

Pentecostalism in the City of Accra: a Blossom on Functional Appeal and Urban Fecundity

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Abstract This paper emanates from fieldwork being carried out since 2007 to discover why intense Pentecostal activity is proliferating in urban Accra, capital city of Ghana. The Lighthouse Chapel International (Lighthouse) and the Royalhouse Chapel International (Royalhouse), two examples of Pentecostal churches having a great appeal to Ghanaians, serve as case study of this project. The paper outlines some trends in the growth of the churches, which make them appeal to urban dwellers. Some members of both churches as well as people from the general public were garnered to expound some already known trends in Pentecostal churches such as their emphasis on both the spiritual and material needs of people, which invariably account for their remarkable growth. Related to this is the suggestive finding that the urban area forms the fertile cradle of Pentecostalism today because the said needs of people are much more pronounced in that environment, where the Ghanaian population is concentrated.

Keywords Pentecostalism, Functional Appeal, Urban Fecundity

1. Introduction

Accra, the capital city of Ghana, is home to almost all the Christian denominations in the countryⁱ. The city is characterized by intense religious activity. Although the 'historic' or mainline churches such as the Anglican, Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian churches have been longer in the city (and the country), it is the newcomers i.e., the Pentecostal churches, that are particularly asserting their presence in an aggressively nuanced manner. They organize crusades very frequently, hold campus ministries in universities and youth camps, build huge churches and conduct services amidst loud music that one cannot avoid noticing them. One general assumption is that Pentecostalism is an overwhelmingly urban phenomenon. Hence, this paper's research problematic is to discover, both in and 'outside' the Pentecostal fold, the popularity of Pentecostalism in the city of Accra. The main questions the paper seeks to answer therefore are what functional appeal does Pentecostalism have for inhabitants of Accra and what characteristic of the city makes it fertile for the growth of Pentecostalism?

Pentecostal Christianity is witnessing enormous growth throughout the world, particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Over a decade ago, Andrew Wallsⁱⁱ sounded a note, reiterated by Philip Jenkinsⁱⁱⁱ, that there is a dramatic demographic shift of Christianity from the global north to the

global south. Jenkins contends that the "centre of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably southward, to Africa, and Latin America" ... where "the largest Christian communities on the planet are to be found" (Jenkins, 2007:1). As this happens, Europe, which had "two-thirds of the world's Christian population" in 1900 is home to "less than a quarter" today, with the figure expected to "fall below 20 percent" by 2025 (Jenkins, 2007:2). The growth of Christianity in the global south is with regard to all Christian denominations as a whole, old and new, as contrasted with the global north. However, the maximum growth is in a distinctively new tradition of Christianity, rather than the old tradition of Christianity. The new tradition of Christianity is strikingly becoming "the standard Christianity of the present age" (Fyfe and Walls, 1996:3). The general contention is that it is Pentecostalism which is becoming the standard Christianity in the global south, setting the south on a new trajectory. In other words, the Pentecostal phenomenon, which Paul Gifford refers to simply as the 'newcomers' (Gifford, 2004: 23) in comparison with the mission churches, constitute the pre-eminent engine driving Christianity in the south into prominence. David Maxwell presents an overview of global statistics from David Martin's estimates, that the Pentecostal movement has about a quarter of a billion members, and Vinson Synan's projection that the movement makes up 25% of the world's 2 billion Christians (Maxwell, 2006: 7).

Referring to the Ghanaian scenario, Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu corroborates the contention, albeit without statistics, that there is a visible "shift in the demographic centre of gravity of Christianity from the northern to the

