

# Responding Rationally to Situational Problems: An Analytical Account of the Waves of Pentecostal Movements in Ghana

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**Abstract** In many parts of the world especially in Africa, the choices people make regarding which religious organisation to affiliate with is informed by the cost and benefits the person or group of individuals involved in it stand to gain. Using cost and benefit in deciding which religion to affiliate with put religion in a problem solving position in recent times. Using a purposive sampling technique, a total of 60 research participants were engaged in an interview to elicit their views on the development of Pentecostal churches (divine industries). The findings revealed three different waves of Pentecostalism in Ghana over the last one century. Each wave was in response to a peculiar type of problem at the time. The paper thus concludes that Pentecostalism as a religious faith remains the same, but its forms and strategies continue to change in response to social and spiritual problems at any given period, thus sustaining its life span and influence in society.

**Keywords** Divine-actor, Pentecostalism, Religion, Wave, Divine industry

## 1. Introduction

There is an observed increasing presence of religious activities, especially Christianity in Ghana. The observed progressive increase is consistent with what scholars have observed; that there is a dramatic shift of Christianity from the global north to the global south [16]. This development is also evidenced by the changing Christian demographics where Europe, which used to be home to 'two-thirds' of the world's Christian population in the 1900s, is now home to less than a quarter in the 21st century. Thus, scholars have predicted a further fall to as low as 20% by 2025 [16]. The activities of Christians in sub-Saharan Africa have indeed increased tremendously over the last few decades, marking it out as the heartland of Christian faith in recent time [7]. It is worth noting that the share of the population that is Christian in this region has increased from 9% in 1910 to 63% in 2010 [17]. Interestingly, Pentecostal faith appears to be leading in both membership and prominence among all other denominations. As the steady growth continues, indications are that West Africa is one of the hot spots of the world as far as Pentecostalism is concerned [29], and Ghana is noted as one of the countries that continue to blaze the path formed by the movement [2]. According to [12], Christians constitute

71.2% of the population.

This changing phase and dynamics of Christian tradition is now a standard norm of the present generation of Christians [26]. In almost all churches (divine industries) in Ghana, belief in the Holy Spirit, healing and deliverance form part of their activities. The term divine industry is used in place of church because the Pentecostal movements have been engaged in many activities including the running Non Governmental Organizations, business, media houses, and healing in addition to preaching the word of God. It is important to indicate that many of the orthodox divine industries that used to oppose healing and deliverance have creatively instituted charismatic renewal units within their divine industries [2]. These additions, it must be noted, are rational responses to Pentecostal position as an engine that is propelling Christianity into prominence. These actions are deemed to be rational because it is the only way to act in order to keep their clientele. It is line with this that Paul Gifford opined, that there is a paradigm shift in Christianity in favour of the Pentecostal divine industries, taking into consideration the latter's mediation in public life [13]. Indeed a careful examination of the religious activities within Christianity in Ghana points to the direction of the emerging Pentecostal faith as a key player on the socio-religious landscape. This fits in with [9] assertion that rational action theories provides best account for the ways in which the actions of individuals yield aggregate consequences especially in the religious arena. As [6] has noted, thoughts and behaviours of individuals with regard to

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religious affiliation may be directed toward achieving goals, some of which are apparently issues that they may have been socialized into [8]. As a result of familiarity with their social environment, the activities divine-actors engaged in are tailored towards the local belief structure. In these societies, what people believe in is based on what they have been socialized into [20]. The collective belief of individual's determines whether or not a particular religious practice will survive or perish. As the case may be, the core dogma associated with religious organisations does not escape social change [5]. In this regard, sustaining the relevance of any religion demands that these religious institutions go through modification and adjustments to fit changing societal needs [10].

In the midst of these dynamics, [14] has argued that religious institutions act like firms in an economic space regulated by discernible laws and logic, and central to this is the treatment of religion as a commodity (an object of choice). Religious economy according to [30] is a market consisting of all religious activities, a 'market' of current and potential producers all of who seek to attract adherents. In a pluralistic religious society, competition amongst firms leads to specialisation, where firms who specialise in the production of the most needed religious products stand to gain by keeping their market share [30]. Under these conditions, firms who are able to identify the most pressing needs of the public and produce in accordance with these needs stand to benefit. In order to face the competitive market environment, the religious firms have to be divinely innovative if they are to maintain their market share and keep their clientele [20, 15]. This paper thus looks at the development of Pentecostalism in Ghana by exploring the historical antecedents and the circumstances under which the movement continue to maintain a dominant position as a leading Christian faith in Ghana.

