ears, lips, hands, feet, our entire body. Our public life is expressed by what we see, say, hear, where we go, and what we do. It is so important that Jesus be Lord over

our public life. We need to see the public life in the context of home life, the workplace, the classroom, and the neighbourhood. We need to see it in its relationship with friends, family, work colleagues, neighbours, and classmates. We need to see it in its attitude toward possessions, obligations, and responsibilities, and the use of time and resources.

- In the light of the foregoing we can say that in our daily lives:
- Jesus must be the Lord over our plans – we must surrender our daily plans to Him (Jas. 4:13-16).
- We should turn over our finances to him so that he will be in control of our money while we are stewards (1 Cor. 29:14,16; Mal. 3:10; 2 Cor. 8:5).
- We should turn over our professions to Him by living lives worthy of our callings and vocations (Eph. 4:1; Col 3:23).
- Jesus is Lord over our family lives and relationships (Eph. 5:22-25; 6:4)
- Jesus should be Lord over your life principles (Eph. 5:8-11).

## **7.0 HIS LORDSHIP AND POSSESSING THE NATIONS**

A proper understanding of the lordship of Christ is key to possessing the nations. The CoP's Vision 2023 document, under 2.5.1 "**Equipping the church to take the nations,**" states:

The Church has never been the focus of the Great Commission. The Great Commission is expected to happen outside the Church. But the Church has always been the most important tool for carrying out the Great Commission (Mt. 28:18-20; Rom. 10:13-15; 1 Tim. 3:14, 15). It is the primary vessel God uses to train and equip His people for ministry (Eph. 4:11-16).<sup>63</sup>

Vision 2023 envisages a church where the members are well disciplined to have Christ-like character, embody the values and principles of Christ's Kingdom in their everyday lives so that they impact every sphere of society positively with Christian values.

I will discuss this section by looking at how lordship influences the personal life, the home/family, the Church, work ethics and the community or nation, and what can be done to possess the nations. Tony Evans writes that,

If you're a messed-up person contributing to a messed-up family, contributing to a messed-up church, leading to a messed-up neighborhood resulting in a messed-up city residing in a



messed-up country, helping to create a messed-up state, and your state is part of a country, then your messed-up state helps produce a messed-up nation.<sup>64</sup>

It will be noted that the transformation of nations and great revivals of yesteryears had often begun with an individual. Possessing the nations begins with an individual who has genuinely encountered Christ as Lord and has been changed by that perception inside-out.

### **7.1 His Lordship and the Personal Christian Life**

When the Christian accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and saviour, and is baptised, he opens the doors of his heart and life that Christ may enter, have full control, re-order and re-shape their life and destiny. Committing to Him as Lord is transferring the title deed, the ownership of our hearts and lives to Him. Consequently, He transforms our thinking, our emotions, and re-models our hearts, passion and desires to dimensions we never dreamed were possible. Paul's prayer for the Ephesian church and ultimately, all believers, was "...that Christ may dwell in our hearts..." (Eph. 3:16-17). A committed Christian therefore, is one who is disciplined and dedicated to the cause of Jesus Christ wherever they find themselves. The Christian's born again, experience is more than joining a congregation and attending church services regularly but one who has been disciplined and lives a disciplined life with its attendant obligations wherever they themselves.

### **7.2 His Lordship in the Home/Family**

In many places, the question, 'who is the head of the family — the husband or Christ?' has not ceased to cause a stir and confusion. If Christ is the head of the Church, and the family being the basic unit of the Church, then He is also the head of the family. This authority is delegated to the husband as leader of the home. The wife and children are to submit to the husband as unto the Lord in everything, and the husband is to love and cherish the wife and children as Christ does for the church, so that the home will reflect the glory of Christ.

### **7.3 His Lordship and the Church**

The greatest need today in the body of Christ (the church) is to reinstate the Lordship and headship of Christ. The unique CoP practice of spending time in fervent prayers for the Holy Spirit's direction before meetings and before decisions are taken is to be upheld in all

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<sup>64</sup> Tony Evans (2006), *The Kingdom Agenda*, (The Moody Publishers, Chicago), 13

generations in order to possess the nations. Dependence on the Lordship of Christ and recognising that He is head of the church will enable us take decisions which are Holy Spirit directed and beneficial to the church as well as to the mission of Christ. As scripture rightly puts it, "He is the head of the body, the church ... that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1:18, KJV).

The CoP has come a long way. As of the end of June 2019, our membership had risen to (provide the figure). In Ghana alone, there are many other churches who are reportedly doing great work in similar fashion. Regrettably however, the Church interacts with society without changing it. It is not enough to grow impressively large congregations for people to speak well of the church and yet fail to permeate, influence and change the society we live in. This is the time to challenge ourselves and every member of the body of Christ to live by Kingdom principles which is superior to worldly principles. Kingdom principles of godliness, love, mercy, honesty, faithfulness, discipline, and the like, are weapons we can use to possess the nations.

#### **7.4 His Lordship and work ethic**

Research has shown that leadership and kingdom values, when put to work, irrespective of the place (whether Church or in business) will produce similar outputs if the rules are followed. It is high time Christians began to view work as a calling and not just for money. Founder and pastor for Embassy of God, Sunday Adelaja writes that. Your job is not just a job. It's a platform God has given you to change society. It is not about your salary, but about promoting the kingdom of God.<sup>65</sup>

Work must be done in such a way that people see themselves as accountable to God and not necessarily to human authorities. Nevertheless, all human authority is a delegated authority given by God (Rom 13:1-ff). Thus, our responsibilities and duties as officers of civil government, parents, church leaders, business owners and managers, teachers, artists and farmers should be discharged against this backdrop, knowing that we are accountable not to human beings only, but primarily and ultimately to the Lord.

At the end of every month when we receive our salaries as workers, we must ask ourselves the question: have I worked for this money or I have wasted time on

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<sup>65</sup> Adelaja, Sunday (2008), *Church Shift*, Charisma House, p 58

trivialities? What change have I brought to the workplace? And what value about Christ have I projected? Have I projected Christ as Lord in my workplace?

## **7.5 His Lordship and the Community/Nation**

It has been said that “the direction of a society is decided by which worldview prevails.”<sup>66</sup> It is people’s worldview that causes them to question God’s existence as creator God, and even if He exists at all, He is farfetched in His relationship with the world. Their lives and conduct, therefore, reflect their godless worldviews. Also, when people talk about what is wrong with the nation, they see the problem as the government, the media, my boss, my parents, my children — anyone or anything but me. The refusal of people to take personal responsibility for their actions has become a national epidemic.

It is time for Christians to take over and ‘possess the nations’ with our Christian worldview, influencing ‘every sphere of society with the values and principles of the Kingdom of God’. The reality of the Lordship of Christ in our communities and nation at large would help to effectively deal with issues of the environment, sanitation, tax mobilization, security and safety, etc. For the question that arises is – “If Christ were Mayor (or Lord) of your community, how would it look like”?

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

It has been established that when we accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour, it involves a recognition of His lordship, for we cannot receive him as Saviour only, without a commitment to his Lordship over our lives. What the lordship means and how we can submit to Christ’s lordship has been discussed. Further to that, we have looked at the implications of accepting Christ’s Lordship and why we must submit to Him. As head and Lord, Christ continues to supply His Church with benefits as the Church submits to Him. What is expected of us as Christians is to let the understanding of His Lordship influence our daily lives. If we allow Christ to be lord of our families, our homes, our work places, our communities and nations, we shall see transformed lives that will reflect the glory of Christian in the nations.

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<sup>66</sup> Tony Evans (2006), *The Kingdom Agenda*, (The Moody Publishers, Chicago), 16

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# **POSSESSING THE NATIONS THROUGH PRAYER**

Joseph Assabil (Apostle)

SCRIPTURE: Eph. 3:21; 5:27; 6:10-18; Isaiah 62: 6, 7; Ezk. 22:30; Jas. 5:16-18

The more praying there is in the world, the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil everywhere. Prayer, in one phase of its operation, is a disinfectant and a preventive. It purifies the air; it destroys the contagion of evil. Prayer is no fitful, short-lived thing... God shapes the world by prayer. Prayers are deathless. The lips that uttered them may be closed to death, the heart that felt them may have ceased to beat, but the prayers live before God, and God's heart is set on them and prayers outlive the lives of those who uttered them; they outlive a generation, outlive an age, outlive a world. That man is the most immortal who has done the most and the best praying. They are God heroes, God's saints, God's servants, God's vicegerents. A man can pray better because of the prayers of the past; a man can live holier because of the prayers of the past; the man of many and acceptable prayers has done the truest and greatest service to the incoming generation. The prayers of God's saints strengthen the unborn generation against the desolating waves of sin and evil.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Church of Pentecost (CoP) has always been a praying church. Prayer is at the heart of every vibrant and fruitful ministry. The purpose of this paper is therefore to ignite the spirit of prayer in the Church and to seek that the Church's prayer life moves notches higher than it has been in the past, as we seek to possess the nations. Thus, the paper is calling for an intense and radical commitment to prayer than ever before in view of the enormous tasks enshrined in Vision 2023. We are envisaging the raising of leaders who know and can prove

or demonstrate the power of prayer; congregations growing ever mightier in prayer and the moulding of a new generation of prayer warriors.<sup>67</sup>

The focus of the CoP is not only prayers that seek the existential material needs of members, but also of sacrificial intercessory prayers, (on behalf of others – a standing in the gap), that would establish the will of God on earth, manifesting the values and principles of the Kingdom of God among men- in homes and families of every nation, tribe and tongue.

### **1.1 The clash of kingdoms and the need for prayer**

The fall of man in the Garden of Eden gave Satan the legal authority to reign over man, corrupt their moral constitution and the world.

The devil knows this. In his archetypal temptation of Jesus the devil suggested to Jesus to worship him and receive the kingdoms of the world and their splendour in return (Matt 4:8-10). Jesus' did not oblige. Jesus' subsequent work on the cross, the sacrificial giving of His life, judgment, pronouncement of guilt on Him, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection has resulted in the resolution of the legal issues involved in Kingdom authority, with all authority residing in and with Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18).

Legally and positionally, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus and by extension, His followers. Nevertheless, experientially, just like the Jews who while in Egypt were promised the land of Canaan as their possession, but had to practically journey, conquer and possess the land as their inheritance, so also the church in the wake and light of what Christ has done, has to possess the land of promises in God's word. The church has to execute the done deal by possessing the nations, its people and transforming values to take on values and principles of the kingdom of God. Among others, a key to achieving this is prayer – incessant, fervent, prevailing prayers.

### **1.2 Prayer and the birth of the church**

The Church itself was birthed in prayer when the disciples in one accord prayed and waited for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.<sup>68</sup> Ever since that time the measure of believing and continued prayer has been the measure of the Spirit's working in the church. Direct,

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<sup>67</sup> Wesley L. Duewel, *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1990), p.25

<sup>68</sup> See Acts 2:1-4

definite, determined prayer has always been needful.<sup>69</sup> The apostles of old consigned prayer to a higher scale when they said they would devote themselves to prayer and the word and leave issues relating to supervision of catering for the material needs of church members to another category of spirit-filled ministers.<sup>70</sup>

When in the course of the life of the New Testament Church, Apostle James was killed by the Roman authorities, the Church roused itself to prayer when Apostle Peter was also seized. Prayer was made without ceasing to God. The power of spirit-wielded prayer broke chains and prison gates and released Peter from prison.

The primary key to this achievement is prayer, real prevailing, importunate, warrior-like prayers that overturns the control and rulership and purposes of Satan experientially and replace it with the will and purpose of God.

## **2.0 THE NEED FOR INTENSIVE PRAYER**

The burden of possessing the nations derives from the Great Commission – the imperative of making all nations disciples. It is a huge call. Prayer provides a huge tool for confronting, disarming the kingdom of darkness and retrieving lost souls and demolishing mental strongholds that orient or incline people towards ungodly living. It is obvious that here is an urgent need for increased prayer. Millions of unbelievers live in darkness, blinded by the devil, in spite of God's provision for mankind in the work of Jesus on the cross. Millions of souls are moving head on into the bottomless pit unbeknown to them.

In individual lives, schools, work places, market places great indication of little knowledge of the life and light of God prevails across all nations, causes immorality, and corruption in high and low places. Children disobedient to parents, upsurge of parental delinquency, with human-kind getting increasingly wicked and depraved. That these are going on, in spite of upsurge of religious activities is indicative that 'something' more needs to be done. I suggest that prevailing, fervent prayers need to be a key part of the 'something' that needs to be done.

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<sup>69</sup> Murray Andrew, *The Ministry of Intercessory Prayer*, (Bloomington, Minnesota: Bethany House, 1988), p. 26. Accessed online: [www.books.google.com.gh](http://www.books.google.com.gh) on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2019

<sup>70</sup> Acts 6:1-7

If God is the only one who can help in these situations and conditions, then this ought to make prayers urgent and imperative of all of us. For as someone put it, prayer is the link between our impotence and the omnipotence of God.

While it is true that an unbalanced focus on Satan and demons and the demonic can negatively affect our trust and faith in the positive things God offers us through Christ Jesus, it bears saying that the Bible adequately teaches that the Christian is contending with spirit beings and teaches or admonishes us to engage them. It is a battle, but not of the kind known to the world. For we are not warring against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers (Eph. 6:12). Paul admonishes Christians to be strong in the mighty power of God in order to face these spirit beings (Eph. 6:10). Concluding this epistle, he instructs: "...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18).

We read in 1 Pet. 5:8, 9 that the devil that he prowls like a lion seeking whom he may devour. In this scripture, Peter admonishes us to resist the devil and be firm in our faith. In fact, the tenor of Scriptures comparing the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness portray warfare. For example:

"I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not overcome it" (Matt.16:18) suggests that the Church is going to be moving forward and practically advancing against the kingdom of darkness, just as Colossians 2:15 and Ephesians 3:10 do.

"The Kingdom of God suffers violence and the violent take it by force" (Matt.11:12, KJV) implies a warrior-like posture.

These scriptures do not leave us any space for complacency in spiritual warfare at all. It is assuring, though, that we are to war with the strength and weapons of God (2 Cor. 10:4-5), the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit. For with God we will gain the victory (Ps. 60:12), as He rises and His enemies are scattered (Ps. 68:1-3);-And He arises as His saints pray with fervour.



- ***Fervency and Power***

Prayer has mighty power to move mountains because the Holy Spirit is ready both to encourage our praying and to remove the mountains hindering us. Prayer can do everything. It brings help where it is needed – supernatural help that fulfils the will of God in the life of families and nations.

Derek Prince pictures prayer as an 'intercontinental ballistic missile' launched from one continent, directed by an advanced guidance system to a target in a completely different continent to destroy an assigned target. 'With prayer we can assail Satan's strongholds anywhere, even in the heavenlies', he observes.<sup>71</sup> Intensity, therefore, seem to be a law of prayer. The fervent effectual prayer of the righteous is of great force.<sup>72</sup> Elijah gives us an example, while Jesus taught on that in one of his Parables.

- ***Elijah and prevailing prayer*** - 1 Kings 18:41-19:8; Jas 5:17-18

In the account in 1 Kings, Elijah prayed fervently and unceasingly until the object of his prayer was obtained (withholding rains and releasing rains). He provides a model for prevailing prayers from which lessons could be drawn, namely:

- Depended on God to change climatic elements, the weather and season
- Was bold and asked God for an almost impossible thing (1 Kings 18:36)
- Prayed fervently, continually and prevailingly until he saw an answer
- He understood that an answer to prayer does not necessarily come immediately
- He prayed seven times and did not waver until he saw an answer.

It must be noted that behind the zeal of Elijah was his concern for the righteousness and the fear of the Lord in the land. Here we are, God calls on us to ask of him and he will give us the nations as inheritance (Ps. 2:8). Fervent and continuous prayer will definitely produce the will of God. In James 5:16-18, the writer makes that comment about Elijah's prayers, challenging and daring us to be like Elijah in prayer and attain similar results. It is an indictment on our spirituality if we do not rise to the challenge to pray fervently.

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<sup>71</sup> Derek Prince, *Spiritual Warfare* (Springdale: Whitaker; republished in Benin City, Nigeria by Matthew Christian Publications, 1998), p. 106.

<sup>72</sup> Samuel Chadwick, quoted in [www.azquotes.com](http://www.azquotes.com) and accessed on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2019.

## **2.1 Picture of prevailing prayer in Jesus' parable**

Jesus' parable in Luke 18:1-8 while showcasing prevailing, importunate prayer also provides lessons on the characteristics of an intercession:

- The parable teaches about importunity or persistence in prayer
- The need to put premium on that which is being prayed for
- The certainty of attaining answers to importunate, prevailing prayers
- The need to understand that the Father is more willing to give good gifts to those who ask Him than our earthly fathers to give us bread.

Thus, if God commands us to pray that His Kingdom comes, and for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, then it stands to reason that we should expect God to answer when we really do pray these words back to Him as we seek to possess the nations.

At all events, the following may be outlined as ingredients necessary for fervent, prevailing prayers generally:

- A sense of need
- Christ-like love that seeks the good of others
- A consciousness of personal inadequacy or impotence
- Faith in the power of prayer
- Courage to persevere in spite of delay or seeming temporary refusal
- The assurance of eventual abundant reward.

We believe that understanding these and allowing them to inform our praying will inure to attaining our desired goals through prayer, as we endeavour to possess the nation.

## **2.2 Prayer complements other forms of work in the Kingdom**

In discussing prayer in relation to possessing the nations generally, there is one account in the Old Testament that is worth mentioning here on how prayer complements physical action to bring about God's purposes. On their journey to the Promised Land, the Amalekites confronted Israel in battle that necessitated the mobilisation of men to face them. While men led by Joshua were at the battle front, Hur and Aaron assisted Moses to lift up his staff towards heaven, in continuous prayers (so to speak) as part of their war strategy. We infer from the Bible that any time the prayer line got weak, the battle was tilting against the

Israelites, but when Moses supported by Hur and Aaron continued to lift up his rod towards heaven, the war tilted in favour of Israel until eventually Israel subdued the Amalekites (Ex. 17:8-15).

In the New Testament, Paul's continuous prayer for the churches, shows how important he considered prayer to be a part of his ministry of the word to the churches. One would say that, for Paul, the ministry of the word, teaching and prayer go hand in hand in moulding the lives of saints so they can attain to spiritual heights in holiness and righteousness acceptable to God (See Rom. 15:5-6, 13; 1 Cor. 1:4; 2 Cor. 13:7; Eph. 1:15-21; 3:14-19; Phil. 1:3-4, 9-11; Col. 1:3, 9-14; 2:1-4; 1Thess. 1:2-3; 5:23-24; 2 Thess. 3:16; 2 Tim 1:3; Phm. 4, 25). Needless to say, Paul's intercessory prayers were exemplary.

### **3.0 INTERCESSORY PRAYER**

Intercession implies taking the place of another in prayer to ask God to do something for them, or battling the enemy on their behalf.

It is to mediate, to stand between a lost being and an Almighty God, praying that this person will come to know about God and His salvation. Through intercession, we stand at God's side, working together with Him in the task of redeeming others.<sup>73</sup> It is standing in the 'gap' (Ezk. 22:23-30).

It is to change the lives of loved ones and the life of nations. Intercessory prayer is always born out of love — love for the one or end being interceded for and love for God's will to be done. It is sacrificial intervention in the spiritual situation for the good of others. As John Calvin suggests, such prayer must arise not only because we feel our own need as a burden which we must lay upon God, but also because we are bound up in love for our fellow men that we feel their need as acutely as our own. To make intercession for men is the most powerful and practical way in which we can express our love for them.<sup>74</sup>

#### **Some noteworthy examples of intercession in Scriptures**

- Abraham intercedes for Sodom (Gen. 18:20-33)
- Abraham intercedes for Abimelech (Gen 20:17-18)

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<sup>73</sup> Edward Bauman, quoted in Dick Eastman: *The hour that changes the world*; Michigan, Baker Book House 1985, p. 76

<sup>74</sup> Anne J Townseed, quoted in Dick Eastman, p. 80

- Moses interceded for Israel to hold back the wrath of God when they worshipped the golden calf in the desert (Ex 32:1-2, 30-32; Ps. 106:19-23)
- Moses and Aaron interceded for the people of Israel to forestall the wrath of God after they complained and rebelled against them (Num. 16:20-23, 41-48)
- Daniel interceded for the restoration of Israel from captivity (Dan. 9:1-33)
- Intercession in Jesus' life:
  - He made intercession for transgressors and stood in for them on the cross (Isa. 53:12; Luke 23:24)
  - Jesus prayed for Peter and the other disciples that the devil might not succeed in 'sifting' them (Luke 22:31)
  - After resurrection and enthronement, Jesus intercedes for us (Heb. 7:25)
- God expects men to intercede for others (Ezk. 22:23-30)

#### **4.0 WATCHFULNESS AND PRAYER**

The Bible teaches copiously, the need to watch, be alert, discern and pray. This is to prevent the situation we would fight in the dark, throwing blows at imaginary and non-specific targets, or be unaware of the enemy's tactics and schemes, or remain complacent or non-challant as though there is no battle to wage, nor enemy to confront and overcome (1 Cor. 9:26-27; Eph. 6:11; 1Pet. 4:7; 5:8; 1Thess. 5:6).

Jesus gives the example in a parable of the farmer who sowed seeds and while men slept, the enemy came in and sowed counterfeit seeds (Matt. 13:24-30). Paul also talked about the need for shepherds to be alert to prevent ravaging wolves from springing and devouring the flock (Acts 20:29-31). It is the same regarding the nations we seek to possess. It is easy to be passive, and not discern the underlying spiritual forces seeking to control the socio-political-religious discourse of our time. We need to know where our political players, for example, seek to tilt the nations towards. This is because there are spiritual strong men over nations that seek to express their rulership over the nations through chosen leaders, if such leaders have not yielded or submitted to the Lord (Dan 10:4-14).

At this juncture, I am inclined to bring up the lyrics of some stanzas of an old hymn by Charlotte Elliott<sup>75</sup> which sums this section appropriately:

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<sup>75</sup> Methodist Hymn Book, no. 491, Stanzas 1, 2 and 6

*Christian seek not yet repose  
Cast thy dreams of ease away  
Thou art in the midst of foes  
Watch and pray*

*Principalities and powers  
Mustering their unseen array  
Wait for thy unguarded hours  
Watch and pray  
Watch as if on that alone  
Hung the issue of the day  
Pray, that help may be sent down  
Watch and pray*

## **5.0 THE NEED TO MOBILISE PRAYERS RAISING AN ARMY OF PRAYING CHRISTIANS**

One of the pictures of God's people in the New Testament is that of an army.<sup>76</sup> And we have indicated in previous paragraphs that prayer warfare is one of the battles the church, the army of God is engaged in. We need to mobilise prayer at the various rungs and levels of the church – local assembly, district, ministry, committees, Area and national levels till prayer becomes an air pipe of the church. Every member of our church should become a prayer, just as every member is a soul-winner. We are thinking of individual members, prayer partners, prayer groups and all.

The goal of such prayer mobilisation would be to promote the sustenance, fervency and urgency of fulfilling the Great Commission, discipling and transforming societies and nations.

The unbridled concentration of prayers towards servicing the needs of members, while plausible and justifiable, is arguably, at variance with the spirit of the New Testament. The NT teaches us to concentrate on seeking the Kingdom of God and its righteousness for God's Kingdom to come on earth. Then comes God's promise to take care of all our needs. To

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<sup>76</sup> Derek Prince, *Spiritual Warfare* (Springdale: Whitaker; republished in Benin City, Nigeria by Matthew Christian Publications, 1998), p. 7

overturn this and shift the priority heavily in favour of earthly needs of members is to work at cross purposes with God. Soldiers in a warfare have no delusions or desire the pleasures at home until the battle is ended. They leave the comfort of homes and families in order to effectively battle the enemy and win.

Food rations are adequate for them, for what they critically need is sustenance and not revelry nor debauchery. It is the same with us Christians who are at war and on a pilgrimage in this life. If we, as Christian soldiers, want to live like 'worldly civilians' our effectiveness as warriors is compromised greatly and sadly (2 Tim. 2:4) and the cares of this life will stifle and douse every anointing the Lord places on us (Matt. 13:22).

We need prayer warriors who have sensed the heart of God, who have experienced the power and glory of the cross, who know the biblical meaning and significance of the Day of Judgment, heaven and hell. We need prayer warriors who feel the slavery, the absence of any eternal hope, and the doom of the unsaved, who feel the transforming power, joy, and glory from Christ of the saved. We need prayer warriors who pray as though God is God and as though Satan is Satan.<sup>77</sup>

Praying to influence and possess the nations, will have to cover government, politics, chieftaincy; business and the economy; education, culture and arts; media, sports and entertainment. Prayers covering religion can include: building of Christ's church, revival in the church, prayer for labourers for the harvest as well as the harvest itself, prayer to resist and restrain Satan<sup>78</sup>, and many more that have been mentioned in passing in this piece.