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southern continents, particularly Africa” (Asamoah-Gyedu, 2004:1). Gifford argues, in the same vein, that despite the significant influence and contribution of the mission churches in Ghana, there is a paradigm shift in favour of the ‘newcomers’ regarding the latter’s mediation in public life in Ghana today (Gifford, 2004: 20-43). Gifford argues as though the mission churches have been completely outstaged by the Pentecostal churches. This is doubtful in view of the lasting institutions the former have established in Ghanaian society, notably educational and social services, which are unparalleled by the ‘newcomers’. What is more, the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference and the Christian Council of Ghana still wield some degree of moral authority through the communiqués they issue, for example. The November 9, 2007 *Press Statement by the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference (GCBC) on the Recent Educational Reforms* and the reactions it received from the public is a case in point. In that press statement, the bishops vehemently objected to the exclusion of religion and moral education from school curriculum in Ghana, insisting in defiant language that their schools will contravene this directive by the Ghana Education Service (GES) in this regard. While the GES was reactionary to portions of the Bishops’ press release (*Daily Graphic*, November 20, 2007: 1&3), the *Daily Graphic* (November 22, 2007: 3) carried a caption ‘Christian Council backs Catholic Bishops on review of aspects of educational reform’. The fact that there were varied reactions in the media point to the general attention such statements from the Bishops generate. This notwithstanding, the Pentecostal churches are emerging as new players on the Ghanaian socio-religious stage.

Birgit Meyer points out that these Pentecostal churches have become extremely popular in Ghana and are mostly urban based. Describing themselves as ‘born again’ they have a great appeal for young, middle class Ghanaians, embodying “a popular Christian culture” (Meyer, 1995: 237). The challenge the new churches pose to the mission churches, according to Meyer, accounts for “some of the mission Churches” incorporating “pentecostally oriented prayer groups in order to prevent their members from leaving the Church” (Meyer, 1995: 236). This view is confirmed by what Asamoah-Gyedu refers to as ‘the Pentecostalisation of Ghanaian Christianity’ (Asamoah-Gyedu, 2004) or Omenyo’s title of his book: *Pentecost Outside Pentecostalism*. In other words, the “renewal occurring within Ghanaian Christianity has been such that even churches standing in historic continuity with Western missions and inheriting their rationalistic, systematic, and creedal forms of Christianity have been pressured into renewal” (Asamoah-Gyedu, 2004: 18). These scholars are overstating their case, in view of the fact that the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement, for example, is a revival within the Universal Catholic Church, which was not compelled by the Ghanaian case per se. However, the mainline Churches in Ghana cannot remain untouched by the changes occurring around them locally.

The growing research corpus on Pentecostalism in Ghana suggests that this brand of Christianity is mainly an urban

phenomenon with “a very international outlook” (Asamoah-Gyedu 2005: 1). Its recurring emphasis on prosperity gospel or success (Gifford 2004: 44-82) is attractive to the young, professional, upwardly-mobile class mostly based in the urban areas. Thus, the success of this type of Christianity seems constantly fuelled by a mix of both spiritual and material messages, seeking ultimately to be inserted into a global socio-economic order which constantly eludes inhabitants of the African continent.

These actively intricate dynamics of religious globalization and the larger significance of the phenomenon of transforming geoscapes require constant analytical and empirical investigation in order to observe the trend and characteristics of this new face of Christianity in their geographical space of origin in the south, tracing them also to the north where they have assumed a transnational character. By the same token, it is imperative to situate the contextual case of individual churches, such as the originating countries or the particular religious movements themselves, within the entire crucible of contemporary Christianity in the global south that is acclaimed to be witnessing so much growth.

The locus for the geographic spread of the new churches in Africa, which is the urban area, is at the same time the changing nexus on the continent. The growth of the urban area is a characteristic phenomenon of developing countries today. Cities like Accra, the capital of Ghana, are sprawling at a rate urban planners are unable to cope with. Houses are springing up everywhere in the city with or without the express permit of the Accra Metropolitan Authority (AMA), and way ahead of the development of infrastructure and social services. The process is notoriously fuelled by the constant flow of rural dwellers into the urban areas in search for non-existing jobs. Corrupt agents of the very structures, which should ensure sanity in land acquisition and the provision of services, also compound the problem building indiscriminately in Accra without regard to the plan of the city. The influx of migrants from the rural areas as well as the generally high fertility rate of Ghana^{iv} overstretch social services particularly in the low-income areas of Accra, which lead as the socio-cultural melting pot in the city. The resultant increased joblessness and poverty characterize the context within which Pentecostal Christianity is flourishing. Peil and Opoku’s 1994 study of Madina, a suburb of Accra, embodies the foregoing characteristics; a 5km area which already a decade ago had a population of 45,000 people with 80 religious groups (Peil & Opoku 1994: 198).