## 2. Methodology

Between July and September 2012, 30 members (10 members and 5 divine-actors) each, drawn from the four divine industries (Winning Life Chapel, Kings Christian Ministry, Reach Chapel World Outreach, and Powerful Jesus Outreach Ministry) were sampled and interviewed in relation to the development and growth of Pentecostal divine industries in Ghana. The sampling was randomly done at the time the researcher was undertaking participant observation at the regular services of the divine industries. Although the research participants were randomly chosen using the convenient sampling technique, only those who agreed to be interviewed were interviewed. Divine-actors were engaged in an in-depth interview after they had finished with all their activities. On the part of the members, a focus group discussion was arranged for members of each divine-industry. The aim was to gain insight into the understanding of different members of the divine industries regarding the development of Pentecostal divine industries.

The criterion for the selection of the research participants was such that they have been with the divine industry for at least one year. One year was considered enough time to observe the religious activities and to know the history and background of the Pentecostal faith. Since the majority of residents in the study area (Tamale) speak English, Dagbani and Mampruli, all of which are languages the researcher speaks, the research was conducted using these languages. An interview guiding questions were used to elicit detailed information from divine-actors, and a focus group discussion guide used to elicit information from members of divine industries. Each interview lasted between 30 to 35 minutes, and was recorded and later transcribed, while observations and field notes were also taken for analysis.

## 3. Historical Antecedence

Ghana as a religious nation has witnessed waves of Pentecostalism over the past century. While some have perished, others have waned in enthusiasm and prominence. However, each has nevertheless left traces of its influence on the religious scene of the country. The emergence of these waves was occasioned by the actions of some religious actors. With the current trend of the movement, one cannot predict with certainty how its future will look. However, there is room for speculation as one pastor (divine-actor) was quoted as saying; 'No one can predict the future; our movement (Pentecostalism) is like waves which break on the seashore, if the current wave fades, God will bring 'a new visitation'' [4], suggesting that the emergence of any religious movement has a specific problem to solve. The term divine-actor is used here to take care of different titles men of God have acquired (Reverend, Apostle, Bishop, Prophet among others).

It is important to note that visitations or visions are charismatic in character and are often driven by the visions of rational actors of specific societies at a specific point in time, bringing about similar rational responses from other actors in the religious field [30]. These actions are purpose based, and are in response to the needs of majority of the population at each appointed period, especially when existing institutions seem to fail in their bid to provide these needs [2]. It is worth noting that many local people became disenchanted, apparently because the orthodox divine industries had failed to deal with their perceived daily threats of witchcraft and misfortunes. In the midst of this disaffection, came waves of local and foreign prophetic ministries, announcing the emergence of a new phase of Christianity. Since its inception, the movement have gone through three evolutionary phases.

## 4. First Wave - The Authentic African Christianity

The first wave of Pentecostalism in Ghana started with the growth of indigenous and independent religious phenomena

that emerged in spontaneous response and, in parallel to the activities of a number of African prophets whose unique personalities and campaigns of revival and renewal drew masses into Christianity [1]. The conversion campaign started in Ghana around 1914 as a result of the activities of a man nicknamed 'Black Elijah' of West Africa, a Liberian Prophet, named William Wade Harris's and his visit to the coastal towns of Ghana (formerly Gold Coast). Two conflicting theories are provided regarding the how he became a prophet [3].

The first theory contend that the revelation came when Harris was serving a prison term in Liberia after he was arrested for his involvement in an insurrection by his people to protest against repressive policies by an Americo-Liberian government towards a tribe of Kru - a tribe Harris had affiliation with. According to this theory, Harris suggested that Liberia become a British colony rather than being suppressed by the Americo-Liberian settlers. He was arrested for his role in leading an uprising [3]. While Harris was in prison in 1910, it is alleged he received a trance visitation in which the Angel Gabriel was instrumental in his call to the ministry [1]. He is purported to have said that the Spirit came on him as on the day of Pentecost and he started speaking in tongues [3].