## **6.0 HINDRANCES TO PRAYER**

If prayer is so important, what normally delays, prevents, hinder or makes it difficult for us generally to pray as we ought?

- **Wrong perception of what prayer means**

Peoples wrong perception of prayer makes them wait until prayer meetings or devotion periods are specially set before they pray. If God lives in us as His temple, then prayer must not necessarily be localized in an earthly location (Jn. 4:21-24). If a temple is where we pray, and we are God's temple, then by implication we can pray where the temple (we,

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<sup>77</sup> Wesley Duewel, *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*, p.23

<sup>78</sup> Duewel, *Touch the world through prayer* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 19860), pp 224-227

ourselves) are or move to – in the marketplace, office, in a vehicle, in a word everywhere we are we can pray without ceasing.

- **Wrong perception of who God is and therefore a wrong approach to him in prayer**

Some of us have come from a pagan background before conversion to Christianity. Our perception of God is a powerful being who created all things but lives some distance off, even though He sees all things. We seem to see God as a supernatural being we consult just to access power and help for our good and to satisfy our desires. This is a relic from our religious past. That foreign perception about accessing supernatural power to aid us is the same we bring to Christianity. It hinders effective praying.

On the other hand the Christian God seeks a *Father-Son relationship* with us. We are His offspring, born of His Spirit, His children, His very own. Jesus laboured to point this out to us clearly. Our inability to see this relationship as real, and live in it has been a great hindrance to how we pray and the things we ask God to do. It is also a hindrance to our ability to believe that God will do what we have asked of Him (Matt. 6:8-9; Acts 17:28-29; Jn. 4:23). It hinders us from seeing that ministry is about doing our Father's business, which we ultimately inherit as sons.

- **Life not yielded to God: Unwillingness to submit our will to God and the clear teaching of His word**

Yielding and living for God is so important. Unfortunately, however, people's unwillingness to submit to God is real. For example, God says we should pray for those in authority and kings so that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness (1 Tim 2:1-3). But how many Christians are willing to pray for the government of their nation formed by a party they do not support. How many can genuinely pray the Lord to give us a leader of His choice, regardless of which tribe or party he comes from? Certainly, such attitudes act as hindrances to prayer in its truest sense. Our prejudices tint our spiritual sight and hinder us from seeing as God sees and to pray according to His will.

- **Living in the flesh**

- Too much concern for the cares of this life (Lk. 21:34)
- Not being focused on what essentially the Bible teaches as God's priorities
- Too much food (weighs on our spirit) — a Christian cannot afford to be a glutton. As someone has observed, "it is as sinful to be a 'foodaholic' as it is to be an alcoholic".

As Bounds points out, feebleness of living reflects its weakness in praying hours. We simply cannot talk strongly, intimately and confidently to God unless we are living for Him faithfully and truthfully. The prayer closet cannot be sanctified to God when the life is alien to His commands and purposes.<sup>79</sup> In the same vein Nee observes that the quality of a man's prayer is dictated by the state of his living. For a fleshly person cannot offer spiritual prayers.<sup>80</sup>

- **Filling one's mind with too much products of the media**

Impressions from media products seek to sit on the soul and have the potential to mind and eventually colour and shape our perception of world situations. Most often they do not present an accurate picture of what is on the ground, apart from the fact that some of the images and pictures shown could be avoided. Beyond this the media can be addictive, not to mention it devours our time. A cursory look of the life and biography of most of the spiritual giants shows that they fed very little on the media.

- **Lack of deep love and passion for God**

E. M. Bounds observes; "those who know God the best are the richest and most powerful in prayer. Little acquaintance with God, and strangeness and coldness to Him, make prayer a rare and feeble thing". A life that is unaligned to the purposes and will of God cannot engage in effective prayer. Such a spiritual state is a hindrance to prayer, properly so called. When we love God and have deep passion for His purposes we are constrained to pray until those purposes are achieved.

- **Absence of the Spirit of Prayer: Unyieldedness to the Holy Spirit**

Zechariah 12:10 talks about the spirit of 'grace and supplication', while Romans 8:26-27 talks about the help of the Holy Spirit in prayer. The reason given for the Spirit's help in

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<sup>79</sup> E M Bounds, *The Necessity of Prayer* (Pittsburg, Whitaker House, 1984); p. 83

<sup>80</sup> Watchman Nee. *The Spiritual Man Vol 2*. (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers Inc., 1968), p. 54



prayers is that we do not know what we 'ought to pray'. This lack, the KJV calls 'infirmity', NIV, 'weakness' The Holy Spirit is so much needed and His absence or non-dependence on Him is a hindrance, to genuine, godly prayer.

"The Holy Spirit breathes the spirit of prayer within you. Power in prayer comes from His empowering within. Prayer weakness usually results from spiritual weakness, and itself contributes to spiritual weakness. When the Spirit works in you feebly, then your prayer life will be weak and powerless. The more mightily the Spirit works within you, the more mighty will be the results of your praying...Prayer vision is Spirit-given vision, prayer hunger is Spirit-given hunger, and prayer power is the mighty power of the Spirit pouring through your whole spiritual being".<sup>81</sup>

How true this observation is!

- **Sin of Prayerlessness**

Paradoxically and yet arguably, the sin of prayerlessness is the greatest hindrance to prayer. In 1 Samuel 12:23 Samuel said he would not sin against God by not praying. His statement connotes **decision** and **choice**. He decided to pray. Thus a real hindrance to prayer is the choice to neglect prayer, the **decision** to **disobey** God's command to pray. This is what I call the sin of prayerlessness. Applying this to the theme, we would say that little prayer suggests probably, that we hardly carry the burden of the responsibility of possessing and discipling nations. This lack can breed prayerlessness in this regard.

- **Evil spiritual forces:**

Satan hinders prayers because he knows it is one of the most potent forces against his kingdom. He will do everything to prevent one from praying. At times, one goes to a place and feels under spiritual pressure as well as unusually fatigued to pray. Then one goes to another place and can continue to pray for over a long stretch of time without even feeling tired. This probably suggests that there is a release of the Spirit of prayer and supplication in one area as a result of spiritual breakthrough and a lack of the same in the other.

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<sup>81</sup> Wesley Duewel, *Mighty Prevailing Prayer*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990; p. 100.

- **Unwillingness to take the 'war situation' seriously.**

Many may not have accepted the reality of spiritual war in which we find ourselves. The battle is intense and real. Failure to sense it and fight on is to be defeated.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

We have tried to discuss the imperative of prayer in kingdom business. We have discussed the raging war and conflict between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan, pointing out that Jesus' work on the cross wrestled spiritual authority from Satan. However, evangelisation and discipleship backed by fervent, prevailing intercession is needed to take over nations, cultures, languages and thoughts for God. It should always be remembered that while it is God's will that His Kingdom comes and his purpose is done on earth, Jesus taught that we should pray for that to happen. The fact that something is God's will, does not necessarily imply that it will happen.

Therefore, confronted with, and constrained by the demands of the Great Commission and the theme for our church's vision 2023, intensified prayer becomes *sine qua non*. We have therefore established the need to mobilise prayer across all levels of the church, while also highlighting and alerting some hindrances to prayer so that overcoming them we might raise the tempo of prayer in the church as we seek to possess the nations for the Lord.

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# RAISING GODLY CHILDREN TO POSSESS THE NATIONS

Ellis Otoo (Eld. Prof.)

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

*"A man that has not dealt with his foundation cannot deal  
with another Man's foundation"<sup>1</sup>  
(Steven Chuks Nwaokeke)*

We live in an era where the fight for the capture of the minds and thoughts of children and the young ones have become the challenge of society. Today, children are exposed to all manner of ideas and issues on our televisions, radios, video games, mobile phones, social media, etc. Unfortunately, most parents and guardians pay less attention to some of these issues. Again, some of the issues are being pushed discretely using the media landscape and others in the form of policies from national governments through our educational systems, such as the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) being introduced into the educational curriculum. There is a gradual and subtle attempt to take away or minimize the role of parents or guardians in effectively raising their own children through the "increasing rights systems". This new dispensation and its attendant challenges call for a new type of Christian child. One who is fully equipped and prepared for the times ahead, one who can discern the time we live in and know how to respond or what to do. Thus the relevance of the topic "Raising Godly children to possess the nations".

In discussing this topic, there is the need to consider four sub-themes to help bring a better appreciation of the issues at hand. These sub-themes are:

1. What is implied by Raising Godly Children.
2. Who is a Godly child, what is their value to us and where should they be raised?
3. What do we mean by possessing nations?
4. How do the above three interrelate and what strategies do we need to achieve the set goal?

This paper attempts to address these issues.

## 2.0 RAISING GODLY CHILDREN

Having and Raising Godly children may mean different things to different people. To some, the fact that they are called parents, father or mother is enough. For others, it brings societal respect and acceptance, and this is pleasing to them. Whilst to some, they see it as a burden. The Scriptures in the Book of Malachi, however, gives us a picture of the essence of raising godly children and where they belong.

“But did he not make them one, Having a remnant of the spirit?  
And why one? He seeks Godly offspring. Therefore, take heed to  
your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his  
youth” (Mal. 2:15 NIV)

We realize that one of the reasons God brings two people together in marriage is for the purpose of raising Godly children, children who look like Him and honour Him. The goal of producing Godly children is for them to reflect His Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, Christian parents should always be conscious of the fact that what the Lord seeks from them are godly children (Gen. 18:19).

One writer defining broadly the essence of raising children, stated that “it is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood”.<sup>2,3</sup>

From this definition, it implies raising children involves training and imparting on the physical characteristics of the child’s personality. By this, it touches on how they have to express themselves in words, in their thoughts and their feelings as they develop, invariably, touching on their behaviour.

Again, raising children involves the training and imparting on the social and emotional learning of the child. When this is done efficiently and effectively, it touches on the personality, academic and social attributes of the developing child.

The third element from the definition is that, in raising children, one trains and imparts on the intellectual capacity of the growing child. This affects learning and understanding thus influencing the child’s actions and overall behaviour.<sup>3</sup> In all these, we realize two running words; **training and imparting**, meaning that there is some teaching, guidance and what

I term as “deposition”. Some traits, skill and knowledge are transferred to the child at the end of the process.

Therefore, raising children and more especially godly children can be delicate, difficult, demanding, stressful and satisfying. It requires commitment and hard work. Again, it takes a lot of time, resources, patience and love. Therefore, Christian parents should be prepared for this task which the Lord expects of them. On the whole, it is a great blessing to have the opportunity to raise children.

In the raising of godly children, two elements dominate and these are NURTURING and TRAINING according to God’s ways. Nurturing is about training, upbringing, taking care of, protecting or providing to someone. In all these words which defines “nurturing” there is an element of empathy. Alfred Adler, a psychologist explains empathy as “seeing with the eyes of another, listening with the ears of another and feeling with the heart of another”. <sup>4</sup> This is what we are expected to do in raising children. A report by the Michigan State University (MSU) in 2013, stated that nurturing is a critical life skill for increasing the health and wellbeing of children and families. <sup>5</sup> Training on the other hand is more about teaching. These form an integral part of the whole process and they are very important. One of the key assignments is that in our nurturing and training we “imprint” godly values into the child’s life. Unfortunately, in our current dispensation, parents, guardians and teachers are doing more training than a combination of nurturing and training.

*Studies have shown that 85% of the influence on a child’s life come from the home.* <sup>6</sup> Thus, one can infer that “Children will be what their home is”. Can we also liken this to the church or the Children’s Ministry? Can we say that “A child’s Christianity or level of faith will be determined by the state of their Sunday School?”

Reflecting on these issues, makes one realise the subtle attempt to take the power and influence of the home from the whole process of bringing up children and re-directing it into policies and control by state institutions. This thus highlights or brings to bear the importance of the role of the Church in developing godly parents with an understanding and appreciation of a godly home and environment, and a godly marriage for the upbringing of children who know the Lord and also fear God. This is strengthened by the word of God which states:

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6 (NKJV)).

The type of training being indicated here is one that transcends time and situations. For nurturing and training to be effective in the process of raising Godly children, one must live whatever they teach or transfer to the child both in word and lifestyle. As the old adage goes “You cannot give what you do not have”. Thus, parents and guardians must model godliness and persist in it for it is through this that one can cultivate the attributes of Godliness in the children. This is because children more often than not model the character of their parents, guardians and their teachers. We see this strengthened in Paul’s communication to Timothy in the first Book of Timothy and also in his letter to the Ephesians.

“Watch your life and the doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1Timothy 4:16 (NIV)).

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (Ephesians 5:1-2).

Again, we see an example of the raising up of godly children in Paul’s second communication to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:5; where he recollects the upbringing and faith of Timothy.

“I am reminded of your sincere faith, which was first lived in your grandmother, Lois and your mother, Eunice and I am persuaded now lives in you also” (2 Tim. 1:5 (NKJV)).

By this, Paul is inferring that by the same generational lifestyle of the grandmother and mother, same is in Timothy. This is because he believes that a lot of work has gone on in terms of nurturing Timothy in the things of God because it is an imprint of the family. From the trend, it implies that at each stage, they make sure it is imprinted in your heart, your mind and your actions. Can the same be said about us, about our children and as a church, about our Children’s Ministry?

### 3.0 THE CHILD AND THE VALUE OF THE CHILD

Generally, children are an outcome of the union between Man and Woman. In the context of God's word, children are as a result of God's blessings. The book of Genesis indicates that; *"Then God blessed them and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it . . . . ."* Gen. 1:28a (NKJV)). Therefore, we appreciate that children are as a result of God's blessings.

God's word also teaches us that, children are a heritage from the Lord. It states in Psalm 127:3 *"Behold children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward"* (Psalm 127:3 (NKJV)).

The word "heritage" means property, "treasure" – that is or may be inherited or a special or individual possession. Therefore, the child is a special gift or treasure that God gives to us to care for, to nurture as stewards for Him. Thus, there is an accountability element for parents and the church on each child God gives to us. By the word heritage, it implies, children are not made but inherited from an original owner, God. Therefore, they must be handled with all the utmost care and value required by all stakeholders who encounter them; the parents, guardians, the church and society. However, this must be done based on the principles and core values of the giver, who is God.

Children are one of the most valuable members of the family and the church. They form the foundation/base of the family and of the Church. They carry the touch and the name of the family and also the Church. For the family, they represent the lineage and carry the image. They build generations. Scripture gives a better appreciation of the importance of children. It states:

"Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them" (Psalm 127:4-5 (N KJV)).

Children are described as "arrows" and arrows are potent ammunitions which have been used for generations till now in battles and in the practice of pursuing or tracking animals. However, arrows need to be well fashioned (designed and worked on) and directed to achieve optimum results and this comes with practice. From the Scriptures, it can be inferred that, a warrior fights and wins battles. He does this with precision and useful tools like an



arrow which is well designed for purpose. Thus, children form very important elements in achieving the Vision 2023 of the Church. As arrows, they are very powerful and potent but they need to be well nurtured and trained to enable them become the effective and efficient future generations and leaders of the Church. This requires focus, patience and dedication.

Raising godly children also brings value to the home and the Church. This is because they help sharpen the skills and value systems of the Christian parent or guardian. The effect is in different areas including practising of the Christian faith, expression of love and care, role modelling, prayer, sacrifice, forbearance, commitment, forgiveness etc.

#### **4.0 CHILDREN POSSESSING THE NATIONS**

To possess means to have ownership; to occupy in person; to hold or actually have in one's own keeping; to have and to hold.<sup>7</sup> Simply put, it is about Ownership; Occupation and Influence. Thus, possessing nations as defined by Apostle Nyamekye is "a system where members possess their nations by transforming every worldview, thought and behaviour with values, principles and lifestyles of the Kingdom of God, turning many to Christ."<sup>8</sup> By this it means the "Possessor" must first have the values, principles and the lifestyle of the Kingdom.

Possessing the nations is a proactive term which requires positive action based on godly principles and values. It is about dominance, influence, taking possession in every space that one finds himself or herself. This term is very synonymous with the children of Israel in their march to the Promised Land. The charge was to occupy, dominate and to own. However, this is a task that should be done holistically and thus must include the children.

To effectively achieve this with the children requires - "focused and purposeful raising of children" - in the way and things of the Lord. This goes beyond normal parenting but one which has a possessive or battle intent in its approach. Executing it is also the responsibility of every stakeholder but more especially the parents/guardians and the Church.

Therefore, the need to raise godly children to possess the nations is a clarion call for action both for the transformation of our children and the possession of every space they find themselves. What strategies do we then need to put in place or are required to execute this agenda?

A. *Responsibilities of Parents*

1. Need to teach and nurture the child in Christ and His word. This is fundamental and must be done through the communication of the 4Ws; <sup>9</sup>
  - a. Effectively communicating the WORD of God
  - b. Effectively communicating the WORTH of God
  - c. Effectively communicating the WAYS of God
  - d. Effectively communicating the WORKS of God.

For communication to be done effectively to achieve desired results:

- It must be done **consistently** – This means that in our imprinting of the 4Ws in our children it must be done purposefully and orderly as indicated in the book of Isaiah: *"For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept. Line upon line, line upon line. Here a little, there a little"* (Isaiah 28:10 (NKJV)).
- It must be done **continuously** – Similarly, the same must be done without breaks, ensuring that we saturate every opportunity with the words and commands of God as shown in Deuteronomy: *"You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up"* (Deuteronomy 6:7 (NKJV)).
- It must be done **convincingly** – This means in our communication about God and His commands we need to be persuasive as indicated in the book of Deuteronomy and this requires Godly wisdom. *"He said to them, take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law"* (Deuteronomy 32:46 (NIV)).
- It must be based on **Personal Testimony and Experience** – Communication of one's personal experience with God is a powerful and practical approach to imparting our children. The most powerful of all personal testimonies and experiences is an impactful life that cannot be explained without God. A person's testimony is an awesome thing, especially when it is backed by a consistent lifestyle. It causes people to listen, relate and respond to you if you share your experience. <sup>10</sup> We see this as Moses admonishes the children of Israel to hold dear their experience with God and to also teach them to their children as they move to occupy the new land.

“Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them” (Deuteronomy 4:9 (NIV)).

From these, one realises the importance of effectively building the capacities and understanding of parents and guardians with respect to the word, the times we live in and the need of having and spending quality time with their children. This is very essential in the training and nurturing process of raising godly children with the capacity to possess nations.

2. Explicit obedience to divine instructions is very important. It is one of the essential elements to seeing God move in the lives of people and nations. We see this in the preparation of the children of Israel to occupy the promised land. Instructions were very critical and obedience to divine instruction was instrumental to their possessing and living in the promised land. In the raising of Godly children to possess nations, the type of instructions, mode of communication during the teaching, training and nurturing and obedience to these instructions are very important. In the book of Deuteronomy, one observes Moses’ directive in this light:

“You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates”. (Deuteronomy 11:19-20 (NKJV)).

“For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do – to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him- Then the Lord will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves” (Deuteronomy 11:22-23 (NKJV)).

3. Coaching of our children – It is important to expose our children to the realities of the times we live in through training, practice and living of the word. This should be done by both the parents and the church. This enables the children to acquire skills and knowledge to help build their capacities through the supervision of their parents

or teachers. Examples are what we see in many of our churches today, where the children are exposed to evangelism and some major activities of the church.

4. Provision of Mentorship for children – Mentoring of the children is very important and this should be given priority. This is because when effectively and efficiently carried out, it brings about transformation of the children. Parents/guardians should serve as role models and mentors to their children. *They should always know that they are not raising up children but they are raising Godly adults*, therefore whatever Godly attributes they desire, they must work at seeing them imprinted in the lives of the children.
5. Training, Discipline and Admonition – These are fundamental responsibilities of every Christian parent. Ephesian 6:4 guides us in how we ought to do this:  
*"And you Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord".*

*B. Responsibilities of the Church*

Children grow to become adults thus, the foundation or base of the present and future church are the children. In this wise, the quality of the members in every adult church will to a large extent be reflected by the investment made in the children especially relating to the things of God. Therefore, churches are supposed to give priority to the focused training of children especially children who are expected to possess nations. Unfortunately, in many of our churches, the attention and investment given to the training and nurturing of children needs much improvement. What should the church then do;

1. Mindset change – If children have to be part of the Possessing the Nation agenda (which they are), then there is the need for a mindset change about the Ministry; Starting first from the Pastorate and leadership, then the rest of the adult membership.
2. The Pastorate and Leadership should not consider the Children's Ministry as a second class church. If we have to achieve the vision of possessing nations, then we need to change the way we do things. Our perceptions of the Children's Ministry must change. It must be seen as an important unit/arm of the church and given the requisite attention and investment. For example; how many Pastors have ministered or stay through the children's service this whole year relative to that of the main (adult) service? etc.

3. The church needs to provide the environment for the focused training and nurturing of the young ones. The church must be an example of Christian community and love – We are expected to establish Community Clubs within our vicinities. The question is how do we effectively do this? It is suggested that the concept of "*co-creation*" is adopted so that both the church and the community would own the initiative. Some of the initiatives may involve - the creation of bible reading and study clubs; creation of reading clubs; opportunities for extra classes (academic work); establishment of drama clubs etc. These create indirect approaches for the infusion of the gospel (evangelism) and the building of community.
4. The church must also create an environment for the children to see faith being practised and for them to also practice the Christian faith. Thus, the church must itself be a good example of practice. Even though the intergenerational service is an excellent idea, the buy-in by all is very important and all efforts should be done to get everyone to own it and to continuously work at improving on it.
5. The church must provide the resources both in terms of finances, logistics and quality human resource to support the children's ministry in their task of training and nurturing.
6. The church should ensure that children ministry teachers and volunteers are constantly provided the requisite training and exposure to reflect the new vision and the changing times we live in.
7. It must facilitate mentoring and coaching by providing experienced older adult members (volunteers) as mentors and coaches for the children. There is the need to have "champions" apart from the parents, that the children can look up to. These champions would provide coaching or be an inspiration/motivation to the children. They may also help in ensuring "*sustainability*" through the clarification of doctrines, traditions and practices of the church etc. They may also help ensure "*succession*" through the identification of skills, giftings, talents, skills nurturing, impact and assisting in skills training
8. The church also needs to provide effective teaching and mentoring on Godly marriage and the nurturing of Godly children for present day young parents. This is because most present day young parents lack the requisite skills and the time in raising Godly children who would possess the nations. To support the teachings and training provided by the church, the concept of "*family cells*" comprising two to three young

families including an older one to serve as mentor can be introduced. These cells may meet periodically to interact and share experiences. This may help in strengthening marriages and families and contribute greatly to the raising of Godly children with the capacity to possess nations.

9. Even though better parenting techniques are important and better programs are also important, the church has a responsibility to provide constant prayer support for the children. This is because the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him comes from God (Ephesians 1:17).

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

The times we live in are very challenging for children and the youth. There is the need to build the capacities of the children both in the knowledge and skill of the faith to enable them discern the times and be able to respond to the issues; invariably developing a new breed of children with the Joshua and Daniel character.

Children who can possess nations, influence systems and policies and those whose very presence bring the fear of God and change to any space they find themselves. To achieve this requires commitment, sacrifice, investment and leadership from all stakeholders but more especially the Parents and the church. The time to do this is now and the clarion call by the leadership of the church through the vision 2023 is in the right direction. The Lord grant deeper insights and motivate us to act even as we reflect on this presentation in Jesus name. Amen.

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# I AM AN AGENT OF TRANSFORMATION

David Tettey Tekper (Apostle)

Texts: Matthew 5:13-16, Romans 12:1-2, Exodus 3:1-10, Isaiah 6:8-9,  
Ezekiel 22:30, Matthew 5:13-16

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The theme for the 5-year vision (Vision 2023) of the Church of Pentecost is "Possessing the Nations: Equipping the Church to Transform Every Sphere of Society with Values and Principles of the Kingdom of God". The overall goal is to build a church 'where members go to possess their nations by transforming every worldview, thought and behaviour with values, principles and lifestyles of the Kingdom of God and thereby turning many people to Christ.'<sup>82</sup> The vision calls for the church to 'focus on being salt and light in this perverse world in order to transform the spiritual, social, economic and political fabric of the nations.'<sup>83</sup> One of the key means to achieving the agenda of 'Possessing the Nations' is to ensure that our members become agents of transformation in every sphere of life. It is this call that this paper seeks to echo, which significantly reflects the slogan for the 5-year - "Possessing the Nation; I Am an Agent of Transformation".