Beginning in the cities in Ghana these nascent churches launch into the hinterland, but perhaps at a much slower pace than the speed with which they seek to fulfil their utmost ambition as international missions.

By interviewing some members of Lighthouse and Royalhouse, as well as non-members from the Ghanaian public, this paper seeks to understand why this brand of Christianity thrives so fervently in urban Ghana. The fact that most members of the general public interviewed randomly in the city during this research turned out to belong to Pentecostal churches rather than the mainline churches is

revealing about the flourishing nature of this Christianity in Accra. The 2000 population census puts Pentecostal/Charismatic churches at 24.1% of the population (Ghana Statistical Service 2002: 26).

Lighthouse was founded in 1987 by Bishop Dag Heward-Mills but its roots go back to his evangelistic ministries during his student-days at Achimota School and later at the University of Ghana. By 1991 Heward-Mills, who trained as a medical doctor, had entered full-time ministry as Bishop and General Overseer of his church. He actively engages the media (print, audio and video cassettes, as well as TV coverage) in his ministry. Most of the 20,000 members Lighthouse claims in Ghana are in the urban areas. The church has also gone international with branches in some 34 countries. Its headquarters in Ghana boasts of the largest Mega Church, an edifice with a hospital and flats for medical doctors. The Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Centre and the Christ Mission Academy of Lighthouse train pastors for both Ghana and the mission.

Sam Korankye Ankrah, founder and general overseer of Royalhouse, claims to have had a dramatic religious commission, while in Holland in 1991, to found a church back in his homeland, Ghana. The fruit of this religious experience is Royalhouse. But he too had been involved in students' evangelistic ministries at St. John's Grammar School in Accra and later at the University of Ghana. Effectively, it was the Showers of Blessing Incorporated (SOBI) evangelistic ministry which he started at the University of Ghana in 1984 that metamorphosed into Royalhouse. The church claims some 15,000 members in Ghana, again most of who are in the urban areas, and 8 international missions. Its special departments include the media ministries, church administration, the Christian Leadership College, and the Department of Social Services.

Lighthouse and Royalhouse are examples of the Pentecostal wave in Ghana. It must be pointed out at this stage that in Ghana generally, the terms Pentecostal and Charismatic are used interchangeably by the public although scholars recognize the inherently conceptual and doctrinal difference in their usage. Taking a cue from the Pentecost experience of the early Christians in Acts 2: 1-13, Pentecostalism emphasizes the 'global' character of this brand of Christianity^v expressed in one of its hallmarks, 'speaking in tongues', while all those gathered at that historic event in Jerusalem heard them, 'each in his own language', stressing the universality of the church. Charismatic churches, on the other hand, as the name indicates, are steeped in 'charismata' or gifts. They emphasize the need for 'being born again', possessing the 'gifts of the spirit', 'strict moral life' and 'faith gospel theology'. The new churches in Ghana, however, hardly draw a strict line between the tenets of Pentecostalism and Charismatism. On the contrary, Lighthouse and Royalhouse, for example, subscribe to the general doctrinal teachings of the Pentecostal/Charismatic tradition such as 'speaking in tongues', 'being born again', 'gifts of the spirit', 'strict moral life' and 'faith gospel theology'. Such accommodation on the part of the churches would justify their

being lumped together under the Pentecostal/Charismatic appellation. Therefore, although mindful of the conceptual difference, this paper adopts the term 'Pentecostal' here to include 'Charismatic', reflecting the interchangeable use the Ghanaian public makes of the concepts.

2. Objectives

The main objective of this paper is to discover why intense Pentecostal activity is proliferating in urban Accra, capital city of Ghana. It also aims at outlining some trends in the growth of Pentecostal churches, which make them appeal to urban dwellers.