This presentation seeks to call Christians to assert their identity as agents of transformation in today's world. Using Matthew 5:13-16 as anchor text, lessons will be drawn for how the Christian can effectively act as God's agent in the transformation of the world. In this paper, we shall make an attempt to identify who an agent of Transformation should be, the need for transformation and how an individual can transform society. We shall also explore challenges that are capable of hindering the Christian from performing this role and suggest ways by which we can overcome such challenges.

The call to be an agent of transformation is a needful one if we can make any significant contribution to arrest the decay in our society. Indeed, one of the paradoxes of Africa in general and Ghana in particular is the incongruence between large Christian population and the rife ungodliness in society. According to [The Centre for the Study of Global Christianity](#)

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<sup>82</sup> (Pentecost 2018), Page 5

<sup>83</sup> Page 6



[at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary](#)<sup>84</sup>, there were more Christians in Africa than any other continent as of 2018. Africa has 631 million Christian residents, Latin America has 601 million Christians, and Europe has 571 million Christians. It is even projected that by 2025, of the 2.6 billion Christians in the world, 695 will be living in Africa. The Christian population of Ghana is 71.2%, made up of: Pentecostal/Charismatic, 28.3%; Protestant, 18.4%; Catholic, 13.1%; others, 11.4%. These numbers are significant and worth celebrating and have had great impact on the continent. Yet, in many other areas, the continent is yet to feel the full impact of the transforming power of the gospel. The situation is similar to what is happening in Ghana. In an article titled 'Ghana's Part-time Christianity', Robert Coleman bemoans the wide display of religiosity by many Ghanaian Christians, yet with minimal impact. According to him,

Many Ghanaian Christians love to make a show of the religion but when it comes down to godliness and moral uprightness, they are found wanting. Ghana is drowning in the filth of corruption, dishonesty, tribalism, indecency and sexual promiscuity yet the biblically prescribed morality of the Christian majority, whose songs, symbols and landmarks immediately stand out to visitors to this country, cannot be easily seen nor felt. This is one of the most disturbing and irreconcilable features of Ghanaian Christianity<sup>85</sup>.

Coleman is right in many ways. Christians cannot claim to follow the sinless and blameless Christ, to be filled with the Holy Spirit who reproves the world of sin, judgment and righteousness and yet live otherwise. The lives of the Christian majority must reflect in godly values and principles in the home, workplace, church and community. For so long a time, Christians in Ghana have preached the power of the Lord Jesus Christ to save and change sinners. It is time this gospel is satisfactorily reflected in individual lives for societal transformation; it is time to equip the members of the Church to assume their true identity as agents of transformation – credible ambassadors of Christ. Unless this happens, our

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<sup>84</sup> <https://aleteia.org/2018/07/24/africa-overtakes-latin-america-for-the-highest-christian-population/>

<sup>85</sup> (Coleman 2014) Accessed on 11/2/18.

Christianity can best be described as an apology of Christ intends it to be, and society would mock the power of Christ to save and transform.

## 2.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

**The Meaning of an Agent:** According to the Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary,<sup>86</sup> "An agent is one who acts for, or in the place of, another, by authority from him; one entrusted with the business of another; a substitute. It could also mean an active power or cause; that which has the power to produce an effect." Agent may therefore refer to a person who acts on behalf of another person or group. He or she serves as a medium through which the principal authority communicates and executes his agenda or purposes. The agent works under the control of the principal authority and acts within the scope of the delegated mandate. From the Christian perspective, an agent refers to a Christian who acts on behalf of the Lord God Almighty with delegated authority by the Holy Spirit to impact society progressively. As Christ's ambassador, the Christian reflects the character and power of Christ in every sphere of life as he represents Christ on earth.

### 2.1 Who qualifies to be God's Agent?

Who can be that man that God could use as this agent on earth? God wants to restore humanity and His creation into their original status. This can be done through man – A certain type of man, not always a group but individuals. He should be a man after God's own heart. Samuel told King Saul that "The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you" (1 Sam. 13:14b). Recounting this event later in Antioch, Paul the Apostle told his audience that "And when He had removed him [Saul], He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who will do all my will'" (Acts 13:22, NKJV). King Saul was rejected as an agent or God's representative because he did not do the "will of God".

It is important for us to appreciate the fact that, what qualifies one to be a man after God's own heart is the ability to know and do what is in God's heart and mind. God told Eli that "Then I will raise up for myself **a faithful priest** who shall do according to what is in **My heart** and in **My mind**" (1 Sam. 2:35a, NKJV). When God rejected Eli and his children for

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<sup>86</sup> <https://biblehub.com/topical/a/agent.htm>. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

doing what was wrong in his sight, He raised “a faithful priest” who would obey and perform what He desires and thinks. This Scripture gives us the understanding that we can only work with God as agents of transformation, if we are able to align with His will. The agent of transformation must first have a transformed heart; a heart that yields to God daily. This is why God told the Prophet Samuel that “For the Lord does not see as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). For this reason, Paul admonished the church in Rome not to conform to the patterns of the world but be transformed by the renewing of their mind (Rom. 12:2). The implication is that until the heart and thought patterns of the agent is transformed to align with that of God, that agent cannot transform their sphere of influence.

From the scriptures discussed, it is clear that God’s agents are believers who accept to pay the full price and conform to His standards. From this, we can also deduce that believers are saved, transformed and sent into the world to carry out good works on behalf of God, using the principles and values of the Kingdom of God as agents of transformation (Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:11-14). We have to be sound to eagerly do good works on earth as God has entrusted into our hands. We must appreciate the fact that we are working for the creator of the universe, the Almighty God. Such an understanding places a huge responsibility and demand upon the believer. Acting on behalf of the Creator demands care and giving of our best because He deserves our best. We act on God’s behalf to reflect his light to dispel darkness, wherever we find ourselves (Acts 14:8-11; Jas. 1:17-18, Mt.5:14-16).

The good news is that God always recreates His creation, transforming individuals and groups into new and better instruments for His own glory. He invites us to become involved with Him in the transformation work. He is looking for “healthy” believers who are changed from inside out to be used in bringing communities to their original status.

There must be a personal life transformation for any agent who is engaged in changing systems, structures and people – a new development of character, attitude and mindset. To effectively represent someone or be their agent, one must know the person. To become God’s agents, we must know Him; this knowledge must not only be intellectual but also a relational Paul, the Apostle knew this secret when he desired to know Him and to experience the power of His resurrection. This can be described as having a personal encounter with God. The Bible gives us a number of examples of people who encountered God and served

as agents of transformation within their societies and in their generations. Some examples include:

- Jacob (Gen. 32:24-30).
- Moses (Ex. 3).
- Isaiah (Is. 6)
- The Early Apostles (Acts 2:1-4, Acts 4:23).
- Paul (Acts 9:3-4, Gal. 1:11-16).

Although Moses was discouraged and abandoned the project of helping the people of Israel, who were then suffering in the hands of the cruel Egyptians (Ex. 2), his encounter with God as recorded in Exodus chapter 3 turned the story around. Moses himself experienced a personal transformation and subsequently became a very bold and revolutionary agent of transformation, bringing freedom to the whole of Israel. Similarly, the Prophet Isaiah, encountered God, when he came to the temple to worship God (Is. 6:1-8). This encounter brought personal transformation to him first, and subsequently made him God's agent of transformation. It is important to state here again that, to become an agent of transformation, one must undergo personal life transformation.

## **2.2 Qualities that can Make One God's Agent**

1. **Purity** "Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God" (Mt. 5:8). It is purity that starts from within one's thought or mind, because your thoughts become your words, actions and character. The Apostle Paul exhorts us to have renewed mind (Rom. 12:1-2):
  - In conscience (Rom. 9:1-5)
  - In behaviour (Eph. 4:17-32)
  - In speech (1 Tim. 4:12; 2 Cor. 7:1)
2. **Passion** A strong feeling or excitement for something or about doing something, or concept. We must be passionate about our desire to bring people to the saving knowledge of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. We must also be passionate about our transformation agenda. It is passion that drives us beyond discouragement and

persecutions. The fire in the heart of a person who is truly passionate about the Kingdom agenda cannot be quenched.

3. **Purpose** (John 9:4-5)

- Being single minded, aimed at accomplishing the God given task of reconciling man to God (2 Cor. 5:18-19).
- Playing your role as **salt** of the world, bringing preservation to every sphere of life and every situation that has the potential of decaying. As salts, we are also expected to bring taste and flavour to every meaningless situation, purifying systems and institutions of the nations of the world, so that the world may see the goodness of God (Mt. 5:13).
- Playing your role as **light** of the world (Mt. 5:14). Light gives direction and dispels darkness. As light of the world, we must endeavour to shine in every dark place. Our lights must shine in the church, in our homes, in education, in politics, in our businesses and in our various professions. The light must shine in the media (including the social media). In short, the world must see the light of the Lord through us on every mountain and in every sphere of life.

4. **Perseverance** (Heb. 10: 32-36; 2 Tim. 4:1-5). To persevere is to be persistent in doing something in spite of difficulties or delay in achieving success. The attempt to transform every sphere of life will not come on a silver platter. It will take perseverance to achieve this aim.

5. **Power** (Acts 1:8; Eph. 6:10-17). As believers, we are much aware that "Though we walk in the world flesh, we do not wage war according the flesh" (2 Cor. 10:3, NKJV). Paul tells us that "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12, NKJV). The good news however, is that through the Holy Spirit, we have been given power to be witnesses of the Lord. This power gives us authority over all the powers of darkness and grants us enablement to be authentic agents of transformation. Without the power of the Holy Spirit there cannot be any meaningful transformation in society.

The Acts of the Apostles teaches us that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is the game changer.

6. **Prayer** (Eph. 6:18-20; 1 Tim. 2:1-4). There is enough evidence in the Scriptures to teach us that, it is by prayer we connect and commune with God. The level of transformation we can achieve as agents of is dependent on the level of prayer we can offer.
7. **Person of the Word**. Living for the word, for it is life-giving mirror and a sword (Heb. 4:12; Jas. 1:22-25).

### 2.3 Meaning of Transformation

According to the Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary<sup>87</sup>, to transform means "to change the form of or to change in shape or appearance or to metamorphose". Thus, transformation is the process by which someone or something changes in form, nature or appearance. From biblical perspective, it can be explained as the progressive renewal of the mind and subsequent change from a life that no longer conforms to the ways of the world to one that glorifies God (Rom. 12:1-2). This is accomplished by the renewing of the mind, an inward spiritual transformation that will manifest itself in outward actions. On a larger scale, Tom White defines transformation (as quoted by Lynn and Sarah Leslie) as;

The measurable supernatural impact of the presence and power of God on human society, sacred and secular. In the church, this is characterized by increased holiness of life, accelerated conversion growth, reconciliation in relationships, mobilization of gifts and callings, and an increased relevance to and participation in greater society. In the culture, this may be characterized by pervasive awareness of the reality of God, a radical correction of social ills, a commensurate decrease in crime rates, supernatural blessing on local commerce, healing of the broken-hearted (the alienated and disenfranchised), and an exporting of kingdom righteousness. To this end, a catalytic core of saints typically embraces a lifestyle of persistent repentance, humility, prayer and sacrificial

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<sup>87</sup> <https://biblehub.com/topical/a/agent.htm>. Accessed on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019

servanthood that attracts the favor and presence of God, and breaks the predominating influences of the ruling power structures of human flesh and the devil<sup>88</sup>.

From the definition of White, biblical transformation has impact on two levels – the church and the society. When transformation takes place, Christians reflect the life of Christ and become committed to the cause of Christ. This in turn affects the society as their godly lifestyle and action impact the community in which they live, work and worship.

Transformation is hereby seen as a complete or major change in someone's appearance, form or nature. To change something completely usually in a good way:

- To change in composition or structure
- To change the outlook or appearance
- To change in character or condition.

Talking of transformation also brings in mind enhancing Spiritual and relational vitality in our church and society in general. Jesus summed it up in Matthew 22:35-40. Loving God bring spiritual vitality. Transformation also involves loving our neighbours and bringing relational vitality. Transformation begins when we have a deep sense of the presence and power of God in our lives. An ongoing or continuous encounter with God's holiness.

In the New Testament one knows God through the knowledge of Jesus Christ. (John 8:19; Col. 2:2-3). Such knowledge gives direction, conviction and assurance of faith (2 Cor. 4:14). It consists of having better understanding of God's will in the ethical sense (Col. 1:9-10), knowing that God desires to save people (Eph. 1:8-9), and having insight into God's will through our knowledge of Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:17; Eph. 3:18). God puts a high priority on knowing Him personally and living a life that reflects His justice and righteousness (Hos. 6:6). What do you want people to admire most about you?

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<sup>88</sup> (Leslie, Sarah and Lynn, 2015)

## 2.4 Some Scriptures about Transformation

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ezekiel 36:26; Romans 12:2, Philippians 1:6; Luke 6:43-45; Jeremiah 32:38-40. Transformation means “change or renewal from life that no longer conforms to the ways of the world to one that pleases God (Rom. 12:2). This is accomplished by the renewing of the minds, an inward spiritual transformation that will manifest itself in outward actions. We demonstrate our transformed life through our bearing spiritual fruits in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10). Evidence of transformation in us is seen in the way we reflect the likeness and glory of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18, Rom. 8:9). The transformed life emulates Christ as Paul portrays in Galatians 2:20. The Gospels (the word of God) plays a major role in our transformation (Rom 1:16, Eph. 4:22, Rom. 8:13; 2 Pet. 1:3-11).

## 2.5 Agent of Transformation

From the aforementioned definitions, it can be deduced that an agent of transformation is one who has encountered Christ, has been transformed by the indwelling Holy Spirit, sanctified by obedience to God’s word and acts as God’s representative in every sphere of life, bringing the love and life of Christ to all they connects with. Such a person acts as God’s representative on earth through whom He fulfils His purposes in the world. Such a person has a divine mandate to influence every sphere of life – marriage and family life, education, trade and commerce, law and the judiciary, the media and governance, etc. – with Kingdom values and principles. Such a person brings the reign of Christ in every sphere of life through their lifestyle and proclamation. For it is only in fulfilling this mandate that the Church can possess the nations of the world for Christ.

## 2.6 Traits of Transformation Agents

1. **Being in Christ:** Thus, abiding in Christ and His word (Jn. 15:1-5). The Early Church and the disciples were recognised as having been with Jesus (Mk 10:38-42). This is a mark of transformation. Something about them changed.
2. **Being filled with the Holy Spirit:** Here also, the Early Church is a good example. They recognised the role of the Holy Spirit in continuing and sustaining Christ’s mission and in transforming their society (Acts 4:31:33). No wonder it was said about them that they turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). This is a typical example



of how the Holy Spirit empowers to transform societies, that even your opponents will have to confess that there has been a radical transformation.

3. **Being a person of the word:** Living for the word, acting (obeying the word) for it is life-giving, mirror, a sword, (Heb. 4:12, James 1:22-25, Hebrews 4:12).

Christians must build bridges and love others if they want to live on mission. Personal life transformation is an important aspect of leadership and change. Leaders engage in changing systems, structures and people. The most critical area of focus is the transformation of the lives of leaders who are spearheading change. The quality of the lives of leaders (agents) has direct bearing on the nature and quality of total change in society. Personal life transformation of the agent therefore, has to be the primary engagement of those who desire to change organisations, institutions and nations. As goes the leader, so goes the institution. Thus, the institution is a reflection of the leader. The heart of the leadership challenge is the heart of the leader. Jesus' teaching on the principle that "a good tree bears good fruit" in His sermon of the mount corroborate this assertion (Matt. 7:15-20). In Jesus' address to the religious leaders of His time, it is evident, that their problem was that what they professed and taught was the opposite of what they actually practiced. Jesus saw them as "false", they lived double lives and as such were very dangerous and lacked integrity.

## **2.7 God's Original Intent for the World**

God's original goal in the creation of the world was for it to be a visible expression of His glory, splendour, majesty and power. His intention was that through humankind, the earth would serve as a place where His purposes would be fulfilled. When He created humanity in His own image, He blessed them with every capacity to reflect His righteousness in all ways. However, due to the fall, sin and corruption entered the life-stream of the human race (Rom. 5:12). Thus, all humans are now born into the world with a strong impulse and pull towards sin and wickedness (Gen. 6:5; Ps. 14:1-3; 51:5; Mk. 7:21-23; Eph. 2:1-3). People follow their own sinful desires and go their own way other than God's (Is. 53:6; Rom. 3:23). As a result, society today faces problems ranging from moral decadence, drugs, crime, dysfunctional marriages and broken homes, poverty, sexual perversions, among many others. The standards and systems of the world continue to be God-defying, and the ways of humanity, rather than being an expression of God's glory and righteousness, continue to deteriorate.

The restoration work done by Jesus Christ makes it possible for mankind to assume their original position and perform their original role of fulfilling the will of God. The believer in Jesus Christ becomes God's agent on earth to work and have oversight of creation on God's behalf. Ephesians 2:10 makes it clear that "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (NKJV).

Also, the believer has been assigned a role as the light and salt. Light and salt are things that cause tangible changes wherever their presence is felt or announced. They influence situations for better. Light, for example, drives away darkness. Similarly, salt adds flavour and preserves deteriorating situations. Jesus, in teaching His disciples how to pray, taught them to request that God's Kingdom comes and His would be done on earth as it is in heaven (Mt. 16:10). In effect, they were to pull down heaven to earth, so that the will of the Lord will be done in all the earth. Thus, we can have a taste of heaven's goodness while on earth. The earth was to be changed to enjoy heaven while here on earth. This is the role God wants believers to play while on earth. Once someone becomes a believer, they are expected to live by the principles and values of the Kingdom of God and cause positive changes in their places of influence.

## **2.8 The Christian as an Agent of Transformation**

Matthew 5 through to chapter 7:29 is designated the Sermon on the Mount. It is the life, ministry and message of the Kingdom of God which Jesus came to usher. In the Lukan version, it follows directly after the choosing of the Twelve (Lk. 6:13ff). Thus, some have rightly called the Sermon on the Mount as 'the Ordination Address to the Twelve', 'The Compendium of Christ's Doctrine,' "The Magna Charta of the Kingdom," "The Manifesto of the King,"<sup>89</sup> among others. The Sermon on the Mount can be divided into five constituent parts namely, the introduction (5:1-20); the antitheses (5:21- 48); the three acts of piety (6:1-18); other teachings of Jesus (6:19-7:12); and finally, warnings about judgment (7:13-29)<sup>90</sup>. The introductory part contains fourfold sections namely, the setting that prepares the ground for the entire Sermon (5:1-2); the beatitudes (5:3-12); the identity of Jesus' followers; the essence of discipleship (5:13 - 16) and finally, Jesus' stance on the Law and the Prophets (5:17-20)<sup>91</sup>.

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<sup>89</sup> (Barclay 2001) p97

<sup>90</sup> (Harrington 1991). p76

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p82

In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus metaphorically describes His followers as “the light of the world” and “the salt of the earth”. By designating His disciples thus, Jesus was re-echoing the call to be light among the nations; He was reminding His followers to assert by commendable lifestyle, their God-given identity as salt and light to the world. Additionally, this identity was to be fulfilled with a new vigour by a new group of people now created out of Jesus’ followership (the Christians). Within the context of the Sermon on the Mount, this intention is clearly spelt out when Jesus challenges His disciples to a new way of life in line with the principles of the Kingdom, marked by a new righteousness (Mt. 4:25-5:2; 7:28-29). This section will glean from Matthew 5, how Christians and the Church can fulfil the call to be agents of transformation.

## **2.9 Salt of the Earth – Influencing the World through Lifestyle)**

Another means by which Christians can act as agents of transformation is to reflect their calling as “salt of the earth”, to preserve it from corruption and to season it. In Scripture, humankind, under the unrestrained workings of their own evil nature, are represented as entirely corrupt. Thus, before the flood (Gen. 6:11, 12); after the flood (Gen. 8:21); in the days of David (Ps. 14:2, 3); in the days of Isaiah (Isa 1:5, 6); and in the days of Paul (Eph. 2:1-3); see also (Job 14:4; 15:15; 16; Jn. 3:6). The remedy for this, says the Lord, is the active presence of His disciples among their fellows. The character and principles of Christians, brought into close contact with it, are designed to arrest the festering corruption of humanity and season its insipidity.<sup>92</sup>

By comparing with the characteristics of salt, the Christian can know how to act as God’s agent of transformation in the world:

- Salt has a flavouring quality and as such Christians are to add divine flavour to the world.
- Salt generally creates thirst and as such Christians are to create a thirst for Christ.
- Salt also has the capacity to stop decay, acting as a preservative. Likewise, the Christian is to serve as a preservative, stopping the moral decay in this sin-infected world.

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<sup>92</sup> (A R Fausset; David Brown; Robert Jamieson 1999)

- Salt acts by coming into contact with the substance it is meant to affect and silently, it influences it. In the same way, Christians who are in the world but not of the world must influence their sphere with their lifestyle.

## **2.10 Be Light of the World – Influencing through Witness**

To be called by Jesus as light of the world is very humbling, since the Lord appropriates this distinctive title to Himself (Jn. 8:12; 9:5; and see Joh 1:4, 9; 3:19; 12:35, 36). Christians are not light in themselves but reflect the light of Christ who indwells them by the Holy Spirit. Just as the moon the light of the sun, so is the Christian to reflect the light of Christ. In the Bible, light is seen as a symbol of orderliness and the absence of confusion. As **light**, we are expected to bring **illumination** into the darkness of the world (exposing its evil and corrupt practices), shine our brightness on its crooked path, and show people the right way to pleasing God. Just as in the physical world, where light dispels darkness, shows the way, prevents people from falling, brings about orderliness and makes visible what is hidden, so it is in the spiritual sphere. Our light must shine through our godly and godly examples for the world to follow in all spheres of life – in marriage and family life, education, trade and commerce, law and the judiciary, the media and governance, etc.

## **2.11 Be a City on a Hill – The influence of the church**

In Matthew 5:14, Jesus states that a city on a hill cannot be hidden. In my view, this statement refers to the church since a city is made up of many houses and the collective light cannot be hidden. Admittedly, the Church and the world are interconnected; Christians have been called out of the world to be equipped in the Church, and sent back into the world to influence it with the values and principles of the Kingdom of God. Although the Church does not belong to the world, it exists within it. If we therefore fail to affect the world with our godly values, the world may corrupt the Christian and the Church. The Church is the manifestation of the reign of God, and so the values that guide her are high. It is these values that separate the Church from society while at the same time connect it to the same society (Emedi, 2010).

As God's mouthpiece and a prophetic voice to the nations, the Church has a mandate to ensure that the purposes of God are progressively executed before the end of time – raising nations, building cultures, structuring society with its functions and institutions, and shaping the form and quality of political systems.

Jesus and the early disciples functioned actively wherever they found themselves. Their teachings were greatly influenced by the socio-economic and political factors of the time. In several instances, Jesus confronted the Pharisees and Sadducees for their self-indulgence, greed, injustice and ill-treatment of the poor and destitute (Mt. 23:25-33). They were known for their oppression and exploitation of the deprived. His messages about the Kingdom of God clearly showed the manner in which His audience ought to live and how they were to treat the poor and needy among them.

The transformation of societies has always been part of the Church's contemporary mission activities. While the focal point of the mission enterprise has been to propagate the gospel message to the lost world (Mk. 16:15-16), calling humanity to repentance and faith (2 Pet. 3:9), it has also involved a process of teaching them to obey all that Jesus has commanded. While we lament our poor performance, albeit inadvertently, in this area over the years, we can also celebrate the new opportunity we have to demonstrate our love for Christ through unconditional obedience to apply firmer grips to the task.

Additionally, the Church must practise love, charity, and caring for the needy among them (Acts 2:42-44; 4:34-37). The Early Church really understood acts of charity and was full of good works, so much that they enjoyed favour with all the people in their communities. During the spread of Christianity to the Roman Empire, western world and then to Africa, the Church had been involved in distributions to the poor, the establishment and upkeep of hospitals, schools, orphanages, among other societal reliefs. It had also been very active in the advocacy for moral laws and policies that contribute positively to societal development. The Church in our day has not relented on its role in the transformation of society. Nonetheless, considering the continual upsurge in cases of moral decadence, drugs, crime, dysfunctional marriages and broken homes, poverty, sexual perversions, among many others, it must step up its efforts in fulfilling the agenda. We must therefore uphold the tenets of the Vision 2023 to achieve the physical expression of the transformation agenda.

## **2.12 Serving as Priests**

Christians are called Priests (1 Pet. 2:9). Priests in the Old Testament were chosen by God to offer divinely appointed sacrifices, carry out various duties related to worship, and teach the law of God to the people (Ezra 3:10-11, 7:10; Heb. 9:6,7). At the appointed time, Jesus our great high priest offered Himself once for all as an atoning

sacrifice for the sins of mankind (Heb. 3:6; 9:23-28). By virtue of Christ's work on the cross, believers have become "living stones... being built up as a spiritual house **into a holy priesthood** to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5).

The biblical concept of the priesthood of all believers teaches that, by repentance and faith in Christ, we can come to God directly without any human intermediary. This priesthood is a function, rather than an office, which all believers have, making them directly responsible for their relationship with God. This does not deny the importance of leadership or offices in the church, but rather rejects hierarchical roles reminiscent of the Old Testament priest that can tend to make believers passive in their relationship with God. As priests, we are called to **represent Christ in all the places** of our daily lives. The priest served God in the temple, and the nation of Israel was also to be a kingdom of priests who represented Yahweh to the nations around them (Ex. 19:5). Similarly, we are called to reflect Christ in our homes and local churches as well as in the places where unbelievers live, such as among our relatives, neighbourhoods, marketplaces and places of work (Eph. 2:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; 1 Pet. 2:9, 12). We must work towards the return of the era where many of our members were called *Osofo* (Pastor) in their various spheres, because of their exemplary lifestyle and purity.

### **3.0 HOW DOES AN INDIVIDUAL GET ON TO TRANSFORMING SOCIETY**

The key question the agent of transformation must ask is: **What would Jesus do in this situation?** Answering this question requires a thorough grasp of the life, values and teachings of Christ. **Knowing Jesus is the most critical** asset for transformation. To experience restoration to God's image and to lead transformation in all spheres of life in a way that is bringing all creation back under God's kingship (Ps. 22:27-28), one has to go beyond the principles of Christ's leadership to the person of Jesus Christ. Christ is not only our model for leadership, He is also God's instrument for empowering transformation in the lives and situations of Christians or believers. There must be a relational knowledge of Christ that is both intellectual and experiential. There are some basic essential commitments for followers of Jesus. These are:

1. Living like Jesus in the contemporary world.
2. Leading like Jesus in the contemporary world.

In seeking to be like Jesus, we aim at having the mind of Jesus Christ. This requires the process of worldview transformation. We should have as our goal, the restoration of humans into the image of God and of human leadership to good stewardships of God's creation; people who are leading like Jesus are effective stewards of God's new creation (the church) in proper relationship with all of God's creation. The first commission God gave mankind before the fall is to be **good stewards of creation** (Gen. 1:28). This stewardship requires working towards having all of creation serve their purpose in God's plan (Rom. 8:18-22).

When we become Christians; we are called to this good work that God has already prepared for us (Eph. 2:10; Titus 2:14). Believers who are being transformed into the image of God, should be helped to see stewardship of God's creation as an essential part of the leadership calling of all believers in both the Church and broader society. The transformation of people into the likeness of Jesus Christ is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in the lives of believers to lift up Jesus (Jn. 16:13-15).

He opens the eyes of believers to see the complete image of Jesus Christ. He also through His power transforms the lives of believers into the image of Jesus Christ, if they seek such restoration earnestly. It is the **will of God that we are all transformed into the image of His Son Jesus Christ** (Rom. 8:29). It is not only behavioural demonstration of the life of Christ, but being transformed in our thinking and the values that guide our lives so that we are more like Christ Jesus. We must allow and depend on the Holy Spirit to transform us from within so that our minds become increasingly like the mind of Jesus Christ. The values and worldview of Jesus are the models that we should aspire to as follows of Jesus Christ. What are some of these values?

### **3.1 Challenges to Becoming Agents of Transformation**

Matthew 5:13-14 states that "...But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot...Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl...." In other words, there is the possibility of losing the effect of being able to affect the sphere God has sovereignly placed us and this can be very subtle. The question is, what prevents Christians from acting as agents of transformation in their spheres?

The main challenge to an effective agent of transformation is conformity to unchristian worldviews instead of biblical worldviews. For instance, the key element of all the worldviews

of this world is the attempt to elevate the created above the Creator, to bring the human being to the centre of life. It seeks to focus on the present life and live as if there is no place like heaven or hell. People thus seek to live without a conscience and accountability of life. Christians who lose their saltiness are Christians who have become so consumed with the world that they forget their mission to transform their spheres for Christ. It can be recalled that when the focus of Christians on the second coming of Christ, there a holy fear to live right and please the Lord. The reason for the biblical injunction in Romans 12:2 is key, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (NIV). There is a battle for the mind of the Christian, since actions flow from belief. Through the use of the internet and soap operas, Christians are compromising their stance on righteousness and enjoying ungodly scenes from movies. Little by little, the conscience is dulled and the mouth is shut against these wrongs (1 Tim. 4:2). Other factors could include fear of persecution and lack of yieldedness on the part of the Christian.

### **3.2 What will accelerate or hinder our transformation (Romans 12:1-2)**

Since our transformation is required of God, we need to do all that has to be done to accelerate its accomplishment and avoid anything that will slow or hinder our transformation. Apostle Paul, in the verses read, was urging and pleading with us. It means he did not take it lightly; he emphasised it, for it is very important. If we align our lives with it, it will change us for the better. A transformed life will make us benefit from God's promises, our health, finances, peace and wholeness are assured. There will be wholeness in our relationship with our spouses, bosses, co-workers and those serving under us.

You do not need to urge somebody to do something that will happen automatically. (E.g. You cannot urge the sun to come up in the morning.) Apostle Paul is urging us because there is a **choice** to be made, an obedience or disobedience to choose from. We are saying one can allow or disallow his transformation. One can also choose to delay his transformation. The Apostle would like us to be more like Jesus. The speed with which the transformation happens is according to our willingness to allow it to happen.

Transformation into His image will also require our **cooperation** by giving our bodies as living sacrifices. A living sacrifice is allowing our **agenda** to go and taking on God's agenda. His agenda must prevail, "not my will but your will be done".



I have to make a choice to do God's will instead of doing my own will. I have to choose to submit my life to God's will. In doing so, I am offering my life to God as a living sacrifice that is holy, acceptable, and well pleasing to God. Transformation will need our cooperation with God. The degree of my cooperation will determine my transformation to the image of His Son. Obeying God's will at times calls for suffering as the flesh's desires are not granted. But even in such a situation, there is a great grace from the Spirit that holds one up.

Our obedience facilitates the flow of the power of God in our lives and makes the yoke light (Mt. 11:29-30). I will either present my body or not, the choice is mine, but if I do, then that is my reasonable sacrifice and worship to God. Transformation begins with the renewal of our minds. If one's mind is not renewed, you will not be transformed. Renewal means, to make new the way we think and understand reality. It means that our thinking and our understanding is no longer guided by the perspective of this world, but our thinking is reformed by the Word of God. Renewal of the minds means is more than just thinking new thoughts. It means becoming convinced of these new thoughts. It means that God's reality takes the place of the world's reality. The world's reality is based upon the lies of the Devil. We cannot change ourselves by trying to conform to an outward form of religion. We must be transformed from the inside out and this is only possible through the inward transformation of our beliefs. What we believe and what we are convinced of will end up determining all that we do. If there is a behaviour that needs to be changed, focus on renewing the mind. As the mind is renewed, as unbelief is turned to faith, attitudes will change, inward motivations will change, and then actions will change.

Renewing our mindset is important for an effective transformation for the fact that most often, our thinking is different from God's thinking. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your way and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. 55:8-9, NIV). The reason for the mind's renewal is that our thoughts are the first to be triggered in the **chain reaction of our soul**. Our thoughts trigger our emotions, our emotions stir up our desires and then our desires produce our actions. So, if we could catch negative thoughts when they first occur, we could stop the whole chain reactions before they even begin (we will be able to prevent a lot of the sins that occur in our lives). I therefore have to change what I believe, and agree with the word of God. I must determine to renew my mind and practise love, patience, self-control and peace.

### **3.3 Discipline**

For our transformation to be enhanced, we need to discipline ourselves. The desires of the flesh are opposite to the desires of the spirit. The flesh seeks to please itself, but the spirit seeks to please the Lord and others. That is why we need to discipline our bodies so that we do not gratify the desires of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-23). Let us do away with the things that hinder our transformation into the image of Christ. Some of these things might not be sin but they hinder the transformation process. Let us identify them and bring them under control with the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 9:27).

### **3.4 A transformed life Affects Others**

As we behold the glory of Christ, we are transformed into His image. What we are beholding makes a difference; it impacts our lives till we become like Him. As we behold Him, we too become mirrors. We gaze upon the glory of the Lord and as we gaze, the glory streams upon us and there is an image of Christ reflected and mirrored in us. Then others, looking upon us, see the image of Christ in our lives and they are also transformed into His image. As an illustration a little child was thinking about the unseen Christ to whom she prayed and came to her mother with the question, "Is Jesus like anybody I know?" the question was not an unreasonable one; it was one to which the child should have received the answer "Yes". Every true disciple of Christ ought to be the answer – in some sense, at least – to the Child's inquiry. Every little one ought to see Christ's beauty mirrored in their mother's face. Every Sunday School teacher's character should reflect some tracings of the eternal love on which the pupils may gaze. Whoever looks upon the life of any Christian should see in it at once, the reflection of the beauty of Christ.

If we would have Christ mirrored in our lives, we must continue ever beholding His glory, gazing upon it and we shall be mirrors reflecting Him into whose face we gaze. Then those who look upon our lives will see in us the image or the picture of Christ. As we are transformed into Christ's image as Apostles, Prophets and Evangelists, we radiate His glory to those around us, our ministers will be affected and they will also go to affect presbyteries and soon our entire church community will be affected by the radiance of Christ. If we realise this truth, then a God centred worship, the love of the brethren, Christian community and fervent evangelism will be the result and there will be total transformation into the image of Christ.

## **4.0 HOW DO WE APPLY THESE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES TO BRING TRANSFORMATION TO OUR CHURCH?**

We need to apply the principles of spiritual transformation into the way we do ministry in our church. Since transformation starts from a change in the inner man, we will need to evaluate the mission, purpose and our core values and look up to making changes where necessary. We need to see ourselves as servant leaders like our master Jesus and be purposeful toward the completion of the task we have on hand, the task of discipling ourselves and the members to grow into the stature of Christ. (Eph. 4:12-16). We will need to evaluate the way officers are called and ordained, not as a way of compensation for any acts of goodness toward us, rather discernment of the call of God upon their lives to serve in those capacities. Our relationship with ministers, officers and members under our areas of jurisdiction must reflect the love of Christ and be concerned about their spiritual development.

We will have to examine the way we do our reports: accurate statistics, promptness in reporting, and not shirking our responsibilities. We would need to change the attitude of inner circle and groupings which causes **divide and rule** and be fair and firm to all who come our way. Our messages should not be what we only expect of our congregation but must include our practical example of living the word.

### **4.1 How to Lead Members to be Transformed**

People's perspective about Jesus must be changed for them to be transformed into His image. He is not only a shepherd, but fully God and fully human. We also, though human, can be transformed to reflect Christ's image.

In discipleship, we need to allow the people to maintain their individual uniqueness, but use our own lifestyle to show them what it is to be mature Christians. The deep lessons our followers will learn from these actions of ours will go with them in life to mould them as they face life situations. Our and institutions should make people disciples of Jesus, not just disciples of our institutions. There is the tendency that we are more concerned with the attendance at church functions than with the personal growth of the people who attend. Sometimes success is measured by how fast and how large a church grows so we teach our people to give priority to church functions over everything else.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

For us to be effective agents of transformation in God's hands we first need to sincerely believe in our hearts that Jesus is Lord and that He is Lord of our lives (John 6:24-29). Our first calling is to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. This allows us to have a personal relationship with Him on daily basis. We should not fall victim to making Christ known without knowing Him first for ourselves (Phil. 3:4-5, 10-11). We must learn to put our hands into God's hands, walk with Him, drink from Him, listen to Him, and obey Him. Jesus had to rely totally on the Father in order to fulfil His divine assignment.

We must continue to press on towards the goal (Phil. 3:12-14, 18-21). We must focus on Christ, wherever we find ourselves (political, business, civil/ public service, church, NGO, etc). As we press on, we should not allow any destruction; we must persevere and hold on to the end just as we believed from the beginning. We must behold Him; first for a transformed lifestyle and second for ministry as leaders. In Christianity, we cannot lead until we learn to follow the Chief Shepherd. We do not have any message until we become messengers. According to Gbile Akani, people see Jesus as a currency to what they need but we need to see Jesus as the end in itself. If we follow Him, we will also know Him. If you know Him we will do His will as leaders and if we do His will, we will be able to transform our societies and receive His reward.

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# THE POWER AND BEAUTY OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Massaboi Zuwu (Apostle)

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Fellowship is an important part of our Christian Faith. Coming together in fellowship to support and encourage one another is an important Christian principle (Heb. 10:24-25). Christian fellowship allows us to learn, gain strength, and show the world the beauty of our love and unity in Christ. This is a testimony that affirms our Christian witness. Thus, Jesus said, "By this shall men know that you are my disciples if you love one another (John 13:35).

As a community of God's household, our lifestyles must show forth the praise of God. Although we are from diverse backgrounds and ethnic groups, we should be able to celebrate our diversity in unity to portray the glory of God. However, in our world today, people in the church are becoming increasingly individualistic in their attitudes and lifestyles. This paper will discuss the following:

- What is Christian fellowship and how do we develop it?
- How does effective Christian fellowship impact the Church?
- How does effective Christian fellowship reveals the power and beauty of the church to the world. How does it enhance the possessing the nations agenda?
- What are the hindrances to Christian fellowship?
- How do we overcome these hindrances?

## 2.0 WHAT IS CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP?

Christian fellowship can be defined as any gathering of saints who come together to glorify God the Father and the Son, and to edify one another.

In the colloquial Greek of the New Testament period, *koinonia* which basically means fellowship was used in several ways. It was used of a business partnership, where two or more persons shared the same business and were thus closely connected in work. Also, it was used of marriage, of the shared life of two persons, a man and a woman, together. Furthermore, it was sometimes used of a perceived relatedness to a god, such as Zeus. Again, it was used to refer to the spirit of generous sharing in contrast to the spirit of selfish

acquisition (Acts 2:42-46; 4:32-37). In Christian fellowship everyone benefits from the fellowship both spiritually and physically.

Those who believe the gospel are united in the spirit through Christ to the Father, and that unity is the basis of Christian fellowship. Effective Christian fellowship can only occur within the body of Christ, which is the Church. On the other hand, we can love and relate with unbelievers, but not fellowship with them. This is so because we are the light, of the world, the righteousness of God, and the temple of God. As such, we have nothing in common with darkness, unrighteousness and idol worship (2 Cor. 6:14-16 ;1 Jn. 1:3).

Christian fellowship is much more than a gathering of believers or a Christian meeting. It is possible for people to gather together many times in a day, yet there may be no real fellowship between them. Christian fellowship is a state in which we share with God and with one another in life, work, pleasure and sufferings. It is a lifelong relationship that should occur between us physically and spiritually at all times.

Christian fellowship could sometimes be contrasted with "community", which may refer to a group, a body, or a society that is formed by the coming together of " individuals" in a contractual way. The emphasis is on the initiative of the "individuals" and on the voluntary nature of the group thus formed. In contrast, *koinonia* or Christian fellowship has its origin in a movement out of the internal and external relatedness, and communion of the Godhead that is, God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

By the sacrificial death and glorious resurrection and exaltation, Jesus brought into being a new creation, a new order, and a new epoch. Even though this new creation will only be revealed in fullness at the end of this age, it is a reality now on this earth. Christ exercises His authority in this new creation in and through the controlling and liberating Holy Spirit, whom the Father has sent in the name of Christ. Thus, from Christian perspectives, to be "in spirit" is also to be "in Christ". This is another way of saying that Christians who are baptised into Christ are dynamically related to the Father through the incarnate Son in and by the Holy Spirit of the father and the son. Those who are "in Christ" as apostle Paul often states are in communion not only with the Father, the Son and in the Holy Spirit but also with one another. This relatedness, relationship and communion is fellowship.

### 3.0 HOW DO WE DEVELOP CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP?

- The first step in developing fellowship as believers is to know God, and have a relationship with Him. This is very important because He is the beginning, so whatever begins with him will stand the test of time. If we establish a relationship with God, that becomes the foundation upon which we build our fellowship with one another. In other words our fellowship must first begin with the Godhead (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 John 1:3-7)

"God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with His son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9).

If our fellowship with God the Father is broken it affects our fellowship with one another because He is the one bringing and holding us together.

- We can develop our fellowship through our love for God. It is our love for God that will attract us to him whenever and wherever we find ourselves. True love does not separate, it rather unites. Love is powerful and it is the power of love that brings us to God (1 John 4:19; 10:37; Rom. 8:35-39; 1 Jn. 5:3).
- Love for neighbour is a key to developing Christian fellowship in the body of Christ. When we are not able to demonstrate the love of God towards our neighbour, true fellowship can never be possible (1 Jn. 15:12-13, 17; 1 Cor. 13:4-8; Eph. 4:2-3). It is the love of God that binds us together. The Bible says, let brotherly love continue as stated in (Heb. 13:1), meaning we are brothers and sisters. It will take this understanding for us to be able to strengthen our fellowship. We must have a revelation which will help us to realize that we are a family. In Christ, we are all brothers and sisters, and as we know, members of the same family live together and share everything in common. They support, encourage and defend or protect one another. In this kingdom, we are not enemies, but members of one family (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19). We are all members of the household of faith.
- Our willingness to live in peace with one another as the word of God encourages us. To do this, we must be humble, be willing to forgo our rights and forgive each other (Heb. 12:14; Rom. 12:16-18).
- We can further develop our Christian fellowship through the sharing of pulpits. Inviting one another programmes will help foster our fellowship. During time



together, we must consciously engage in meaningful conversations, the ones that will help build us up. We should spend some time to pray for one another, share our individual challenges and bring them before God. We should also remember to also pray for others who are going through difficult times in the ministry or in their family lives. We should not make the challenges of others our talking point if we are not ready to support them materially, financially and in whatever way we can (Gal. 6:9-10).

- We can further develop our fellowship by teaching on its importance (2 Cor. 5:18).

#### **4.0 HOW DOES EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP IMPACT THE CHURCH?**

God the Father in His wisdom, designed that all of His children be members of one body, the body of Christ. Just as no normal person acts in opposition to himself, so members of the body of Christ must also be in fellowship, with one another and with Christ. By our connection to one another as members of one body, each of us derives nourishment, support and development from the fellowship.

Therefore, our Christian fellowship can impact the church through:

- Brings spiritual growth and maturity:

This growth and maturity can be achieved in the lives of members through the ministries of Church leaders (Eph 4:11-16). As a result of their growth and maturity in Christ, each one in the Church would identify their potentials and callings. By their discovery, members will be well placed to begin to minister to one another (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-31; 1Pet. 4:9-11). In The Church of Pentecost, the practice of transferring ministers from one duty station to the other makes this very practical. As it is normally said in the CoP "we transfer gifts and not personalities." This is one of the secrets behind the growth and soundness of CoP. It exposes members of the Church to all the different graces and gifts as indicated in the above scriptures.

- It will bring numerical growth to the Church. The Bible says the Lord added to their number daily through their fellowship. The Church grew in numbers. So as we engage in fellowship with Christ and with one another, the God of increase will increase us (Acts 2: 47; 1 Cor. 3:6).

- It will cause the Church to have favour with all people, and that favour of God will open wider doors for the Church to possess the nations (Acts 2:47a).
- The impact of our fellowship in the church can also be seen in our fruitfulness. Normally, it is those individuals that have attained maturity that produce fruit. Our effective Christian fellowship will therefore cause us to be fruitful in every area of life (Jn. 15:4-5, 16; Gal. 5:22-23). God wants us to be fruitful in every area of life. We impact one another and bring glory to our God by the fruits we bear. (Jn. 15:8; Phi. 1:11). The fruits that we manifest as people of God serve or help to identify us as children of God. Jesus said in the gospel of Matthew that, "by their fruits you shall know them". Fruits in this context refers to our character and our lifestyle. We are identified as children of God not by the Christian names or titles we bear, the church we attend or by the kinds of prayer that we offer to God, but by the fruits we produce as a result of our fellowship with Christ.
- By the support we give to one another. We are all members of the body of Christ and must have love and help for each other. We must take into consideration this scripture that says, "And if one member suffers, all the other members suffer with it" (1Cor. 12:26). For sincere fellowship, we must also take into consideration the scripture which says "Be devoted to one another through brotherly love" (Romans 12:10). Through our fellowship we will learn from one another and challenge each other unto good works. (Heb. 10:24).
- Christian fellowship can impact the church through the manifestation of the divine presence of God. Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there (Matt.18:20, NKJV). As we fellowship, the church will experience the presence of God. It is this presence that draws men; that distinguishes us from all others. He is everything to us (Genesis 39:2-6, Ex. 33:15-16).
- Our fellowship will certainly impact the church by eliminating or reducing spiritual and material lack in the church. This was made possible in the Earlier Church, the spirit of greed, covetousness and self, gave way to the spirit of generosity (Acts 2:42-45; 4:32-37). As we fellowship, our spiritual and material surpluses will complement one another bringing each of us to equal levels. At this level, there will be no need for envy or jealousy, because everyone has received something to survive on (2 Cor. 8:13-15). By their spirit and led fellowship, they were able to conquer the

enemies called greed, covetousness and self. Unfortunately, the body of Christ seems to be battling with these enemies today. For example, in Africa, we have more than enough to wear, ride and eat but because of greed, covetousness and self, few people will take for ourselves what belong to thousands and even generations while others starve to death. The scripture in Acts 2:42, says that, no one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. And this is the truth, that none of us actually owns anything. The Bible says, we brought nothing in this World and we will certainly go with nothing except but our souls.

## **5.0 HOW DOES EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP REVEAL THE POWER AND BEAUTY OF THE CHURCH TO THE WORLD—HOW DOES IT ENHANCE THE POSSESSING THE NATIONS AGENDA.**

Christian fellowship is such an effective tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit that, it has the capacity to show forth the power and beauty of Christ in the church to the world.

Power can be simply defined as that which causes effect and beauty is that which brings attraction.

- An effective key to revealing the power and beauty of the church to the World is unity. A key is anything used to grant access and to unlock closed doors; so unity unlocks the power and beauty of the church. The church is the carrier of the power and beauty of God, but until we unite, that power and beauty cannot manifest for the world to see and benefit from. Unity at all levels, irrespective of those involved, is such a powerful force that cannot be defeated by any human effort (Gen. 11:6-8).


It took the Godhead to defeat the unity of man which was against his purpose. Unity is God's ideal; it is His nature. Then God said, let us make man in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air (Gen. 1:26)

God said, "let us...in our image" meaning the Godhead was fully involved. They worked together in the creation of man. The pronouns "us" and "our" are words of unity, the language that reveals and promotes oneness. Unity is spiritual that is why it is possible for two individuals to be united even though they do not necessarily live

in the same city, nation or under the same roof. It is also very certain that two persons can live together physically and still be divided.

God the Father does not move or work alone, so He is very interested in the unity of the church. Jesus is building a united church, that is why he had to spend time before God praying for the unity of His Church as recorded in Jn. 17: 20-23).

The Psalmist will assist us to understand better how unity is able to reveal both the power and beauty of the church. Psalm 133:1-3 indicates how good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity. In the eyes of God, unity, oneness and togetherness is good. Good in this context is referring to something desirable, acceptable, best, lovely and magnificent. Our unity in fellowship as believers brings out the goodness of God in and amongst us. It is good when we understand one another and it is good when we are able to laugh with one another, it is good when we are able to walk together.



Again, the writer of Psalm 133 also said that when brothers live together in unity, it is pleasant, meaning, it is beautiful, admirable and attractive. Beauty attracts, it draws closer to itself. So when we unite in fellowship, we are covered with the glory of God. Indeed, we attract the presence of God. As we read earlier in Genesis 11, the unity of the builders of the tower of babel got the attention of God which brought him down to where they were. Also, on the Day of Pentecost, the unity of the disciples created the right atmosphere for the coming down of the glory of God. Thus, the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-2) When the glory of God manifest in a place or comes upon a people, that place or the people become a wonder to others. On the Day of Pentecost, all of the disciples gathered, 120 individuals were united in heart, mind and spirit before God. They all had one focus and aim. Their prayer might have been "Lord send us your Holy Spirit so that we will receive your power to be your witnesses to the world". All of the 120 of them were filled with Holy Spirit and spoke in other tongues and the name of God was glorified.