Even as Ghanaian society becomes more and more urbanized^{vi}, religion continues to be central in people's lives, as displayed in the increasing activities of the Pentecostal churches^{vii}. In fact, it is urban Ghana that is the cradle of astounding Pentecostal activity. The dynamic nature of the growth of Christianity in the global south makes it imperative for the emerging trends to continue to be monitored, hence the importance of this fieldwork.

3. Methods

Between February and September 2007, 100 members of both Lighthouse and Royalhouse (50 from each church) and 100 members of the Ghanaian public were surveyed and interviewed about the Pentecostal appeal to urban dwellers. The sample was randomly chosen in the churches while undertaking participant observation at their services, while members of the general public were interviewed at Madina lorry station. Madina is a fast growing suburb of Accra^{viii}. Although the sample was randomly chosen by approaching individuals, only those who were willing were interviewed. Consequently, 43% of church members interviewed, for example, were female, the rest male.

In the churches, members of the congregation were interviewed after services attended over the period. The interview relied on the good faith of church members in asking them not to subject themselves to multiple interviews on subsequent occasions. The rationale was to gain the perspective of different church members in the study. Members of the general public, on the other hand, were interviewed at the Madina lorry station while they were waiting to board mini buses bound for central Accra. Since the research intended to survey the views of residents of Accra, the first question was to ask interviewees how long they have been resident in the city. Anyone who had lived in Accra for 1 year or over was interviewed. One year was deemed to be enough time for new comers to observe the religious activities around them or even begin to participate in such activities themselves, having moved in to settle in the city. Since the buses at stations in Ghana are not normally driven off until all seats are taken, there was usually enough time to ask a passenger the few questions structured for this research. Here too interviewees were chosen at random. Language was not a barrier

since the majority of residents in Accra speak English, Pidgin English, Akan or Ewe, all being languages I speak.

In view of the fact that previous research in Ghana suggests that Pentecostalism is an overwhelmingly urban phenomenon (Peil & Opoku 1994; Asamoah-Gyadu 2004; Meyer 1995), this study sought to find out how popular Pentecostalism was by soliciting the view of adherents of both Lighthouse and Royalhouse, as well as members of the public whose religious affiliation was unknown prior to the interview. The following set of questions served as interview guide for adherents of Lighthouse and Royalhouse :

1. What attracted you to your church?
2. What needs does your church fulfil for you?
3. Why do you think Pentecostal churches are increasing in Accra?

Respondents of the study who were non adherents of the two churches were asked in turn:

1. What church do you belong to?
2. What attracts people to Pentecostal churches?
3. Why do you think Pentecostal churches are increasing in Accra?

The questions were a guide to elicit detailed information from interviewees about the appeal Pentecostalism has for Ghanaians. The survey solicited information on the type of spiritual and material help people receive from these churches. The in-depth interviews were structured, lasting about fifteen minutes. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis.

The main focus of the study was to conceptualize the kind of appeal Pentecostalism has for people in Ghanaian society, particularly urban dwellers. Since the appeal Pentecostalism has for people and the needs it fulfils may be difficult to measure empirically, the analysis of qualitative data was employed in the study. The stories and experiences of people related the needs Pentecostalism fulfils in their lives or otherwise. This method was particularly informed by the qualitative work by Polson (2008), and Peil & Opoku (1994).

It must be said that the findings in this study relate to Accra. The appeal of Pentecostal churches is investigated more from the perspective of its members while non-members provide the analytical framework for understanding the fertile ground the urban area provides for people like them to be recruited. The conclusions could well illustrate the experience in other urban areas in a developing country like Ghana with a shared experience regarding similar social contexts of urbanisation.

4. Results

The interviews were carried out fairly easily, both at Lighthouse and Royalhouse on the one hand, and at Madina station on the other, with most interviewees speaking English and displaying understanding of the issues. As pointed out earlier, not that language could have been a barrier but the fact that almost all those interviewed spoke English means educated people tend to congregate in urban areas in

Ghana, particularly in the capital Accra, albeit the adult literacy rate for Ghana is 57.9% as indicated in the 2007/2008 UNDP Human Development Report. Jobs and other opportunities like networking for social mobility are concentrated in the city, constituting pull factors to the urban area. As existing literature shows (Meyer 1995), the Pentecostal churches recruit heavily from this literate, middle class social group.