Unity begins in the heart of fellowship. Until we are truly united in our hearts, all other efforts which may be made to unify us physically will be in vain (Acts 4:32). It is the power of unity in the heart that pulls us together into one place to do one thing in spite of the fact that we are from diverse backgrounds.

The power of unity in fellowship produces new life, freshness, newness of ideals, visions and success. During the course of my studies and meditation, the Holy Spirit brought to mind the conjugal relationship between a man and his wife as a unique example of fellowship (unity and oneness) that produces new life. As people of God, when we are united in fellowship it brings down the presence of the Holy Spirit. And as we preach the gospel under such atmosphere, souls get saved into God's Kingdom. This means that our unity in fellowship has produced new lives just as it happened on the day of Pentecost.

Apostle Peter, moved by the Holy Spirit, stepped forward and preached the gospel with boldness and in the power of the Holy Spirit. And three thousand souls, "spiritual babies", were born again into the Kingdom of God. The power of the Church through effective Christian fellowship, was demonstrated in a mighty way.

God in His wisdom has shown us that there is diversity in unity, and that unity is not uniformity. That is why when Christ ascended on high, He did not only give one office for the building of His church. Instead, He gave some apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, each with different graces, yet all working together for the building of His church (Eph. 4:11-14).

As we look around in all of God's creation, we see diversity everywhere. We see it in human beings; we are made in different sizes, colours and heights. We also see it in God's other creations such as birds, fish and vegetations. It is in our diversities that God the creator wants to manifest his power and beauty through the church to the world. When we come together in fellowship, manifesting our different abilities, gifts and uniqueness, we show forth the glory of God to the world. There is great beauty and glory in diversity. It takes a combination of different colours to have a beautiful building or cloth, different voices united in a choir in order to produce a great music.

- By our fellowship, each of us is empowered to meaningfully contribute to the overall wellbeing and growth of the Church. We need to see that as Christians, our fellowship with one another is very necessary, because it is in the atmosphere of fellowship that the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit is released upon the Church. The evidence of the power of the Church was seen in the healing, deliverance, working of miracles and the harvest of souls into the Kingdom of God (Ps. 133:1-3; Acts 2:1-4; 41, 4:33;

5:12). They were united in heart, as portrayed in the words of the Apostle Peter "look on "us, " why do you star at "us "as if by "our" own power or godliness "we" had made this man to walk" (Acts 3:12). Our fellowship as people of God activates and put in motion the supernatural power of God that is within us. Let us hunger after the spirit of effective Christian fellowship, so that we can experience the end time revival that will bring down the glory of God among us to testify to the World that our God lives.

## **6.0 HOW DOES CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP ENHANCE THE POSSESSING THE NATIONS AGENDA?**

The ultimate desire of God is to reach all men with the gospel through which they can come to salvation in Christ. Everything He does for man, has this underlining purpose. Christian fellowship cannot be an exception in this regard. Indeed, effective Christian fellowship is key in the possessing the nations agenda. Remember it is worth noting that through the unity of the brethren in fellowship, the Lord added to their number daily. This means that unbelievers will be attracted to the Church, where they will come to salvation in Christ (Acts 2:42-47).

The result of our unity in fellowship will be a flow of fresh oil, the anointing of the Holy Spirit amongst us in a stronger dimension beginning with leadership down to every member of the church. This flow of anointing will enhance evangelism in the church. (Ps. 133:2; 92:10; Acts 1:8).

## **7.0 WHAT ARE THE HINDRANCES TO CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP?**

The enemy always fight against whatsoever is related to God and which are intended to benefit the church. As we have considered the impact that fellowship has on the church and how it helps to unfold the power and the beauty of the church to the world, we now want to discuss some hindrances to our Christian fellowship.

- The greatest enemy or hindrance to our fellowship as believers is sin. It is sin that separates us from God. This certainly affects our own fellowship or relationship with one another (Gen. 3:8-10; 23; Isa. 59:1-2).

- Self is a serious force or spirit that hinders Christian fellowship. Some contemporary believers have become self-seeking, going after things that only benefit them as individuals, without considering others. The desire for self-glory and recognition leads to taking decision that favour oneself. When a leader's decision benefit our selfish interest, then the leader is seen as a good person but when it is the other way around, he is considered a bad person. This kind of carnal attitude could keep the church divided (Luke 9:23-24). We should not allow self-love to stand between us and the Lord; it should also not stand between our fellowship with one another (2 Tim. 3:2).
- Unhealthy competitions and strife amongst brethren break our fellowship or sweet relationship with one another (1 Cor. 3:3; 2 Cor. 10:12; 12:20).
- Jealousy and anger in the heart against one another will kill our fellowship. Jealousy, when allowed to rule in our hearts will cause us to see and treat one another as enemies in the Church, instead of seeing and accepting one another as members of one holy family (Gen. 4:3-8; 37:4-11; 20, 28; 1 Sam. 18:7-13; Prov. 6:34-35).
- Bitterness, unforgiveness and hatred in the heart against each other, will not permit us to be one in the spirit. When we are not united in the spirit, our coming together in the name of fellowship will be in vain. We may physically be sitting, eating or even praying together but there will be no true fellowship, because our hearts are divided (Gen. 37:4-11; 20,28; Matt. 18:21-22; 34-35). How many times have we not "sold" and "killed" one another because of jealousy, bitterness and hatred over titles, positions or possessions and official transfers?
- The lack of respect for one another, and not being able to recognise and appreciate the efforts or meaningful contributions of others in the church has the potential of impeding our fellowship. When we belittle others and think that they are not important or their contributions are not valuable, such individuals will keep to themselves. Such attitude does not promote fellowship.
- Favouritism in the church or any organization for that matter will hinder true fellowship (Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 16:19-20; Jams. 2:1-10)
- Pride is a strong enemy that stands against the fellowship of believers. The Bible says that " God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6). If God resists the proud it clearly shows how dangerous pride is to Christian fellowship. The spirit of pride keeps a person who is controlled by it from God. It means when we allow pride in our lives, it will hinder our relationship with Him (Ps. 10:4; Prov. 8:13; 11:2;

13:10). Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall (Prov. 16:18)  
A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit (Prov. 29:23).

- Gossip is an evil that destroys the of the children of God. The Bible says that gossip betrays a confidence and it separates close friends. (Prov. 11:13),
- The lack of hospitality and stinginess stand in the way of our coming together. These things cause us to be narrow minded and uncharitable. Children of God, however are expected to be people with big hearts (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:16; 1 Pt. 4:9-10; Matt. 5:42; 10:8; Rom. 12:8)

## **8.0 HOW DO WE OVERCOME THESE HINDRANCES?**

We can always have solutions and answers to the challenges of life as we look to Christ in faith and humility. We can therefore overcome the above hindrances by letting the love of Christ to flow through us to all. The bible says that love covers a multitude of sins. (1 Pt. 4:8). If we are able to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, we can defeat these enemies of our fellowship. As people of God, everyone must be willing to seek the interest of others above themselves

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

Jesus came to restore our fellowship with God through His vicarious death and resurrection. As a result, He has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19). Due to the importance of Christian fellowship, we have been urged not to forsake our meeting together (Heb. 10:25), because through our fellowship, we are able to encourage and build each other up in the faith. Let us continue to see and relate to each other as members of one family, for our strength, victory and success is in our unity. As we endeavour to possess the nations, let us remind ourselves that it is only in unity as a church that we can successfully possess the nations.



## REFERENCE

Note by pastor Tayo Akinola Living Seed Monrovia and [www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com)

DRAFT

# POSSESSING THE NATIONS THROUGH PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Peter Ohene Kyei (Aps. Prof.)

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The last words and deeds of each person's life are significantly important because they indicate the person's final will or priorities. Just before Jesus returned to heaven after the resurrection, He gave specific instructions to His disciples. The four (4) Gospel books of the Bible bear impressive record of this. Each of them ends with explicit command for involvement of the Church in evangelism:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, ..." (Mt. 28:19-20, NKJV).

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature..." (Mk. 16:15, NKJV).

"Then He said to them, thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day and that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Lk. 24:46-47, NKJV).

"...As the father has sent me, so I am sending you" (Jn. 20:21, NKJV)

These commands were further reinforced in the first part of the book of the Acts of the Apostles:

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NKJV).

The scope of fulfilling these commands is all nations, the whole world, every creature, and to the end of the earth<sup>93</sup>, which culminates into one imperative to:

Evanglilise the world! or Possess the nations!

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<sup>93</sup> D. Earley and D. Wheller *Evangelism is .... How to share Jesus with passion and confidence*. Band & Publishing Group, Tennessee, 2010.

The Great Commission has always been the heartbeat of God to win nations beyond Israel; it is not limited to a selected few or some gifted disciples; it is for all followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John Stott states:

“...this commission is binding upon every member of the church. Every Christian is called to be a witness to Christ in the particular environment in which God has placed him. Furthermore, although the public ministry of the Word is a high office, private witness or personal evangelism has a value which in some respects supersede even that of preaching, since the message can then be adopted more personally<sup>94</sup>.

The Early Church took the Great Commission so seriously that, after the Holy Spirit “invaded” their lives in Acts 2, they fearlessly, persistently and constantly evangelised (Acts 5:42; 8:25;13:32;14:7, 15,21) to possess the nations even at the cost of their lives. So committed were they to Christ that they dedicated themselves faithfully to His orders and refused to surrender or succumb to opposition. Not even persecution could stop them (Acts 8:1-5). They were unstoppable! Now it is our turn! We cannot do otherwise in our quest to possess the nations. Unfortunately, too often, evangelism has been neglected and is of least concern to many Christians in contemporary times.

Personal evangelism featured very prominently in the Great Commission of the Early Church. When severe persecution arose against the early believers after the martyrdom of Stephen, they spread out beyond Jerusalem sharing the good news through person to person evangelism.

This paper examines personal evangelism with practical field experiences and its implications to possessing the nations. It is however important to start by setting the stage on the basis for personal evangelism and build further on it.

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<sup>94</sup> John Stott: *Personal Evangelism* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity: 1943:3-4) cited in

## **2.0 IMPORTANCE OF SHARING OUT FAITH AND WINNING SOULS**

Sharing the gospel is the privilege of every believer and the norm should be for every Christian to actively share their faith. Why? Let us first consider a challenge thrown by someone who does not believe in the existence of the God we serve:

### **An Atheist's Challenge:**

"If I firmly believe, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another, then religion would mean to me everything. I would cast away earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as vanity. Religion would be my first waking thought and my last image before sleep sank me into unconsciousness.

I should labour in its cause alone. I would take thought for the morrow of eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained for heaven worth a life of suffering. Earthly consequences would never stain my hands or seal my lips. Earth, its joys to look upon eternity alone, and on immortal souls around me, soon to be everlasting happy or everlasting miserable. I would go forth to the world and preach to it in season and out of season, and my text would be, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loose his own soul?"

Do we believe in the Great Commission? Do we practise it? Do we see the need? How we live our lives daily provide answers to these questions.

Let us consider some powerful reasons which encourage Christians to be courageous and stand against fear, embarrassment and other obstacles which prevent us from sharing our faith:

### **2.1 Jesus commands us to go**

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus commanded all His disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations..." and expects all His future followers to do the same, with the promise that He is

with them until the end of the age. He spoke to the leaders He first called, about soul winning – “I will make you fishers of men” (Mt. 4:19) and His last words to His disciples were also on soul winning. Soul winning is thus, dear to the heart of Christ and He expects all disciples who love Him to obey this command, by relentlessly pursuing the lost souls as the Apostolic Church did. **Will you go and share the Good News with others?**

## **2.2 The love of God**

The nature of the God we worship is love (1 Jn 4:7-8). Therefore, the motivating force of our whole lives, including sharing our faith with others, must be our love for God.<sup>95</sup> “Love for God is the only sufficient motive for evangelism since self-love will give way to self-centeredness.”<sup>96</sup>

Lovers give precious things to their beloved, “And if we are the children of such a God, it stands to reason that we should mirror in our own attitudes that love for His people who do not deserve it <sup>97</sup>”. The followers of Christ, therefore, need to manifest such supernatural love for unbelievers who are wallowing in sin, in the custody of the devil. The desire to share our faith should not come out of duty but out of love and delight for the Lord (Ps. 37:4). The reasons why the first century church was energetic about sharing Christ is because of the place He held in their hearts. We must make soul winning our priority if we love the Lord and ultimately, our desire to share our faith should be to bring glory to the Lord.

## **2.3 All men without Jesus are lost**

All men outside Christ are lost and heading towards a Christ-less eternity. To be lost means man will spend eternity in hell. Apart from Christ, humans are eternally separated from God:

They are “wretched and pitied, poor, blind and naked  
(Rev. 3:14-21)

They are alienated from the life of God (Eph. 4:18) and  
separated from Christ without hope and without God  
(Eph. 2:12)

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<sup>95</sup> Dever Mark, *The Gospel and Personal Evangelism*, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2007 pp. 100

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. pp. 100.

<sup>97</sup> Green Michael. *Evangelism through the local church*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990

But Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Lk. 19:10). Human beings, therefore need to be saved through Christ (Jn. 14:6) – “I am the way, the truth and the life...” Our good brothers and sisters, friends and neighbours outside Christ are lost. God’s wrath and judgment are upon them.

Since Christians, are the only people with the message that can save the lost, we have the responsibility to carry it out to the lost souls. Everybody needs Jesus. **Will you go on this rescue mission?**

## **2.4 The ministry of reconciliation has been committed to the Church**

In 2 Corinthians 5:18, Jesus Christ has given us the ministry of reconciliation. It is a great privilege and honour for God to entrust every believer with their ministry. We must trumpet the provision of salvation through Christ with God’s mercy and grace towards men, rather than only judgment and condemnation. We have therefore been made **Ambassadors for Christ** with God making His appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we preach “Come back to God”. This glorious honour should motivate every believer to take the sharing of their faith seriously each passing day.

## **2.5 The Gospel is the Power of God unto Salvation (Rom 1:16-17)**

The gospel is more powerful than satanic powers, unbelief, all religions, materialism and love of the world. Sin cannot stop the power of God for salvation. The gospel is the message of the Lion of the Tribe of Judah who has overcome the world! No matter how strong and hard our people are, the gospel is stronger and harder. We must therefore, be encouraged to share our faith and bring many unto God’s Kingdom.

## **3.0 UNDERSTANDING EVANGELISM**

The uniqueness of evangelism lies in the command of God to each of us to “go and tell”. Thus, regardless of whether we have the gift of evangelism or not, we are called to share the gospel with others to make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:18-20). To evangelise is to witness to others about our experience of Christ and His grace upon our lives. Bringing clarity to how we define evangelism in a biblical way helps us to align our evangelistic

practices with the Scriptures<sup>98</sup>. Manley Pippert has noted that, evangelism in its form is introducing our friends to Jesus:

Andrews brought his brother, Simon Peter, to meet Jesus Christ. Philip brought his friend Nathaniel<sup>99</sup>.

Michael Green defines evangelism as “a presentation of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit so that people will put their trust in God through Him as their king in the fellowship of His church”<sup>100</sup>. C.H. Spurgeon, the famous nineteenth century preacher maintained that evangelism “is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread”.

This definition draws attention both to the needs of the recipients and the generosity of the giver – God. It reminds us that we cannot bring this good taste to others unless we personally have “come to taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8). Additionally, “It is not talking to someone as if you were better: you aren’t better. It is not looking down on a self-righteous nose and saying, “Sinner, repent!” It is realising that spiritually; we are all beggars in need who have found that Jesus is the Living Bread. Evangelism is therefore telling someone how to meet the Living Bread, the Lord Jesus Christ (John 6:50-51).<sup>101</sup>

The Lausanne International Congress defines evangelism as “the proclamation of the historical Biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to Him personally and so be reconciled to God”<sup>102</sup>. It insists evangelism is the proclamation of the Jesus of history who is the Jesus of the Scriptures with a view to persuading men to respond.

An all-embracing definition of evangelism with wide-reaching acceptance comes from Archbishop William Temple: “To evangelise is to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit that men shall come to put their trust in God through Him to accept Him as their Saviour and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of the church.”<sup>103</sup>

Most important in the definition of **evangelism** is that it includes, the Good News about Jesus Christ; it is centred on God the Father, and depends entirely on the work of the Holy

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<sup>98</sup> Stile Mock J. *Evangelism*, Crossway, Illinois (2014) P26

<sup>99</sup> Pippert Manley Rebecca, *Out of the saltshaker and into the world evangelism as a way of life*, IVP. Illinois (1999)

<sup>100</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church* Hodder and Stroughton, London (1990)

<sup>101</sup> Earley Dave and Wheeler David. *Evangelism is how to share Jesus with passion and confidence*. Tennessee: B and H Publishing Group, 2010

<sup>102</sup> Lausanne Congress on Evangelization, 1974

<sup>103</sup> Green Michael. *Ibid*, p. 9

Spirit for its effectiveness. Evangelism also means incorporation into the Church, the body of Christ. It challenges decisions and importantly, true evangelism leads to discipleship.<sup>104</sup>

Effective evangelism introduces unbelievers to a relationship with Jesus. It leads people step-by-step to an eternal marriage with the heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, resulting in transformed lives also sharing their faith. The gospel must therefore be proclaimed to ensure effective evangelism.

#### **4.0 WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?**

When we share our faith, we centre on the message that leads to salvation. When we talk about salvation, we focus on the gospel message. Christianity is about the Good News – the best news ever proclaimed to and heard by the world. Jesus Christ talked about the Good News when He took and read the prophecies of Isaiah that pre-dated His birth (Is. 61:1; Lk. 4:18-21).

The gospel is literally “good message” or “good news”. It is the joyful message from God that teaches us salvation. Evangelism is sharing the Good News and like the lepers in 2 Kings 7:9 “we are not doing right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves... Let us go at once and report it to the” world. They realised that hiding and hoarding life-giving food was wrong. The lesson to learn from this story is the moral obligation to share the good news.

The message of Jesus Christ is Good News and we must not keep it to ourselves. It is our obligation to at least present the food to others; their refusal to eat will be their choice and not our responsibility. Initially, they may be sceptical, but that should not deter us. We were starving, unclean spiritual lepers ourselves before we surrendered to God. There is Good News in Jesus, and we must go and tell somebody about it<sup>105</sup>. “So, faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ” (Rom. 10:17, RSVCE). Pippert maintains that it is not a story of human inventions but a God-authored Gospel that has the power to save! We are called to give this unadulterated message:

God sent his Son, Jesus, who came and took our sinful, broken humanity into Himself and made it His own by dying on the cross. He thus sacrificed His life for us to overcome our

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<sup>104</sup> Green Michael. Ibid, Pg. 10-11

<sup>105</sup> Earley Dave and Wheeler David. The Message That Leads to Salvation. B and H Publishing Group, Tennessee, 2014



sins. But He rose from the dead and by surrendering our lives to Him, our sins are forgiven, our lives made whole and our eternal destiny secured.

To Paul, the Gospel message is simple and clear “we preach Christ and Him crucified ...” (1 Cor. 1:23).

## **5.0 PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL**

In contemporary times, the gospel of Christ has been distorted and instead of urging people to accept Christ there is massive manipulation for personal gains. The gospel often remains untaught; biblical words are distorted to water down the true meaning of sin, death and hell or even confuse genuine seekers of the truth. “Promise of health and wealth deceive the most vulnerable: the poor, disadvantaged and sick. And many churches are after a costless, comfortable and benefit-giving “gospel” that is found nowhere in the scriptures. In fact, the gospel is subverted with what Paul calls “different gospels” which are not gospels at all (Gal. 1:6-7)<sup>106</sup>.

“Neither is it an avenue for entertainment rather than worship. Jesus was engaging but He never entertained. What is needed is to firmly fix our hearts and minds on the biblically principled, gospel-centered evangelism. It is to learn how to proclaim the gospel with integrity and to keep the big picture aimed at true conversion in view”<sup>107</sup>.

The primary form of evangelism is the proclamation of God’s truth through sharing the gospel. Will McRaney Jr. postulates that everyone has a personal theology, whether it was intentionally formed or unknowingly shaped by surrounding influences. Part of the task of the witness is to clarify the mixed messages the unbeliever has received from various sources shaped by experiences, the media and friends; most people are confused about spiritual matters. Apostle Paul, therefore, noted in Colossians 4:4, “Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should”.

## **6.0 METHODS OF EVANGELISM**

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<sup>106</sup> Stiles Mark J. Evangelism. How the whole church Speaks of Jesus, Crossway (2014), Pg. 283

<sup>107</sup> Stiles Mark J. Ibid, Pg. 29

There are various methods of evangelism but effectiveness must be the yardstick for making a choice. Regarding biblical methods of evangelism, scripture gives guidance into which approaches are wise and right. Paul, for example, encourages flexibility and adaptability in matters of approach: "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible... I have become all things to all men so that by all means, I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:19, 22-23).

## **6.1 The two main evangelism methods**

- **Mass evangelism** involves rallies, crusades, conventions, etc.
- **Personal evangelism** where the focus is on one person at a time with the main aim of winning him or her to Christ. Strategies developed to facilitate this method include: The Four Spiritual Laws, The Bridge, New Life for all, The Old Man, etc. (See Appendix B).

Much evidence exists of the higher effectiveness of personal evangelism thus, the rest of the presentation is geared in that direction.

## **7.0 WHAT IS PERSONAL EVANGELISM?**

In Mark 5 when Jesus healed the demon possessed man at Gadarenes, he begged Jesus to allow him to accompany Him; Jesus did not permit him but said to him, "Go home to your friends and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you..." (Mark 5:19). Perhaps, Jesus was showing us one of the most effective ways of evangelism in the Church. God uses individuals to share the Good News of the gospel.

McKnight defines personal evangelism as "One talking to another person about his need for the salvation found only in Jesus Christ with the purpose of bringing him to a decision"<sup>108</sup>.

Michael Green maintains that personal evangelism, which is the sharing of Good News between two friends was the main methods by which the gospel spread in the earliest days of the Church.

McRaney Jr agrees with Michael Green maintaining that, "personal evangelism is the foundation of all church growth methods". Without personal evangelism there are no churches, no pastors, no worship service. Everything begins with personal evangelism.

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<sup>108</sup> Taylor Gene, A Study of Personal Evangelism. Learning to Be Fishers of Men, David Patfield, 1996, pp 9

Nothing much happens in church until some concerned Christian shares the life changing message of Jesus Christ. Philip, Andrew and Nathaniel as well as our Lord Jesus Christ, provide clear examples of personal evangelism.

### **7.1 Philip's Example in Acts 8**

A typical example of Personal Evangelism is the case of Philip and the Ethiopian official. Philip was led by the Holy Spirit to leave Jerusalem to the desert. He was asked again to draw closer to the Ethiopian official who was reading Isaiah 53. Philip asked him whether he understood what he was reading, and the official responded in the negative. Philip then "began with that passage of scripture and expounded to him the good news about Jesus".

Even though this was a Holy Spirit directed move (as He does in our evangelism efforts), Philip asked about his felt need, led him to Christ and baptised him. The Ethiopian official "went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39).

### **7.2 The Example of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman in John 4**

Throughout His ministry on earth, Jesus knew how to turn normal conversations to spiritual matters. In His encounter with the Samaritan woman, Jesus employed the following steps that are worth adopting:

#### **7.2.1 Avoid or set aside prejudice and moral judgment.**

Jesus ignored all the prejudice Jews had towards Samaritans. Her immoral behaviour of having had five (5) previous husbands, excluding a current one, did not bother Jesus. Jesus, a *Rabbi*, sat with the marginalised in society (a Samaritan Woman). This is a clear example of how "Urban Ministry" can move to the vulnerable, neglected, marginalized, and poor in society.

#### **7.2.2 Speak the Truth in love (vs 11-26).**

Jesus engaged her in a relaxed setting and looked for an opening to share an experience. She sought for water, Jesus offered her living water and she was excited (vs. 13-15).

#### **7.2.3 Present Jesus as the Messiah (vs 25-26)**

Jesus revealed to her that He was the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

#### **7.2.4 Be committed to the Discipleship Process (vs 39-42).**

Jesus remained with them for two (2) days to establish them in their new-found faith.

## **8.0 ADVANTAGES OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM**

Gene Taylor has noted the following as the main advantages of Personal Evangelism<sup>109</sup>:

- It can be done by all  
Every Christian with average intelligence and concern for others can do personal evangelism.
- It can be done anywhere
- It can be done at anytime
- It reaches all classes
- It "hits the mark".
  - Preaching by necessity is general in nature
  - Personal evangelism is direct and on individual basis.
- It works

Many who have been unmoved by eloquent sermons usually respond to personal evangelism.

## **9.0 SHARING OUR FAITH WITH OTHERS – THE BELIEVER’S RESPONSIBILITY**

Before we ever engage an unbeliever, we must take the following steps in preparation to share our lives and faith:

### **9.1 See people as Jesus sees them**

Manley Pippert clearly noted that most often we are blind to those around us. If we see them bleed, we pretend they are not really hurting. They are interruptions to our schedule. To share our faith, we need Jesus to heal our sight.

Jesus wants us to see their needs, their loneliness, their belongings and He wants to give us the courage to reach out to them. For example, the Samaritan woman had had five husbands and was currently living with a sixth man. The disciples may have despised her and never considered her as a follower of Jesus but Jesus did not see her frantic male-hopping as just looseness. Jesus saw that her need indicated hunger for God. He saw great

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<sup>109</sup> Taylor Gene, Ibid pp9

potential for God through her efforts to find the right thing in all the wrong places. After encountering Christ, she brought a whole city to Jesus! How many “Samaritan women” have you bypassed, ignored or been blind to?

## **9.2 Love people where they are**

To establish trust with people, we must love them in spite of whatever baggage they bring. We need to accept them as they are without compromising our Christian standards. Remember, Jesus accepted a “gift” from the sinful woman at Simon’s banquet (Lk. 7:36-50).

## **9.3 Be salt and light**

Most Christians have only Christian friends and do not make time to establish friendship with seekers or unbelievers. To possess the nations for Christ, this must change!

## **9.4 Develop an obedient and tender heart**

Evangelism demands a willing spirit. The God who created us can use us, but it is absolutely important that we make room in your hearts for lost people.

## **9.5 Be filled with the Holy Spirit**

To enable them efficiently carry out the Great Commission, the Early Church was continuously filled with the Holy Spirit and submitted to His teaching, leading and direction – this in-filling is paramount in soul winning.

## **9.6 Pray for the lost and for clear communication.**

It is important to note that evangelism at its core is a spiritual battle. Persistent fervent prayers and fasting are required to precede personal evangelism.

## **9.7 Understand the message and Person of Christ**

Before we can witness, we need to grow our understanding of the essentials of the message we are seeking to communicate.

## **9.8 Live a credible life**

Living a credible life before others enhances evangelism. People who know us are watching. In order to be that credible, we must demonstrate that the Christian lifestyle works.

## **9.9 Look for divine appointments**

As we build relationships and interact with people, we need to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. God can and does provide us with divine appointments to share His great love. We must therefore constantly be on the lookout for receptive people whom the Holy Spirit is drawing to Himself.

## **10.0 PRACTICAL STEPS NEEDED TO SHARE THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM**

### **10.1 Develop conversational skills**

We need to get a grip on the essentials of the message to share and know what to communicate. The interactions with the seeker or unbelievers, as well as questions that may arise call for special conversational skills. Nonetheless, it is the power of God and His divine initiative that penetrate and convert the seeker's heart. Jesus said "No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me (Jn. 6:44). So, learn how to communicate but know that God is in control to direct affairs.

### **10.2 Watch your attitude**

Our attitude and style communicate content just as our words do. Employment of good listening skills, expression of enthusiasm and interest without being defensive are some of the attitudinal measures we need to adopt if we are to get the attention of our target group.

### **10.3 No Question is Unacceptable**

Learn to appreciate and pay attention to all questions unbelievers or seekers may pose, especially the ones you cannot answer. No question should be rejected as too hostile. Moreover, Manley Pippert is of the view that if our style with seekers is always to "argue them down", we may be winning the argument and forget the purpose of evangelism which is to introduce the gospel to our hearers in the confidence of God's power to convict. "The gospel does not need our aid in its defense; it is quite capable of defending itself<sup>110</sup>".

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<sup>110</sup> Manley Pippert R.

## **10.4 Turn Conversations to Christ**

Your key role involves being able to steer conversations to spiritual matters and ultimately to Christ.

## **10.5 Communicate the Gospel Message**

The gospel is being communicated verbally and non-verbally. Non-verbal message is always stronger when there is a conflict between the verbal and non-verbal. So, watch out for violation of any cultural norms, adopt simple and friendly postures, be conscious of facial expression and generally body language – all these enhance effectiveness of our witness.

## **10.6 Clarify the Gospel Message**

McRaney Jr. has noted that unbelievers might have received conflicting and confusing messages. To clarify our message, we need to take measures to ask open-minded and non-offensive questions. Good questions help to make room for better clarity.

## **10.7 Assess Readiness**

As the conversation progresses, our role includes checking for understanding and possible commitment of the unbeliever or seeker to the gospel.

## **10.8 Persuade**

Having assessed their readiness, we must not force or put pressure on them. Rather, we need to encourage or persuade them to surrender to Christ.

## **10.9 Decent Dress Code**

As the presenter of the Good News, we must present ourselves decently, modestly and neatly in our dressing. Some dress codes may drive away potential converts and we need to be conscious enough to avoid such attires.

## **10.10 Close Conversation**

If the person agrees to accept Christ as Lord and personal Saviour, we can pray, offer our support, and help them to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord and begin follow-up. However,

when the person rejects Christ for whatever reason, we must learn to part ways graciously and with an open door for a later opportunity as we continue to pray for the person.

We need to constantly remind ourselves that **evangelism is a process**; one plants, one waters but God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). Adequate preparation (pre-evangelism) is an imperative pre-requisite for a successful personal evangelism.

## **11.0 PRE-EVANGELISM PHASE**

Pre-evangelism is developing friendship relationship with unbelievers, undertaking acts of kindness and manifesting visible authentic Christian lifestyle before the gospel is shared. Ruth Rosan mentions that many people need their curiosity to be aroused and their trust built before they are ready to discuss spiritual things.<sup>111</sup> Manley Pippert has also noted that in healing and feeding the hungry as well as encountering the woman at the well, Jesus was engaged in pre-evangelism. Will McRaney Jr. has the following key factors for the important pre-evangelism phase:

### **11.1 Build credible relationships:**

This involves befriending lost people and living a credible life. "where there is no relationship, there is no influence."<sup>112</sup>

### **11.2 Build bridges:**

There must be conscious efforts to connect with people. "The gospel travels along network of relationships."<sup>113</sup>

### **11.3 Look for divine appointments**

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<sup>111</sup> Rosan Ruth, Pre-evangelism. [www.jewsforjesus.org](http://www.jewsforjesus.org), March, 2019.

<sup>112</sup> Andy Stanley. Sermon series, Georgia cited in Will McRaney

<sup>113</sup> McGavern Donald, Bridges to God cited in Will McRaney Jr., The Art of Personal Evangelism, B & H Publishing Group, Tennessee, 2003.



As relationships and interactions are built, we need to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as He provides us with divine appointments by sending us people with whom to share Christ's love.

#### **11.4 It must be noted that the best pre-evangelism work is prayer**

Agonising prayer for unbelievers, work! It prepares their hearts to receive the gospel. God works on their hearts for their good and His glory.

### **12.0 CHALLENGES OF EFFECTIVE PERSONAL EVANGELISM**

The challenges of sharing the gospel continue to rise. Some of them are:

#### **12.1 Fear and intimidation of men**

Many Christians are silent for fear of rejection by friends, being disliked, ridiculed, marginalized, or openly mocked. Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3) and our responsibility in evangelism is to share the Good News of Christ. We are simply called to be a witness of God (Acts 1:8). What happens afterwards is God's work, not ours.

#### **12.2 Lack of compassion for sinners**

Some Christians just do not care about sinners. We do not cry out loud enough to God for the salvation of lost relatives, neighbours, co-workers and classmates. Great results in sharing our faith will not come until we are moved with the compassion of God. Compassion must move us to do something about the problem in people's lives. Jesus was filled with compassion (Lk. 19:41-44; Mt. 9:36).

#### **12.3 Keeping secret sins in our lives**

Every secret sin or harmful habit defiles a person's conscience, beclouds spiritual faculties, weakens spiritual sensitiveness and leading, and robs the person of the sweet fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit. We must be cautious, for the vessel God uses is holy and dedicated to Him (Rom. 12:1).

#### **12.4 Lack of adequate knowledge of the Bible:**

Many still struggle to articulate the truth of the gospel in a simple, coherent and intelligent way. They feel inadequate to do so because many do not read the Bible and cannot support their testimonies with God's word (Is. 50:4-5; 2 Tim. 2:15).

### **12.5 Unconverted Church Members**

Many churches have many unregenerate members who have not received Christ themselves and therefore do not see the need to carry the gospel out to others.

### **12.6 Many churches have too many activities**

They are too busy to do the things that really matter. Many churches move from one programme to another (and people love programmes) with all seriousness but do not make evangelism a high priority.

### **12.7 Lack of commitment and interest**

Wrong attitudes like apathy, unwillingness to witness, "holier than thou", judgmental stance in various ways towards unbelievers, and more serve as barriers and prejudice against unbelievers.

### **12.8 Lack of resources or training**

Many feel hindered and inadequate because they do not have the right tools to use in evangelism (tracts, cards, books, etc.). Sometimes new converts become a burden for the one who brought them to Christ. They may be economically disadvantaged. This is a disincentive for members to reach out for more converts.

### **12.9 Pressures of Life**

Many people are too busy with social and economic enterprises that they seldom leave time for evangelistic activities.

## **13.0 EFFECTIVE FOLLOW-UP IN THE CHURCH**

Following up new converts is the most critical in evangelism. If it is effective, souls multiply and if it fails evangelism becomes fruitless. The early Christians were not only interested in winning souls; they put in much effort to establish them in the church and retain them for fellowship, maturity and further evangelism. Ron Smith has noted that follow-up involves the conservation, maturing and multiplication of souls similar to what happens in the WIN

(Win, Integrate and Nurture) Team of the Youth Ministry of The Church of Pentecost. It is the process of continuously visiting a new convert or a backslider in the home or at work the place with the aim of encouraging the person to continue the walk of faith in the Lord unto maturity and fruitfulness (Col. 1:28).

There is therefore the need for an effective and robust follow-up plan within the Church to enable each and everyone to be a follow up worker, responsible for a number of souls.

**Every member of the Church** must be trained in how to successfully follow-up new converts. This could empower members and reduce the number of people who do nothing in the Church.

A well-structured communication system must be in place. Communication channels such as e-mails, WhatsApp, telephone call or a letter signed by the pastor can be designed as a means of following up on new members.

Herb Millar, gives the following statistics for church visitors:

- 85% of guests (converts) return if visited in 36 hours
- 60% of guest return if visited in 72 hours
- 15% of guests return if visited in 7 days.

#### **14.0 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM: PRACTICAL EXAMPLES FROM WINNEBA AND ABIDJAN:**

In his 2017 State of the Church Address, the then Chairman of the Church, Apostle Prof. Opoku Onyinah commended the Winneba Area for moving from 'nowhere' to the 3<sup>rd</sup> position in Soul Winning in Ghana. This was the result of Personal Evangelism programme embarked upon in the Area in 2016/2017.

When I assumed duty in the Winneba Area in September 2016, I attended and spoke at a few rallies in some districts in the Area. My observations were confirmed by pastors at workers meeting:

- Not many people come to rally grounds in contemporary times.
- big Crusades attracts huge crowds but are expensive.
- What keeps people indoors abound in this generation

- Huge pressure on ministers to organise rallies because it is enshrined in the reporting system.

It was therefore decided that we would embark on **Personal Evangelism**, using the picture and Bible verses booklet of the Great Commission Movement Ghana (GCMG). I had used with remarkable success in my time as a Presiding Elder in 1986. The following actions were therefore taken:

- Training of Trainers Seminar, was held comprising all pastors and appointed capable leaders was held.
- All members in the assemblies were trained each Sunday morning without break for four (4) weeks.

With the introduction of personal evangelism in Winneba Area in 2017, its membership (especially in adults) experienced tremendous growth in souls won. The year 2017 recorded the highest in all the five years from 2014 to 2018 (See Fig 1). For instance, souls won in 2017 was 4,291 followed by 3,386 in 2018 (likely to be the ripple effect from the 2017 performance), and then 2,101 in 2015, 1,991 in 2014 and then 1,961 in 2016. Similarly, converts baptized in water was highest in 2017 with 2,978 water baptisms followed once again by 2,493 in 2018, and then 1,866 in 2015, 1,614 in 2014 and then 1,607 in 2016.

**EXTRACT FROM END OF YEAR STATISTICAL REPORTS FROM 2016  
(JAN-DEC) TO 2019 (JUN)**

**TABLE 1**

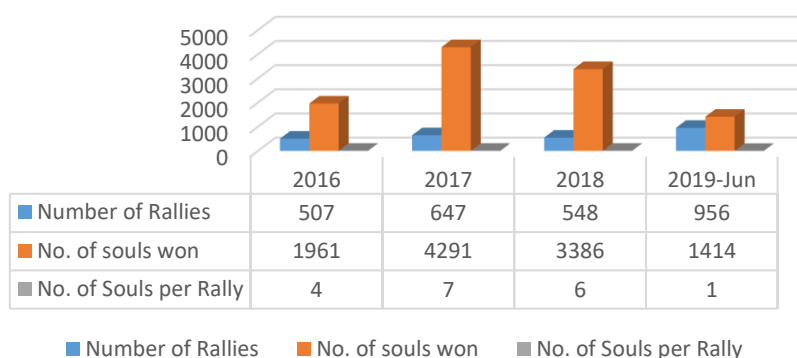
<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Rallies</b>	<b>Number of Souls</b>	<b>Souls per Rally</b>
2016	507	1,961	4
2017	647	4291	7
2018	548	3386	6

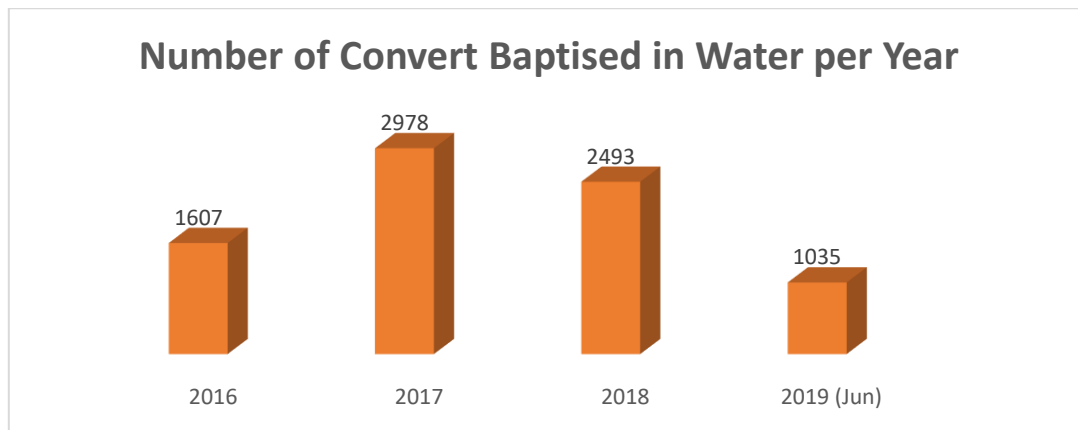
**NOTE:** It must be noted that because of the fact that there is no provision in the Church's report format, ministers substituted the **personal evangelism** results for **rallies held**. This accounted for the rallies held in the above table without Personal evangelism figures.

A figure below represent Souls won per rallies held within the periods of reporting...

**FIG 1**

The Church of Pentecost- Winneba  
Area  
Statistics on No. of Rallies, No. of Souls  
and **No. of Souls won per Rally**





#### **14.1 Apam District Experience**

The Apam District used the GCMG booklet in November 2017 during the “One Member, One Discipled Soul” project of the Church. The District used the first two weeks of the month to train all members in the use of the GCMG booklet for personal evangelism. Then on the last week of the month, they launched out at Home Cell level. On the last day of the week, the District was able to baptise 170 souls in water at a go.

Then, in 2018 during one of the District Weeks, Pastor Smart Ayim, District Pastor, launched it at the Cell level. Each Home Cell group was requested to go out that Sunday for personal evangelism using the booklet. They were to bring the converts to Church. Before the close of service, 106 converts had been brought to the Church. After a brief interactive session conducted by the Pastor, 82 out of the 106 decided to be baptized that same Sunday

#### **14.2 The Youpougon Area, Abidjan in La Cote D’Ivoire**

As a result of the sterling performance of the Winneba Area in evangelism activities in 2017, the then Chairman, Apostle Prof. Opoku Onyinah, called Winneba to share how such performance was achieved at the 2017 Heads’ Meeting held at the Pentecost Convention Centre (PCC), Gomoa Fetteh. This attracted the attention of Apostle Traore Sidiki, Head of the Youpougon Area in Abidjan, La Cote D’Ivoire who subsequently asked for a similar training in the Area. The training was held in August 2019.

On the last day (Saturday) of the training, an hour (11 am -12 noon) was given to about 15 pairs of trainees to apply the concept on the field. To the surprise of the host Area, the exercise resulted in the winning of about 86 souls within one hour. 18 out of the 86 were brought to the church premises within the hour with about 11 of them coming back to

church for service the following day which was a Sunday. As at the end of September, a total of 594 souls had been won using the picture booklet.

## **15.0 CONCLUSION**

The Early Church turned cities upside down and possessed their then known world because they took evangelism seriously. They shared a consistent message (Acts 2; 3; 4:12), depended on the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8), and adopted a convicting and contagious courage. They were not confined to church buildings but went out to share their faith in Christ. The greatest need now, is for the Church to equip every member to effectively and intentionally share their faith "in a way that makes sense to the witness and also make sense to the persons hearing the gospel. This is harvest time, we have a voice and we have a testimony to make "possessing the nations" a reality.

## APPENDICES: SOME OF THE METHODS OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM

### APPENDIX A

#### THE PICTURE BOOKLET

**INTRODUCING YOURSELF AND YOUR MESSAGE**

- YOU DON'T NEED TO PRAY**
- YOU COULD SAY, "I AM/WE ARE .... WE ARE FROM ..... AND TODAY WE ARE HERE TO SIMPLY SEEK YOUR OPINION ABOUT SOMETHING"**

**NOTICE THERE IS NO MENTION OF CHRIST OR THE WORD OF GOD YET.**

These pictures describe God's blessings and how to get them. Let us represent God with the old man, and mankind with the young man. God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.





*Genesis 2:7*

*Genesis 1:31*

*John 10:10*

Out of love God created us and His plan is that we should have fellowship with Him as the old man and the young man are having here. However something happened which we shall see in the next picture.



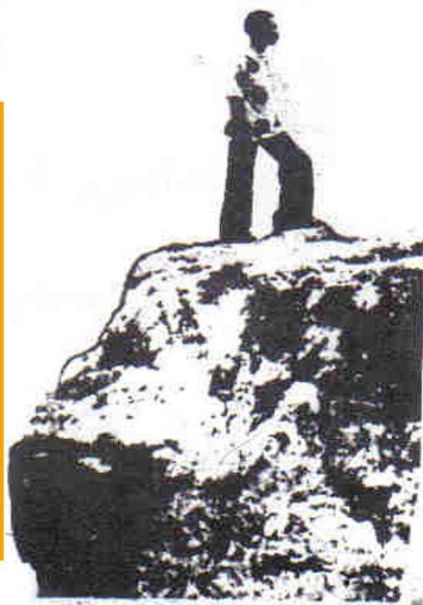
2

*Isaiah 53:6*

*Romans 3:23*

*Romans 6:23*

You see that there is a separation between the two. In the same way man has become sinful and separated from God, and so cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life. Man by himself can never get back to God.



Hebrews 9:22

1 Peter 2:24

John 14:6



The only way by which man can get back to God is through Jesus Christ. He died in our place, and through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life. Jesus carried our sins to the cross and has become a 'bridge', the only one, between God and man. It is not enough to know that Christ has become the 'bridge' between God and man. Man must turn round and come back to God through Jesus Christ. Then we can receive forgiveness and experience fellowship with Him again.

The young man is receiving a gift from the old man. Forgiveness of our wrongdoing and eternal life are free gifts from God. We must each receive Jesus Christ, God's gift, as Savior and Lord. Then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives. We receive Christ by a personal invitation. Eph 2:8,9 John 1:12





Revelation 3:20

ROM 10:9,10

These two hearts represent two kinds of people. The one on the left shows a person who has not invited Jesus Christ into his/her life. Christ (+) is still outside this person's life. You may be someone who attends church but has not invited Christ to enter and take control of your life.



The person on the right does not only attend church but has also invited Jesus Christ to come into his/her life and to control and direct it. Such a person has eternal life.

## ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Did you invite Christ into your life as you prayed? Is Christ in your life now? How do you know He has answered your prayer and has come into your life? In this picture you see that the young man is holding firmly on to the gift from the old man. If you have received Jesus Christ, God's gift, you have eternal life. The Bible promises eternal life to anyone who receives Jesus Christ. You also have received a new life. All your sins are forgiven. You have received what the Bible calls a new birth. Spiritually you have been 'born again'.



## **CLARIFYING THE ISSUE**

If you ask the questions and the person is not able to clearly explain what has happened do the ff:

Read Rev 3:20 and Ask:

- "what does the door represent?"
- what must you do?
- what will Christ do?
- were you sincere when you prayed that prayer?
- then where is Christ right now in relation to you?

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN GROWTH**

**GO TO GOD IN PRAYER DAILY**

**READ GOD'S WORD DAILY**

**OBEY GOD MOMENT BY MOMENT**

**WITNESS WITH YOUR LIFE AND WORDS**

**TRUST GOD FOR EVERY DETAIL OF YOUR LIFE**

**HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS IN YOU**

**NOW GIVE POWER TO YOUR DAILY**



You have now  
become a child of  
God and therefore  
must talk to God  
your Father daily  
through prayer.

*1 Thessalonians 5:17*

*Philippians 4:6*



8

*Psalms 119:105*

*James 1:22*



Just as a newborn  
baby needs to eat in  
order to grow so you  
must feed on God's  
Word.

9

*Hebrews 10:25*

**The Word of God commands us to  
have fellowship with others.  
Attend a church where Christ is  
honored and His Word is  
preached.**

10

**Share the good news  
you have received  
today with your  
friends and others.**

*Psalm 107:2  
Romans 10:14,15*



You see the two have met together again. I have enjoyed our time together so much I will like to meet with you again.

What about you? Can we meet tomorrow or the day after/ Where and when?

Before we meet please try to do the ff: Read the Bible verses in this booklet, thank God for Christ coming into your life to save you today, and read the first three chapters of the gospel of John.



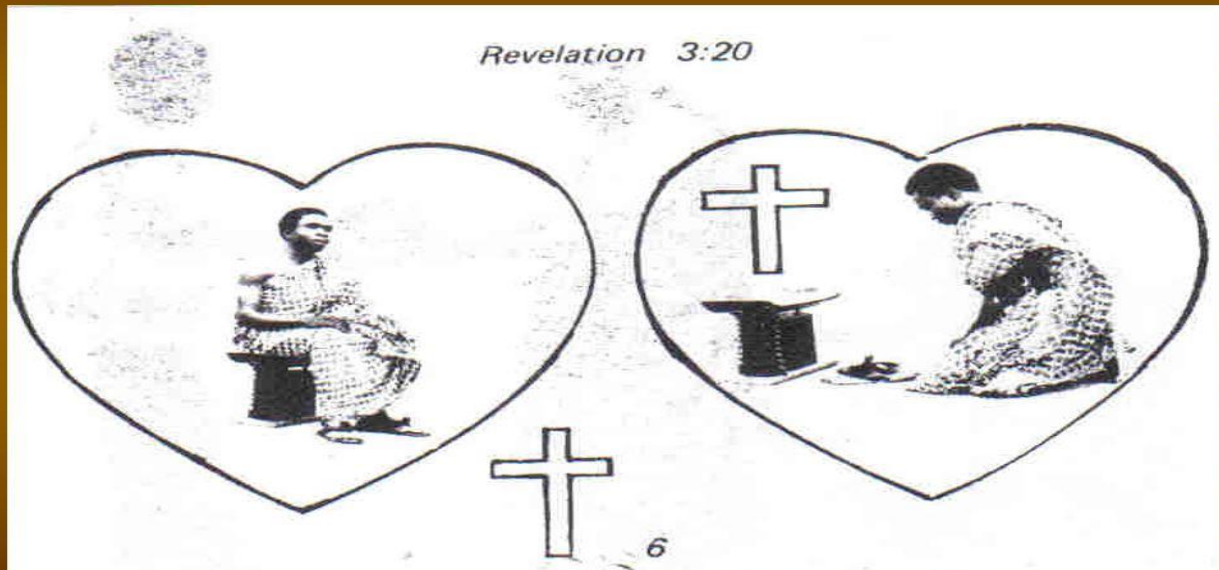
Great Commission Movement of Ghana  
P. O. Box 157, Trade Fair, Accra.  
P. O. Box 010, University of Cape Coast.  
P. O. Box 128, U.S.T., Kumasi  
GHANA.