The interview results are conceptualized within two broad analytical frameworks - functional appeal and urban fecundity. Functional appeal captures the charm or allure around which the Pentecostal churches gyrate, serving as the hub enabling gravitational pull of clients, particularly urban dwellers. The attractiveness of the Pentecostal churches serves the purpose of lubricating membership flow. Interviewees' description of their experience with Pentecostalism and the benefits they derive thereof underscore functional appeal. Urban fecundity, on the other hand, underlies the environment in which the functional appeal materializes into fellowship with Pentecostalism. Urban fecundity describes the lushness or fruitfulness of the urban area in fuelling Pentecostalism. Again, the needs spelt out in interviewees' stories are generated in a social environment. That is the enabling environment in which Pentecostalism thrives, hence the concept urban fecundity. Both concepts will be analyzed much more closely now, in relation to the structured interviews conducted.

While functional appeal is applied to members of Lighthouse and Royalhouse in order to find out what lured them into their church, urban fecundity is with reference to urban dwellers as potential members of Pentecostal churches.

4.1. Functional Appeal

The functional appeal of Pentecostal churches to members of Lighthouse and Royalhouse is expressed in terms of the spiritual and material benefits individuals derive from Pentecostalism. 28% of members of both churches entered into their fold between 4 and 6 years ago while 23% have been members for 7 to 10 years. This is indicative of relative stability and growth in membership. Participating in the services one recognizes immediately that the majority of members are young - the members are young, and the pastors are young. This in itself attracts other young people to these churches.

This trend invariably reflects in the occupational classification of members of the churches; 35% of those interviewed said they were students. Many said they were attracted to their church because of the care they saw their peers receive from the church. This is consistent with my observation in another context that campus and youth ministries are given utmost priority in the evangelization strategy of Pentecostal churches, hence the growing number of student adherents (Okyerefo 2006/7: 18-32). Other reasons members gave include being impressed by the lively church services, the feeling that one's spiritual needs are satisfied, experiencing God's presence in these churches, receiving the

Holy Spirit, and the church's material assistance to members in time of need. Indeed, in these churches particular stress is laid on getting to know others as 'brother' or 'sister' and members encouraged to 'bring a friend' as a way of evangelizing and recruiting new 'sheep' into their fold. However, a few members also expressed disaffection in view of the fact that those among them, who contribute more, financially, are accorded greater honour and respect. In spite of a few antagonistic relationships reported as a result, the overwhelming majority of members of Lighthouse and Royalhouse (94%) who were interviewed expressed satisfaction with their churches.

It is not difficult to see why members of Lighthouse and Royalhouse are faithful to their churches since these churches constantly insist on fidelity. 'Loyalty and disloyalty', a title by which Bishop Heward-Mills published a book in 1999, form major bedrock teachings at Lighthouse, for example, although members do not mention it in the survey. Ensuring that the sheep remain in the fold is important to leaders of Lighthouse and Royalhouse, therefore strict loyalty is demanded as a sign of members' commitment to remaining in their church.

Asked to identify the dominant teaching of their churches, respondents from Lighthouse and Royalhouse identified teaching on charismatic gifts and signs, speaking in tongues, baptism of the spirit, giving generously in order to secure God's blessings, and wealth for God's children. These responses are consistent with the preoccupation of these churches and their members. Many studies on Pentecostal Christianity observe that charismatic gifts such as speaking in tongues and baptism of the spirit, as well as faith gospel theology or the theology of prosperity and being 'born again' are characteristic of these new churches (Maxwell 2006; Gifford 1994; 2004; Hackett 1998; Meyer 1998). Some members of Lighthouse and Royalhouse though could not tell the central teaching of their churches.