## ASSURANCE OF SALVATION





## Handling Different Responses



### LEFT HEART

PROCEED AS NORMAL ■  
AND GIVE  
OPPORTUNITY TO THE  
PERSON TO PRAY TO  
RECEIVE CHRIST



## **LEFT HEART**

**PROCEED AS NORMAL  
AND GIVE  
OPPORTUNITY TO THE  
PERSON TO PRAY TO  
RECEIVE CHRIST**

**NOT SURE OR IN BETWEEN  
ASK, "WHICH WILL YOU  
LIKE YOUR LIFE TO BE?"  
THEN PROCEED TO LEAD  
HIM/HER TO RECEIVE  
CHRIST IF HE/SHE SO  
WILL.**

## **CLOSING THE PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL**

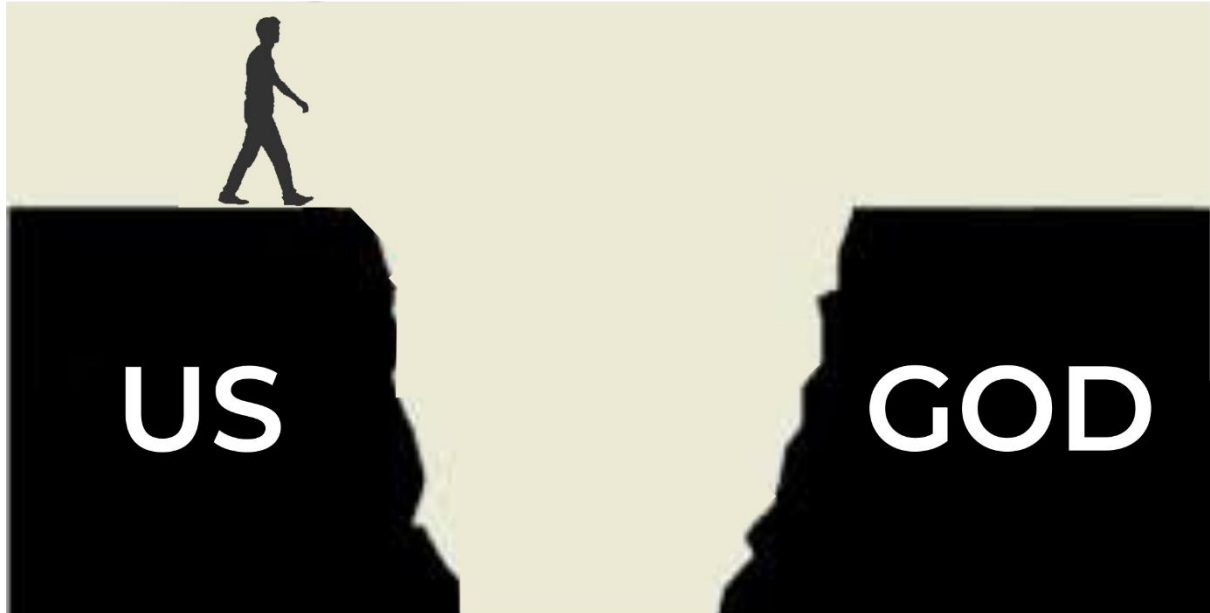
AFTER A PERSON HAS PRAYED TO RECEIVE CHRIST YOU MUST DO THE FF:

- ASK THE PERSON TO REVIEW THE MATERIAL**
- ASK THE PERSON TO THANK GOD FOR LETTING CHRIST COME INTO HIS LIFE**
- ASK THE PERSON TO READ OR HAVE SOMEONE READ TO HIM/HER JHN 1-3**
- BOOK AN APPT WITH HIM/HER WITHIN 24-48HRS AGREEING ON A DAY, PLACE, AND TIME.**

## APPENDIX B

### 1. THE BRIDGE

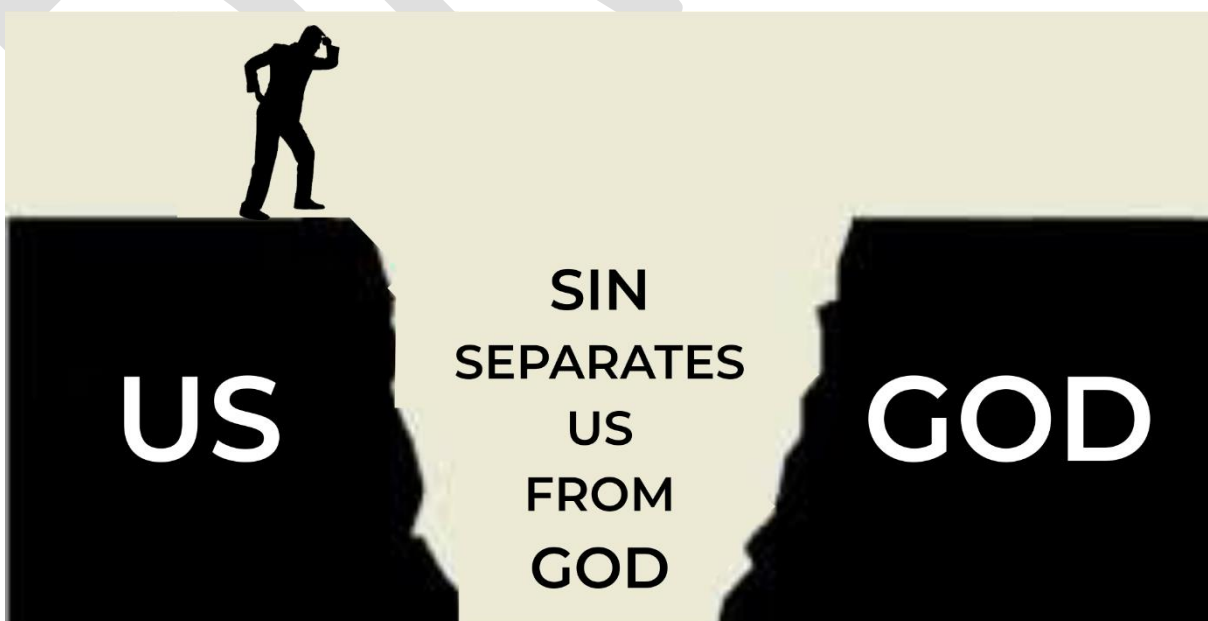
Why do you think we are separated from God?



*Figure 1. The Gap*

*The Bible says our sins have separated us from God...*

*(Isaiah 59:2).*



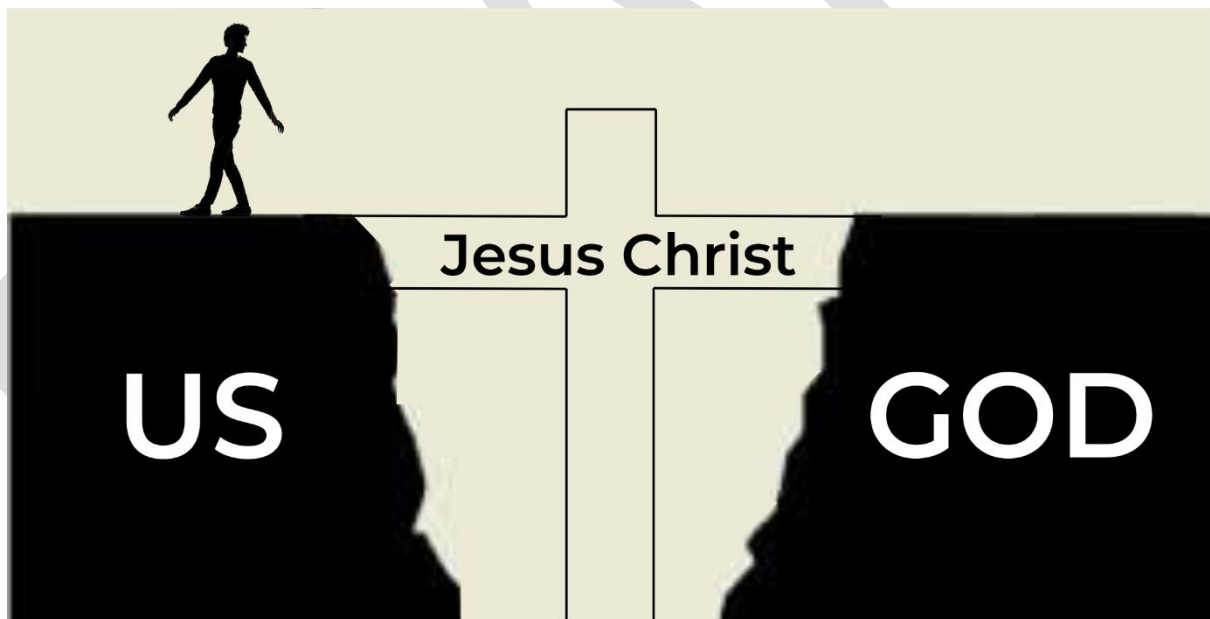
*separating us from God.*

*Sin*



*Sin bringing death and judgment*

**Jesus is the way.**



**Jesus Christ the Bridge.**

Each of us by faith must receive Jesus Christ if we want to know God.

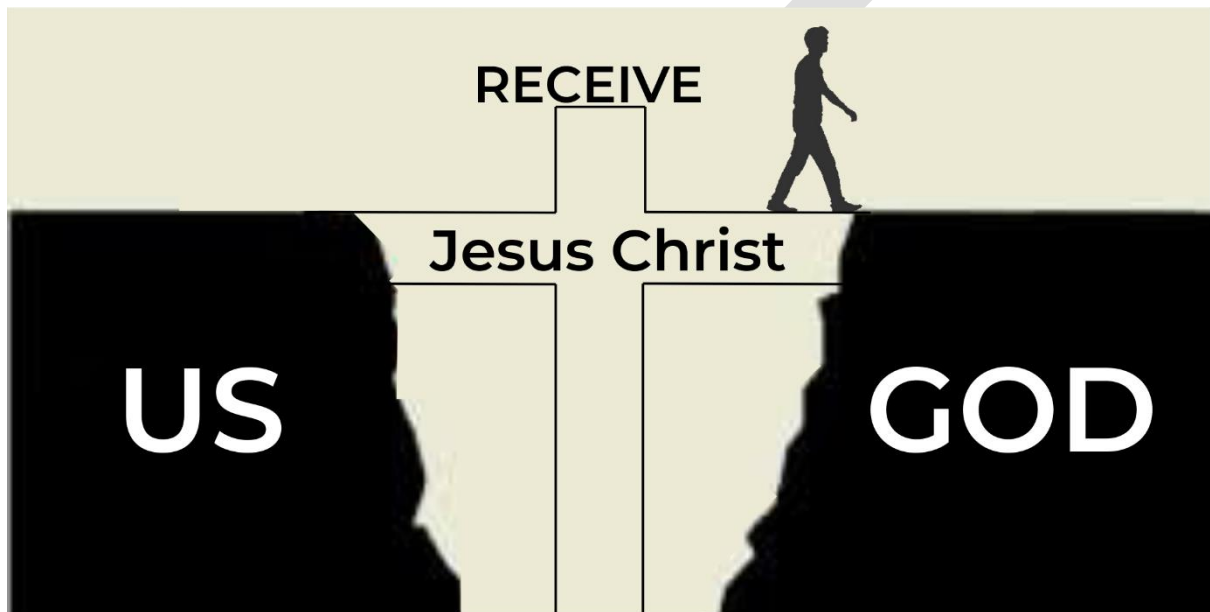
***The A, B, C's of faith involve:***

**Acknowledging** your need – admitting you have sinned and desiring to turn away from that sin (1 John 1:8-9).

**Believing** Jesus Christ died in your place and rose again to be your Saviour - providing forgiveness for your sins (1 Cor.15:3-4, 17).

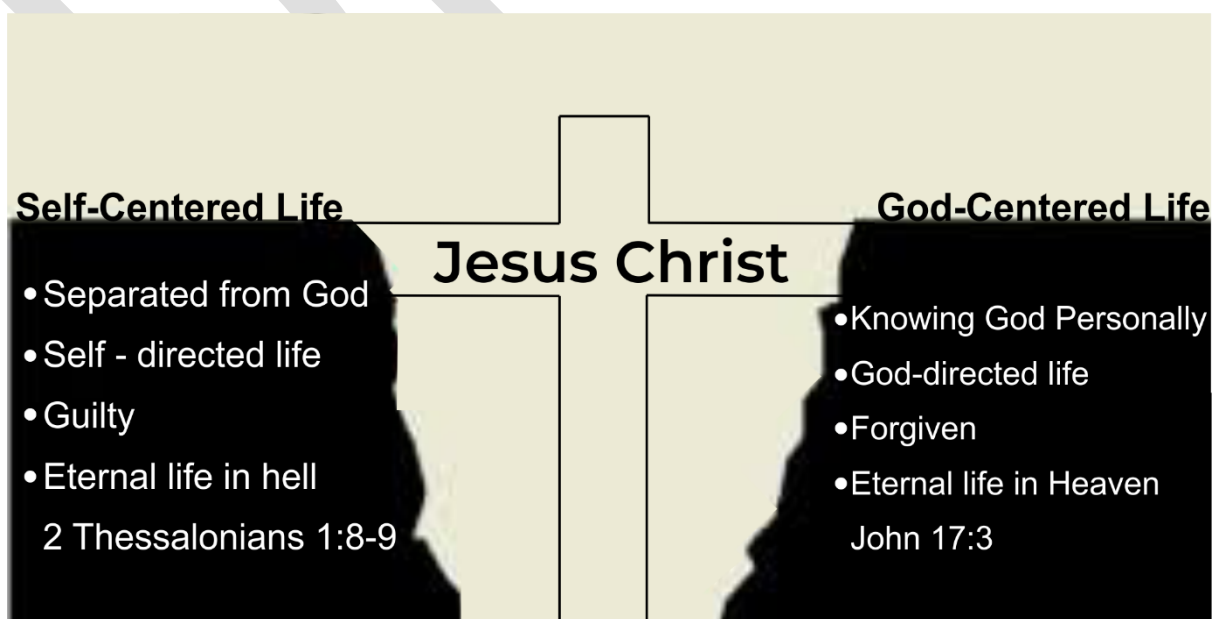
**Choosing** to invite to direct your life.

You can evaluate your current relationship with God by asking ...



**Figure 5. Receiving Jesus Christ**

*Which life best represents your current relationship with God?*



**Figure 6. Self-centred life and God-centred life**

## APPENDIX C

### THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS

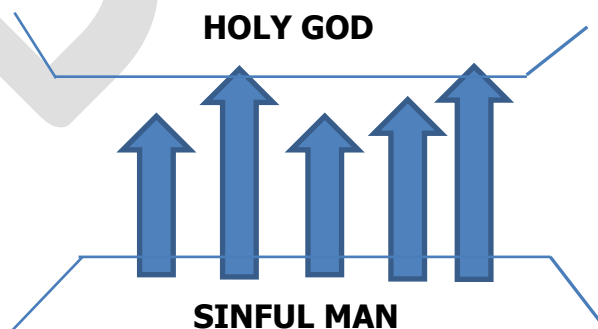


### THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS

BY BILL BRIGHT

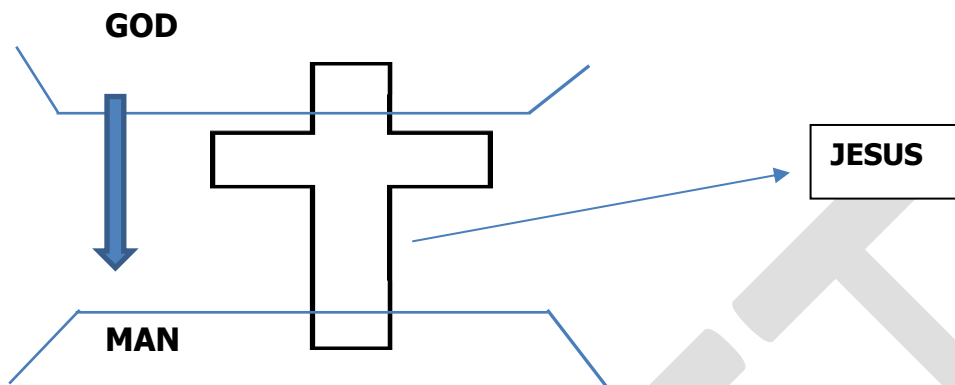
**Spiritual Law 1** – God Loves You and offers a wonderful plan for your life

**Spiritual Law 2** – Man is **SINFUL** and **SEPARATED** from God. Therefore, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.

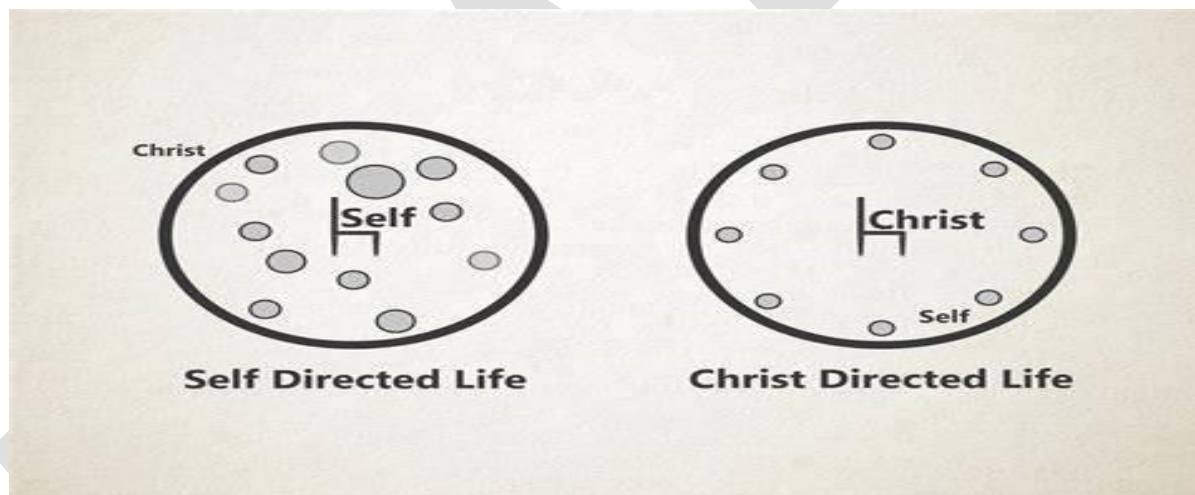




**Spiritual Law 3** – Jesus Christ is God's ONLY provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.



**Spiritual Law 4** – We must individually RECEIVE Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.



## APPENDIX D

### QUESTIONS<sup>114</sup> UNBELIEVERS ASK IN PERSONAL EVANGELISM

The following list is designed to stimulate thinking about some of the types of questions that are being asked.

1. How can Jesus be the only way to God?
2. How can Christianity be true if Christians live like everyone else?
3. What does Jesus have to do with my life?
4. How can I get straightened out with God?
5. Who was Jesus?
6. What is God like?
7. How can I find meaning and purpose in life?
8. What happens to me when I die?
9. What can I trust that what Christians are saying is true?
10. If God is loving, why can't there be more than one way to Him?
11. How do we know that Jesus of the Bible is who He said He was?
12. Aren't all religions basically the same?

Because the questions change, you are encouraged to take several steps:

1. Invest time in learning some principles of responding to objections.
2. Learn some phrase that will help you get through the first few moments of the objection.
3. Learn to respond to a select few issues that you continue to have to address.

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<sup>114</sup> McRaney JR W. The Art of Personal Evangelism, B & H Publishing Group, Tennessee, 2003, p. 211



## **Common Objections<sup>115</sup> By Unbelievers in Personal Evangelism:**

Billy Fay's list of common objections;

1. Christian hurt me.
2. Cults are the answer.
3. God cannot forgive me
4. How can a loving God send someone to hell?
5. How can I know the Bible is true?
6. How do I know I have enough faith?
7. I can't live the Christian lifestyle.
8. I don't believe in God.
9. I don't believe the resurrection took place.
10. I want to think about it
11. I'm a good person
12. I'm a member of another world religion
13. I'm God.
14. I'm having too much fun.
15. I'm Jewish
16. I'm not a sinner
17. I'm not good enough
18. I'm not ready
19. I'm not sure I'm saved
20. I've always believed in God
21. I've done too many bad things
22. I've tried, and it didn't work out
23. My beliefs are private
24. My friends will think I am crazy if I accept Jesus.
25. The argument never stops.
26. The church only wants my money
27. There are many paths to God.
28. There are many religions in the world.
29. There are many translations of the Bible

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<sup>115</sup> Will McRaney Jr., Ibid, p. 241

30. There are too many errors in the Bible
31. There are too many hypocrites in the church.
32. What about my family?
33. What about those who never hear the gospel?
34. Why does God let bad things happen?
35. You can't possibly know what truth is
36. You must think you're better than me.