Almost 50% of the members of Lighthouse and Royalhouse interviewed mentioned nothing when asked what material needs their churches satisfied. Among the rest 50% the next highest category mentioned reprieve from general hardship, followed by the provision of jobs, money and other basic needs, marriage and protection from evil. Church members found a variety of things appealing about their church such as the flexibility and open nature of the church in assigning leadership roles to anyone, the organizational hierarchy of their denominations, discipline in the church, and equal opportunities for both sexes to exercise their gifts. The majority of members interviewed (66.2%), however, could not express what appealed to them in their church. It is characteristic of members of these churches to insist that reasons for membership are spiritual almost to a point of an obsession lest they lose guard on this in view of the perception of the public that these churches spring up for reasons of material gain. However, such obsession of church members is given away by some in admitting that the churches fulfil material needs as expressed in a number of reasons they gave for the upsurge of Pentecostalism in Accra. The reasons

range from the need to spread the Word of God through the abundance of pastors in these times, to the material needs that people have in urban areas. Such needs were identified as security against evil forces, ease of worship, the increasing population in urban areas, and the innate spirituality of man. While some members felt the Pentecostal churches are increasing in Accra because of the desire of the leaders of these churches to woo urban dwellers, others believed that these new churches abound in urban areas in order to stay in touch with the rich who can finance them.

Church members, thus, recognize that both the spiritual and material needs of urban dwellers create the social conditions accounting for the proliferation of Pentecostalism. The urban area, thus, is a fertile terrain for Pentecostalism to blossom and flower.

4.2. Urban Fecundity

Fecundity is defined as the "potential numbers of children women are biologically capable of bearing" (Giddens 2001: 604). In relating fecundity to the urban area, therefore, with reference to Pentecostalism, this paper defines urban fecundity as the number of 'Pentecostal children' the urban area is capable of bearing. The central argument here is that it is precisely in the bid to satisfy both the spiritual and material needs of the urban dweller in Accra that a fertile ground is created for Pentecostalism to flourish. The needs are situated within the entire context of urban problems. Urban problems can be summed up in terms of the "persistent gap between municipal resources and citizen expectations" (Morgan & Watson 1992: 438), expressed concretely in overcrowding, homelessness, poverty and joblessness. The urban area, which generates these social problems in the first place, becomes the same environment in which solutions are sought. By the nature of the problems the solutions too would be economic, cultural, religious and social.

This paper argues that Pentecostalism readily offers itself as a possible panacea to some of the social problems of the urban dweller, hence its appeal to urban folks. Just as the problems it engenders, the urban area in the developing world equally spells out the fecundity characterising Pentecostal growth. Pentecostal growth, thus, inheres in the urban public from which its potential members are recruited. The survey of some inhabitants in the city of Accra, therefore, serves as a means to test the validity of this contention.

57% of members of the public surveyed claimed to belong to a Pentecostal church while the rest 43% belonged to one of the mainline churches, Islam, Traditional African Religion or had no religious affiliation. In addressing what attracts people to a particular church the answers mainly given were that the church be centred on or built upon the Word of God, have a lively mode of worship and preaching, expound the kind of doctrine that addresses people's spiritual and temporal needs, and the 'man of God' overseeing the church. The responses regarding 'the Word of God', 'mode of worship and preaching' and the 'man of God' clearly point to the public's preference for Pentecostal Christianity. These phrases are consistent with Pentecostal parlance in Ghana where mem-

bers of these churches commonly refer to their pastors as ‘my pastor’, thereby asserting a personal relationship. Here then, Pentecostalism promotes a personal relationship with God and one’s fellow members. The phrases are also indicative of the interviewees’ propensity to join a religion that would solve their problems, as the ‘prosperity gospel’ or ‘faith theology’ of the Pentecostal churches professes to do. The search for solutions to problems explains why adherents visit each other’s church, although the similarity and their mode of belief and worship also make interdenominational communion uncomplicated. In this light, 75% of respondents from the general public claimed to have visited other churches. The reasons most cited for visiting other churches were invitation, curiosity, gaining a different experience, and benefiting from other churches’ mode of worship and teachings.