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# **PENTECOST SONGS**

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## 2020 THEME SONGS

### TWI

#### 1.

1. Anuonyam Asore -  
Nkunimdi Asore  
Ereko eyi dɔm ama Kristo 2×  
Asore yi ne fapem ne Kristo  
Etim ɔbotan Yesu so  
Erenhinhim  
Na enni nkogu da  
'fise etim ɔbotan no so

#### 2. Anuonyam Asore

Nkunimdi Asore  
Erefa wiase nyinaa nnomum 2×  
Asore yi, ne fapem ne Kristo  
Etim ɔbotan Yesu so  
Erenwosow  
Na erensesa ara da  
'fise etim ɔbotan no so

#### 3. Anuonyam Asore

Nkunimdi Asore  
Erehyeren wɔ wiase nyinaa 2×  
Asore yi ne fapem ne Kristo  
Etim ɔbotan Yesu so  
Erennuru sum  
Na erennyera kwan da  
'fise etim ɔbotan no so

#### 4. Anuonyam Asore

Nkunimdi Asore  
Orekyere nnipa nkwagye kwan 2×  
Asore yi ne fapem ne Kristo  
Etim ɔbotan Yesu so  
Erenfom kwan  
Na erenyera ne tumi  
'fise etim ɔbotan no so  
*Emmanuel Oppong Donkor*

#### 2

1. Oman, oman, oman kronkrɔn  
Yehowa Ne man, bɔn rentsena mu  
Oman kronkrɔn nye eyi  
M'asem nye eyi  
De hom ndzi mu

2. Asor, asor, asor kronkrɔn  
Yehowa N'asor, bɔn rentsena mu  
Oman kronkrɔn nye eyi  
M'asem nye eyi  
De hom ndzi mu

*Eunice Addison, PANF 554*

#### 3

Okyen ade nyinaa  
M'agyenkwa n' Okyen ade nyinaa

Okyen ade nyinaa

Okyen ade nyinaa

Wɔak'ron No wɔ soro ho

Mitwa hwe N'anim

Jesus, m'agyenkwa Nwonwani n'

Okyen ade nyinaa

*PANT 587*

#### 4

Aman nyinaa, aman nyinaa  
Mommra mmehwe Nyame ne Ba a  
Wɔakorɔn No, Wɔakorɔn No  
Mommra mmehwe N'anuonyam  
*J. C. Quaye, PANT 716*

#### 5

Awurade, ye ade foforo enne  
Wɔ W'asore ne wiase nyinaa m'  
Ma enye nwanwa  
Ma enye fɛɛfɛ  
Ye ade foforo enne  
Ma enye nwanwa  
Ma enye fɛɛfɛ  
Ye ade foforo enne  
*Grace Gakpetor*

#### 6

1. Ayeyi, na medze ma W', mo Wura  
Ayeyi, na medze ma Wo  
Ayeyi, na medze ma W', mo Wura  
Ayeyi, na medze ma Wo  
Ehwe mo do abere nyinaa  
Meedzifi nye me fi mbae nyinaa m'  
Ayeyi, na medze ma W', mo Wura  
Ayeyi, na medze ma Wo  
*Grace Gakpetor*

2. Ayeyi, na yedze ma W, hen Wura  
Ayeyi, na yedze ma Wo  
Ayeyi, na yedze ma W', hen Wura  
Ayeyi, na yedze ma Wo  
Ehwe hen do abere nyinaa  
Hen edzifi nye hen fi mbae nyinaa m'  
Ayeyi, na yedze ma W', hen Wura  
Ayeyi, na yedze ma Wo  
*Grace Gakpetor*

#### 7

Onyame Honhom te yen mu  
Na N'adom so ka yen ho  
Wasiesie yen atew yen ho  
Ama nnwuma pa nyinaa  
Wasiesie yen atew yen ho  
Ama nnwuma pa nyinaa  
*Grace Gakpetor*

#### 8

1. Kristo asakyera me se me nsakyera  
Wɔn a wɔwɔ wiase nyinaa

Mede Kristo su ne me nneyɛɛ  
Refa nipa nyinaa ama No

2. Wayɛ me kanea wɔ wiase  
Sɛ menhyerɛn mma nnipa nyinaa  
Nhu me nneyɛɛ papa no  
Na wɔahyɛ Nyame anuonyam

3. Kristo atemmu agua no anim  
Ɛhɔ na megyina da bi  
Na manya me nneyɛɛ so akatua  
Na manya daa ahome ama me kra

4. Ɛsɛ me sɛ me hwɛ me ho so yie  
Ama me brɛ ne me som anyɛ kwa  
Mennin da ko a me Wura n' bɛba  
Abɛfa me akɔ ne nkyɛn

5. Mene ahotewfo nkonimdifo  
De nne kɛsɛ bɛto dwom sɛ  
Nhyira, anuonyam ne tumi  
Nka nea Ɔte ahengua no so n'  
*Grace Gakpetor*

## 9

1. Wɔnka n' amanaman mu sɛ  
Ɔgye da no adu  
Wɔnka no wɔ wiase sɛ  
Kristo reba bio

*Ansa na Ɔbɛba n'*  
*Wɔmmɔ asem yi dawuro*  
*Ansa na Ɔbɛba n'*  
*Wɔmma abɔde nyinaa nte*

2. Wɔnka n' amanaman mu sɛ  
Kristo adi nkunim  
Wɔnka no wɔ wiase sɛ  
Wasɔre afi awufo m'  
*Samuel Obeng Eshun*

## 10

1. Nhyira nka Oguanmaa no  
Wadi ɔtamfo n' so  
Wadi owu so nkunim  
W'asɔre afi awufo m'  
Wama yɛn fawohodi  
Afi ɔbonsam nsam  
Nhyira nka Oguanmaa no  
*Nhyira nka Oguanmaa no*  
*Ayeyi nka Oguanmaa no*  
*Nyame Ba Kristo*  
*Wadi nkunim ama yɛn*  
*Ahotewfo nyinaa, mommɔ ose mma no*  
*Nyame Ba Kristo*  
*Wadi nkunim ama yɛn*  
*Ɔsoro dɔm nyinaa, mommɔ ose mma no*

2. Nhyira nka Oguanmaa no  
Nea ɔdɔɔ wiase  
Owui wɔ dua no so  
De gyee adasamma  
Nea Ɔde ne mogya no pataa yɛn bɔne  
Nhyira nka Oguanmaa no

3. Nhyira nka Oguanmaa no  
Nea Ɔye yɛn ntamgyinafo  
Wapata yɛn bɔne  
Wɔ Onyame anim  
Wagye yɛn nkwa ma yeabeye Onyame mma  
Nhyira nka Oguanmaa no

4. Nhyira nka Oguanmaa no  
Nea Ɔte ahengua no so n'  
Abɔfo atwa Ne ho ahyia  
Na daa wɔto nnwom sɛ  
Kronkron ne Awurade, ade nyinaa so Tumfo  
Nhyira nka Oguanmaa no

## 11

Honhom Kronkron, me Kra Dɔfo  
Wo na m'ani agyina Wo  
Wo ne me Werekyekeyefo  
Wɔ ɔbra sare yi so

2. Honhom Kronkron, m'adamfo pa  
Wo ne m'akwantu yim' kanea  
Wo hyerɛn ma me wɔ sum yi mu  
'de m' bɛ ko akosi awieɛ

3. Honhom Kronkron ~boafo pa  
Wo nim masetra, yi me brɛ  
Wo sɔ me mu hyɛ me den daa  
Na mantɔ baha da

4. Honhom Kronkron, Ogya Fadum  
Sɛ wiase rekata me so a  
Wo hye nneɛma a ɛnye me mu  
Twe Kristo si manim  
*Michael Agyemang Amoako*  
*Stanzas 3-4 by Opoku Onyiah*

## 12

Osee, mommɔ ose!  
Osee, mommɔ ose  
Efisɛ Yesu adi nkonim yɛn  
Mommɔ ose! Mommɔ ose! Ose!  
*A. L. Angoh*

## 13

Me nkunim frankaa no  
Rehim wɔ wiase nyinaa  
Madi nkunim, Madi nkunim  
Madi nkunim ama m'asɔre  
*Michael Agyemang-Amoako*

**14**

Asore no ti ne Jesus  
 Asore no ti ne Jesus  
 Nea Ote ahengua a ekoron no so n'  
 On'ne asor' no Wura  
*J. Odoi Korang*

**15**

1. Hwie gu me so, Nyame Honhom  
 Maba W'anim nne da yi  
 Hwie Wo Honhom Kronkron gu me so

2. Mepɛ sɛ mesom Wo yiye  
 Na mayɛ nea Wopɛ  
 Hwie Wo Honhom Kronkron gu me so

3. Akra pii reyerɛ, Nyame  
 Boa m' ma menka W'asɛm  
 Hwie Wo Honhom Kronkron gu me so  
*Grace Gakpetor*

**16**

Wo nko na anuonyam sɛ W'  
 Wo nko na anuonyam fata Wo  
 Jesus, W'anuoym hyeren  
 Ehyeren sen owia  
 Jesus W'anuoym hyeren  
 Ehyeren sen owia  
*Emmanuel Kyei Boate*

**17**

Agyenkwa bɛn na yɛahu No 'i  
 Agyenkwa yi ne Kristo  
 Wasra No ngo akyɛn Ne mfɛfo  
 Anuonyamhene na yɛahu No 'i  
 Ahosan ngo na Ode asra No  
 Trenɛɛ akyekyerɛ No  
 Kronkronyɛ ne N'abotiri  
 Anuonyamhene na yɛahu No 'i  
*Opoku Onyinah*

**18**

Home gu yɛn mu, Awurade  
 Ma W'ahome ngu yɛn so  
 Oko yi yɛ Wo ko  
 Hyɛ yɛ'abasa mu den  
 Na yɛatumi ayɛ W'adwuma  
*Opoku Onyinah*

**19**

Sɛ yɛsom nokware mu a  
 Yebɛnya Ne nsam akatua  
 Oyɛ Onyame nokwafo  
 Ne wɛrɛ r'mfi yɛn nnwuma pa  
 Otreeni Nyankopɔn  
 Na wama yɛn akatua pa

Wo fam ha ne soro ho

**20**

Kristo asore no ye animuonyam asore a,  
 Efi ne dem ne nkekae biara nni ho.  
 Kristo asore no ye animuonyam asore a,  
 Efi ne dem ne nkekae biara nni ho.  
 Sɛ wokaasore no ho a, onua, ma wo ho Kwan,  
 Na Kristo animuonyam no nhyeren wo wo mu daa  
 Mfa so nsakyerɛ wiase ne aman nyinaa  
 Kristo asore no ye animuonyam asore  
 Nti nni atorɔ, di wo yonko nokore,  
 Owifo, gyae krono bo, na ye adwumaden,  
 Nkeka nsem a ebɔ kuro, ka nsem a ehia daa  
 Na ɛma nkoso, bo nwumapa ho mmɔden  
 Sɛ wo di nokware a, ɔman no beye yie,  
 Sɛ woyɛ adwumaden a, wo ɔman no betu mpɔn  
 Animuonyam asore, hyɛ kronkronyɛ sɛ atadeɛ,  
 Sɛ wo mpaebo m' ma wo man yi o  
 Nti nni atorɔ, di wo yonko nokware,  
 Owifo, gyae krono bo, na ye adwumaden,  
 Nkeka nsem a ebɔ kuro, ka nsem a ehia daa  
 Na ɛma nkoso, bo nwumapa ho mmɔden  
 Sɛ wo di nokware a, ɔman no beye yie,  
 Sɛ woyɛ adwumaden a, wo ɔman no betu mpɔn  
 Animuonyam asore, hyɛ kronkronyɛ sɛ atadeɛ,  
 Sɛ wo mpaebo m', ma wo man yi o  
 Animuonyam asore, animuonyam asore,  
 animuonyam asore  
 Yɛmfa suban pa nsakyerɛ yɛn man yi o  
*Fred Amoakohene Sarpong*

**21**

Monto nnwom foforo mma Awurade  
 Monto ayeyi nnwom mma Ne din daa  
 Ono na Oyɛ ahene mu Hene  
 Ne Awura mu Awurade  
*Samuel Obeng Eshun*

**22**

Ahum betu, asorɔkyɛ bebɔ  
 Merennyaw M'asor' mu da  
 Ahum betu, asorɔkyɛ bebɔ  
 Merennyaw M'asor' mu da  
 Merennyaw M'asor' mu da  
 Mikura M'asor' mu da  
 Ahum betu, asorɔkyɛ bebɔ  
 Merennyaw M'asor' mu da

**23**

Hyɛnhyɛn, hyɛnhyɛn nye M'asor'  
 Orehyeren wo wiadze yi mu  
 Oatsew no ho, oedzi konyim  
 Otamfo n' suro  
*Eunice Addison*

**24**

Nea Ote ahengua kokuroo no so n'



Ne din de Awurade Kristo  
Nea Ode tumi adura Ne ho  
Na abofo atwa Ne ho ahyia  
Wadi nkunim, wadi nkunim  
Wadi nkunim ama N'asore  
N'ahotewfo nyinaa  
Mommɔ ose, mma Ne din so

*Osoro dɔm nyinaa*  
*Mommɔ ose, mma Ne din so*  
*Samuel Obeng Eshun*

## 25

1. Mepɛ sɛ mesom Wo nokware mu  
Na meye W'apɛde nyinaa  
Na nso wiase refa me nnomum  
Enti mekoto sɛ W'

*Awurade boa me, Awurade boa me*  
*Hye me mu nnipa no den*  
*Na fa m'akoma nnomum*  
*Awurade boa me, Awurade boa me*  
*Hye me mu nkwa bio*  
*Na masom Wo yie*

2. Mepɛ sɛ mitu trenɛɛ anamɔn  
Na meye nhweso ma wiase  
Na nso ɔbonsam refa m' nnomum  
Eno nti mesɛ Wo, Awurade

3. Mepɛ sɛ meye W'adwuma no yie  
Na minya Wo nsam akatua pa  
Na nso ɔhonam redi me so  
Enti mekoto sɛ W'

4. Mepɛ sɛ metena Wo nkyɛn daa  
Na mete nea Wowɔ ma me  
Nanso bone redi me so  
Enti mekoto sɛ W'

*Samuel Obeng Eshun*

## GA (medley)

### 26

1. Nyɔnmɔ, wɔkɛ shidaa nha bo  
Nyɔnmɔ, wɔkɛ shidaa nha bo  
Bo kome too wɔkɛ shidaa nha bo  
Wɔnda bo shi  
Bo kome too wɔkɛ shidaa nha bo  
Wɔnda bo shi

2. Ejaakɛ nokonoko bɛ ni Nyɔnmɔ nyɛn efɛɛ  
Ejaakɛ nokonoko bɛ ni Nyɔnmɔ nyɛn efɛɛ  
Amen! Alleluia!  
Amen! Alleluia!  
Amen! Alleluia!  
Amen! Alleluia!

3. Nyɔnmɔ kɛ wɔ ye daa kɛ kaa  
Ebile buɔ wɔ he akontaa be fɛɛ be

4. Nye baa, nye baa, wɔnu wala nu  
Nye ba wɔnu wala nu ye Yesu mli  
Nye ba wɔnu wala nu ye Yesu mli  
Nye ba wɔnu wala nu ye Yesu mli  
Nye ba wɔnu wala nu ye Yesu mli

5. Yesu baatsake oshɛɛ mli  
Ni Ebaaha ehi ha bo  
Yesu baatsake oshɛɛ mli  
Ni Ebaaha ehi ha bo  
Kaa ha otsui miifa  
Beni oyoo edromɔ shishii  
Yesu baatsake oshɛɛ mli  
Ni eeha ehi eha bo.

## NZEMA

### 27

Salebie la me zo  
Salekesebie la me zo  
Salebie la me zo  
Salekesebie la me zo  
Benya Jesus Christ Isa la me zo  
Benya Jesus Christ Isa la me zo

## EWE

### 28

*(Medley s)*

Madzi ha vivio na Yehowa  
Le fe dɔmenyonyo ta  
Maɖe gbɛfa efɛ ɲuti nya  
Le dukɔ wo do me2x  
Sika kple klosalo ma teɲu afle o  
Nusi Yesu wɔ nam la'  
Maɖe gbɛfa efɛ ɲuti nya  
Le dukɔ wo dome

Mawu nutɔ nenye 2x  
Dzifo kple anyigba nye towo  
Ame ɖɛke mede nuwo  
Nuwo kataa ole le asiwo me  
Mawu nutɔ nenye  
Tso mavɔme yi mavɔme  
Mawuea nenye, yea koe nenye  
Tso mavɔmee yi mavɔme  
Mawuea nenye, ee nenye

Mawu ana nyana wunu, alesiwa anyo nawo  
Mawu ana nyana wunu, alesiwa anyo nawo  
Dzika mega tso wo-o ne ele Yesu gbɔ ko  
Mawu ana nyana wunu, alesiwa anyo nawo

Mega kyi megbe o  
Afeto Yesu leyɔ wo  
Va ko, mega kyi megbe o

## ENGLISH

### 1

1. A glorious church,  
Victorious church  
Setting free many to Christ  
The church is founded on Christ  
It is built on Jesus the Rock  
Will not be moved  
Will never know defeat  
For it is built on the Rock

2. A glorious church  
Victorious church taking captive all the world  
The church is founded on Christ  
It is built on Jesus the Rock  
Will not be swayed,  
Will never change its course  
For it is built on the Rock.

3. A glorious church  
Victorious church  
Shining brightly through the world  
The church is founded on Christ  
It is built on Jesus the Rock  
Will not go dim  
Will never lose its way  
For it is built on the Rock

4. A glorious church  
Victorious church  
Showing all the way of life  
The church is founded on Christ  
It is built on Jesus the Rock  
Will not be swayed,  
Will never lose its power  
For it is built on the Rock

2.  
Our mandate in this generation  
Our mandate in this generation  
Is to possess the nations of the world  
Our call is to build a triumphant church  
A spotless church without wri-in-kle  
Heed the voice of the Master's call  
Let's give our hearts souls and minds  
To possess all the nations  
For the kingdom of our Lord and King  
*Samuel Sackey Hughes*

### 3.

1. Do not let your light go off  
You are a transforming Church  
A glorious church you will be  
Without spot or wrinkle  
Let integrity be your strength  
Let faith be your shield

Shun every impure lifestyle  
Do not let your light go off

2. Do not let your taste go sour  
You are the salt of the Earth  
To stop the rot in the Earth  
And make the creation see  
Its Redeeming Creator  
And return to His glory  
You are a transforming agent  
Do not let your light go off  
*Fred Amoakohene Sarpong*

### 4.

A prisoner of Christ  
I must live only in Christlikeness  
A prisoner of change is to reflect the beauty of the church  
I will examine my life  
check my *motives*  
I will let the word of Christ  
dwell in me richly  
I will shun uncleanness,  
And be clothed with Holiness  
So, the glory of *Jesus Christ*  
be seen in me  
*Fred Amoakohene Sarpong*

### 5.

We give You glory  
We give You praise Lord  
And Shout hosanna to You alone  
We bow before You in adoration  
We raise our voices in praise to You

### Chorus

*Hallelujah to Jehovah*  
*Hallelujah to You our King*  
*We bow before You in adoration*  
*We raise our voices in praise to You*  
*Emmanuel Kyei Boate*

### 6

You stretch forth Your right hand  
To redeem Your people  
You stretch forth Your right hand  
To redeem Your people  
In Your unfailing love You lead  
The people You have redeemed  
In Your strength You will guide them  
To Your holy dwelling  
*A. L. Angoh*

### 7

One Maker of Heaven and Earth  
Jehovah! Jehovah!

Who sent His Son to save us all  
 Jehovah! Jehovah!  
 All people went astray  
 Stampeding to eternal death  
 His compassion was stirred for us  
 Jehovah! Jehovah!  
 He is why we have life today  
 Eternal life and lasting hope  
 Death has no power over us  
 Jehovah! Jehovah!  
 Jehovah, we thank you  
 Your children, all your saints  
 We depend on Your goodness and love  
 Jehovah! Jehovah!  
*Seth Asare Ofei Badu*

**8**  
 Your presence in all the Earth  
 Your presence in us  
 So beautiful and sweet  
 And glorious, wonderful and great  
 Your presence in us  
 So powerful and strong  
 Splendorous, majestic and great  
 Your presence, Oh Lord  
 How beautiful  
 Your presence, O Lord  
 How glo-orious  
 Your presence in all the Earth  
*Samuel Sackey Hughes*

**9**  
 Shining brightly is my church  
 Shining throughout all the Earth  
 Sanctified and victorious  
 A terror to the foe  
*Eunice Addison's "Hyenhyen" translated*

**10**  
 'Tis a glorious church  
 Without spot or wrinkle  
 Washed in the blood of the Lamb  
*PSB 371*

**11**  
 1. Anoint us with fresh oil  
 Fresh oil from His Majesty,  
 From the Father's Golden Throne  
 The oil that never runs dry  
 Flows through the Anointed One  
 Anoint us with fresh oil from the throne

*We bow before Your throne  
 Waiting for Your touch, Lord  
 Anoint us with fresh oil*

2. Anoint us with fresh oil  
 Fresh oil from the Olive trees

Through the pipes *into* the lamps  
 The oil *that* keeps on flowing  
 From ' top of the Golden Bowl  
 The oil that *makes* people shout: "Grace! Grace!"

3. Anoint us with fresh oil  
 The power of God from on high  
 The answer to dry service  
 The dead will be made alive  
 Unbelief will be put to shame  
 The anointing that cannot go unnoticed

4. Anoint us with fresh oil  
 The promise of the Son of God  
 Proceeding from the Father  
 The Spirit who stays forever  
 He who glorifies the Son  
 The anointing that comes with His awesomeness  
*Opoku Onyinah*

**12**  
 Be glorified in my life  
 Jesus, the source of life and power  
 I submit my life to You alone  
 Let Your word be fulfilled in my life  
*Opoku Onyinah*

**13**  
 Beautiful Savior, Glorious One  
 We bow to You and give You glory  
 Who is like You, our Lord, King of glory  
 We worship You and give You glory  
*Opoku Onyinah*

**14**  
 My world needs me  
 The JESUS in me  
 Because I'm here  
 Change is coming now  
 JESUS in me is everything that the world needs  
 We are possessing the nations for You 5x  
 We are possessing the nations for JESUS  
 He has life to give to every dead thing around me  
 Light to shine on every darkness around me  
 Power to heal every sickness around me  
 JESUS in me is everything that the world needs  
*Gina Asante*

**15**  
 1. There is a fountain in the Lord Jesus  
 Let all who are thirsty drink  
 For life and righteousness will spring in you  
 And you shall be a living soul  
 2. The life in Christ will be a light in you  
 As you remain in the Lord  
 And you shall bear the fruit of righteousness  
 To reflect the Kingdom of God

**16**

You are the Lord that deserves our worship  
You are the Lord we praise  
All nations bow before You in worship  
You're highly exalted  
You are the Lord that deserves our worship  
You are the Lord we praise  
All nations bow before You in worship  
You're highly exalted  
O glory, hallelujah!  
O glory, hallelujah!  
Halle Hallelujah, amen  
Halle Hallelujah, amen  
All nations bow to You in worship  
You're highly exalted  
*Fred Amoakohene Sarpong*

**17**

1. Tarry for the Spirit  
He shall come in showers,  
Energizing wholly  
All your ransomed powers;  
Signs shall follow service  
In the Holy Ghost,  
Then the Church of Jesus  
Prove a mighty host

*On, then, Church of Jesus  
Claim your Pentecost:  
God shall now baptise thee  
In the Holy Ghost*

2. Rivers is Thy promise,  
This shall be our plea  
Less than this can never  
Meet our cry for Thee;  
Tired of lukewarm service,  
And the loss it brings  
We would live entirely  
For eternal things

3. When the Spirit cometh  
Loosened lips shall tell,  
Of the wondrous blessing  
Which upon them fell;  
Life of Jesus springing  
Like a well within  
Hearts with loud hosannas  
Constantly shall ring.

4. When with joy we follow  
In Christ's triumph train,  
and our lives are flooded  
With the Latter Rain;  
Then the world around us  
Shall the impact feel,

Of a Church with vision  
Fired with holy zeal.

5. Then the Lord of glory  
Shall be magnified,  
He who trod the winepress,  
fully satisfied:  
Walking in the Spirit,  
Condemnation o'er  
Blessed life of worship,  
Now and evermore.  
*E.C.W Boulton, RH 235*

**18**

1. To me the Holy Ghost is giv'n,  
An earnest of the joys of Heav'n;  
Since He has taken full control,  
I've Pentecost in my soul.

*I've Pentecost in my soul,  
I've Pentecost in my soul;  
The Spirit has come, has come to abide;  
I've Pentecost in my soul.*

2. The Spirit dwells my heart within  
And breaks the pow'r of pardoned sin;  
Tho' o'er my head dark clouds may roll,  
I've Pentecost in my soul.

3. O holy rest! O peace sublime!  
He reigns within me all the time;  
He purifies and makes me whole—  
I've Pentecost in my soul.

4. Then seek this Gift without delay,  
Receive the Holy Ghost today;  
Yield all to His benign control,  
Let Pentecost fill your soul!  
O yes!

*Thoro Harris  
Source: The Cyber Hymnal*

**19**

O magnify the Lord with me, with me  
O magnify the Lord with me, with me  
Let us exalt His name together  
Let us exalt His name together  
Let us exalt His name forever  
Hallelujah! Amen!

*Kwasi Annor*

**20**

1. I'm surrounded by Your power  
I'm surrounded by Your power  
I'm surrounded by Your presence  
Speaker to my soul  
Speaker to my soul

2. I am seated at Your feet Lord  
Meditating on Your glorious word  
Desiring to receive from You  
Speak to my soul  
Speaker to my soul

*Chorus*

*Like the days of the fathers,  
Speak to my soul  
Revelations of glory,  
Hidden mysteries of grace  
Speak to my soul,  
Lord, speak to my soul  
Kwasi Annor*

**21**

We are a glorious church  
Built by Christ our Lord  
To reflect the beauty of God  
We are a glorious church  
Built by Christ our Lord  
To possess the nations for God

O Holy Spirit, revive Your church  
O Holy Spirit, let Your fire burn  
O Holy Spirit, sweep o're Your church  
To reflect the beauty of God

*Fred Amoakohene Sarpong*

*Translation of Ga Medley*

**22**

God, we give all thanks to You  
God, we give all thanks to You  
To You alone we give all thanks  
We thank You  
To You alone we give all thanks  
We thank You

For there is absolutely nothing God cannot do  
For there is absolutely nothing God cannot do  
Amen! Hallelujah!  
Amen! Hallelujah!  
Amen! Hallelujah!  
Amen! Hallelujah!

God is with us day by day  
His Son is watching over us all the time

Come, come, come let's drink water of life  
Come, come, come let's drink water of life  
Come, let's drink water of life in Jesus  
Come, let's drink water of life in Jesus  
Come, let's drink water of life in Jesus  
Come, let's drink water of life in Jesus

God will ensure its well with, whatever the matter  
is  
Do not let your heart be troubled, since you are  
with Jesus  
God will ensure its well with, whatever the matter  
is

*Translation of Nzema Song*

**23**

There is a hand upon me  
There is a strong hand upon me  
The hand of Jesus is upon me  
The hand of Jesus is upon me  
The hand of Jesus is upon me  
The hand of Jesus is upon me

*Translation of Ewe Medley*

**24**

I will sing beautiful songs to Jehovah  
For his goodness sake,  
I will proclaim his deeds among nations. 2×  
Silver and gold cannot buy  
The things he has done for me,  
I will proclaim his deeds among nations.

My Lord you are worthy 2×  
My Lord you are worthy 2×  
Heaven and Earth belong to you.  
There's nothing that above you.  
All things are possessed by you,  
My Lord you are worthy.  
From everlasting to everlasting  
You are God, that's who You are  
From everlasting to everlasting  
You are God, yes, You are!

God will ensure its well with, whatever the matter  
is  
Do not let your heart be troubled, since you are  
with Jesus  
God will ensure its well with, whatever the matter  
is

It's not too late yet  
The Lord Jesus is calling you  
*Come now, it's not yet too late*  
*(Interpretation of Ewe medley of Madzi ha viva na Yehow)*

DRAFT