Interviewees generally share a consensus regarding the challenges the city of Accra, as an urban area, presents its dwellers. These challenges are both material and spiritual. Some interviewees were of the view that in order to meet the peculiar challenges of people in urban areas, churches should seek to address both their material and spiritual needs. All those who claimed to belong to Pentecostal churches indicated that these churches were well prepared to meet the above needs. Obviously, adherents of these churches make propaganda for their church because one cannot gloss over the general contention in Ghanaian society that the mainline churches have been at the forefront of mediating the Ghanaian public sphere (Gifford 2004: 20). The organisational structure of the Pentecostal churches, however, is of great appeal to most members of the public interviewed due to the apparent flexible, ‘democratic’ manner of administration in these churches, which ensure that most members hold some position in church, or are at least given the opportunity to exercise their leadership skills in small groups. This is a contentious position in view of David Lehmann’s assertion that authority in the Pentecostal churches tends to be centred on an individual, e.g., the founder “who is not subject even to token participatory decision-making” (Lehmann 4), although the founder could choose to co-exercise the said authority with his/her married partner, some other family member, close friend or protégé.

Nonetheless, the socio-cultural landscape of the city and the needs it forges provides the bedrock upon which Pentecostalism is building in Accra. Some 49% of interviewees from the public attribute the upsurge of Pentecostalism to the claim that it is lucrative business that many enter into for purposes of material gain. Other reasons advanced for their growth are that Pentecostal churches meet the spiritual and emotional needs of urban dwellers, and they have appealing messages for urban dwellers, whose desire for miracles is increasing in view of the difficulties they encounter, buttressing the city’s fecundity to warrant the reproduction of Pentecostalism. To this end, urban fecundity and the Pentecostal appeal engage in a creative reciprocity in spreading the Pentecostal wave in the city of Accra.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This research corroborates previous works in asserting the characteristics of the Pentecostal Christianity in Ghana and elsewhere as youthful, educated, middle class (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005:1), urban centred (Meyer 1995: 236) concentrating on charismata (Ukah 2003: 209), and steeped in the faith gospel/prosperity gospel (Gifford 1998: 39-44). Pentecostal churches are popular with the youth, students and the educated in general, who are specifically targeted by the churches in their evangelizing moves. In emphasizing both spiritual and material needs they also speak eloquently to the majority of Ghanaians who are enduring the dire economic conditions today.

So what is new in this development? The study awakens one’s consciousness about the fact that Accra, the capital of Ghana, is a fertile crescent for the growth and development of Pentecostal churches. The social conditions of the urban area such as overcrowding, homelessness, poverty and joblessness contribute in no mere way in promoting this development. These social conditions create material and spiritual needs which individuals yearn to satisfy, producing the urban fecundity upon which Pentecostalism thrives. By and large it is the Pentecostal churches such as Lighthouse and Royalhouse that sound the clarion call on their ability to satisfy such needs, crafting an appeal to people on an already fecund terrain. Consequently, although the mainline churches such as the Anglican, Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian churches have been established longer in Ghana and in the city of Accra^{ix} while the Pentecostal churches in Africa generally go back to the 1970s (Kalu 2006: 134), it is the latter that are ubiquitous all over the city of Accra. Paul Gifford argued already in 1998 (1998: 62-63) and later in 2004 (2004: 38) that orthodox Christianity was no longer the dominant factor on the Ghanaian religious landscape; it has been replaced by the Pentecostal brand of Christianity. Although the surveys from which Gifford drew his conclusion were done for the entire country they shed light on the discovery of the present work done on the city of Accra. If Pentecostalism has so much influences on the country as a whole then what about Accra, which is the engine of its growth?

The fact that 57% of the random sample of people at the Madina station is Pentecostal could be a pointer to the direction in which Christianity is travelling in Accra. It needs to be reiterated that data for the study is not representative of the population of Accra. Nevertheless, the random choice of interviewees makes a point regarding the changing religious scenario in favour of Pentecostalism in Accra. The findings highlight the social conditions favourable to the growth of Pentecostalism in Accra and the functional appeal Pentecostal churches such as Lighthouse and Royalhouse have for their members in view of the material and spiritual benefits to be derived thereof.

Functional appeal and urban fecundity, thus, forge an interactive relationship that promotes Pentecostalism’s appeal

to different publics in the city, adherents (Lighthouse and Royalhouse) and the general public. The appeal thrives on the urban fecundity within which it operates. Table 1 illustrates this interactive relationship:

Table 1. Functional Appeal/Urban Fecundity & their Relationship to various Publics.

	Adherents (Lighthouse & Royalhouse)	General Public
Functional Appeal	Interactive	Interactive
Urban Fecundity	Foundational	Foundational

The information presented on the table is an attempt to represent the interaction between the various publics on the one hand and the characteristics of Pentecostalism and the urban area on the other, which promote the growth of Pentecostalism in the city. While this typology is not intended to be exhaustive, it points to the fact that not only does Pentecostalism enjoy an interactive relationship with both adherents and the general public in Accra, in fact, urban fecundity is foundational to both adherents and the general publics' inclination toward Pentecostalism, hence the appeal Pentecostalism has for both publics.

Statistics are never quite accurate in Africa but what is available could still give us inkling into the reality. Sources of the Ghana Statistical Service indicate that in 2000, 68.8% of the 19 million population of Ghana was Christian, 15.9% Muslim, 8.5% Traditional Religious Adherents, and 6.1% of Ghanaians reporting affiliation with no religion. A breakdown noting affiliation to various Christian denominations indicates that 15.1% of the population is Catholic, 18.6% Protestant, 24.1% Pentecostal-Charismatic and 11% Other Christian (Ghana Statistical Service 2002). According to these official statistics of the country then all the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches together form the majority group among Christians although one must bear in mind that they are individual small splinter groups. What is more, these figures are for the entire country and not specifically for cities. What this means is that the collation of statistics in future should pay closer attention to this deficiency. In the mean time, there is no doubt that this relatively young Christianity is thriving in the city of Accra, thanks to the symbiotic relationship between urban fecundity and the Pentecostal appeal. The present study, however, presents but a suggestive conclusion regarding the proportion of growth Pentecostalism is experiencing in Accra. Further research is required, based on a larger survey, to give a conclusive answer to the "need for statistical study of the growth pattern" (Kalu 2006: 146) of Pentecostalism in Accra.

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ⁱ M. Peil and K.A. Opoku (p.201) observe that most of the Pentecostal/Charismatic churches have their national headquarters in Accra.

ⁱⁱ I am here referring to A. Walls, The Missionary movement in Christian history: Studies in the transition of faith, Maryknoll: Orbis, 1996.

ⁱⁱⁱ See P. Jenkins, The next Christendom: The coming of global Christianity, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

^{iv} The total fertility rate of Ghana is 4.5 children per woman (2000 Population & Housing Census 1).

^v See K. Poewe, (Ed.), Charismatic Christianity as a global culture. Colombia (S.C.): University of South Carolina Press, 1994.

^{vi} Ghana is urbanizing steadily. In 1970 29% of the population lived in urban areas, compared with 37% now. Urban population is growing at a rate of nearly 4% per annum while rural population growth rate is under 2% and is expected to decline in future. As a result of this difference, over half of the population of Ghana will be urban in 2015. (A. Adlakha, International brief: Population trends – Ghana. US department of commerce, economics and statistics administration, bureau of the census, <http://www.census.gov/ipc/prod/ib96>).

^{vii} “Pentecostals and charismatics now number about 400 million around the world and ... thus the second-largest group of Christians”, (T. Heneghan p.31).

^{viii} For research on Madina see M. Peil with K. A. Opoku, 1994, The development and practice of religion in an Accra suburb, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 24(3), 198 – 227.

^{ix} For the history of the orthodox churches in Ghana see F.L. Bartels, The roots of Ghana Methodism, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965; N. Smith, The Presbyterian Church of Ghana 1835-1960, Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1966; K.J. Agbeti, West African church history: Christian missions and church foundations 1482-1919, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986; and R.M. Wiltgen, Gold Coast mission history, 1471 – 1880, Techny, III: Divine Word Publications, 1956.