The second theory posited a connection between Harris's divine inspiration and the emergence of the Azusa Street Revival that started in the United States of America in 1906. Few years into its inception, the Azusa Street mission had spread to cover many parts of the world, and Africa received the largest number of first time missionaries who went out as far as Liberia in West Africa, the destination of the first batch of African-American Azusa missionaries two years into its inception. It is speculated that some of these missionaries were able to minister in the mother tongue of Liberians – the Kru language. Apparently, because Harris himself was a Kru, it is believed he might have had contacts with the Azusa Street missionaries who ministered to the Kru-speaking ethnic group [3]. The plausibility of this argument is grounded on the premise that there was no Pentecostal activity in Liberia prior to the arrival of the Azusa group, and that it is likely their presence might have had some bearing in his call to the prophetic ministry, even though it may be possible for a person without previous contact to get experience just as it happened at the Azusa Street mission. Regrettably, no evidence could be found to prove that Harris had contact with the Azusa Street missionaries within the short period they were in Liberia. This corroborates Allan Anderson's observation that some of the first missionaries from Azusa Street, including Lucy Farrow, who were in Liberia in 1907, did not live long, and little is known as to whether the activities of the mission survived their departure [2]. In a short period, Harris was able to convert an overwhelming number of people that the orthodox Christian missionaries could not reach in many years. As [1] has rightly observed:

*One man preached the Gospel in West Africa for nine years and only converted 52. But another man preached the*

*same Gospel just for two years and 120,000 adult West Africans believed and were baptised into Christianity. [1]*

Majority of the people Harris converted were disenchanted persons who had lost hope because the orthodox Christian missions failed to provide similar proof of healing and deliverance. As [21] argues, the people were prepared to embrace a God that could produce convincing and visual evidence of His powerful presence. As the first prophet to preach in a typical Pentecostal style in Africa, Gordon M. Haliburton observed:

*Harris claimed to be a prophet with all special powers that God bestows on those He chooses. These powers enabled him to drive out demons and spirits, the enemies of God. He cured the sick in the body and in mind by driving out the evil beings preying on them. Those who practiced black magic had to confess and repent or he made them mad. He had all the power of the fetish men and more: with his basin of holy water he put God's seal on those who repented and accepted baptism. [27].*

This demonstrates that Harris was well equipped to solve many problems that were put before him, the same way the traditional religious practitioners were solving them, making him their preferred choice because of the simplicity [1]. As Harris was busy along the coastal towns, there were other prophets such as Samson Oppong, John Swatson who were very influential in the hinterlands, where they turned out spectacular numbers of conversions. Some of the converts of Harris campaign, Prophetess Grace Tani and Prophet John Nackabah, former traditional priest, became the main inspiration in the formation of the Twelve Apostles Church, one of the biggest independent divine industries in Ghana following the Harris revival [4]. The formation of the Twelve Apostle Church was informed by Harris instruction that Twelve Apostles be appointed in each village to look after his flock [2]. Harris is believed to have left his insignia with Tani, and in African cosmology, authority is passed on from one person to another through an official handing over of the person's insignia to serve as a symbol of authority and power to act. As an evangelist, Harris did not take delight in founding divine industries, instead, he asked his followers to join any divine industry of their choice, especially the mission divine industries, or built houses of worship if there was no divine industry around [3]. However, Tani and her group decided to found the Twelve Apostles Church.

The orthodox divine industries did not actually thrive much in the face of actions and deeds of the new prophets who positioned themselves to solve many of challenges faced by the ordinary people. As Anderson put it; 'If people perceive their teaching (orthodox divine industries) and practices as powerless to meet their everyday felt needs, then these churches cannot continue with 'business as usual' in the face of obvious short comings' [2]. The gains made by these prophets seem to lie in their identification with ordinary people, and their ability to make converts without creating tension [3]. This religious phenomenon and its emergence is an indication of the extent to which Africans became disenchanted and found themselves between

tradition and change [29]. As scholars have observed, these prophets accepted the African spirit world as reality, but regarded spirits as the work of Satan to be cast out [3, 23]. The blend of both ideas was evidenced in their emphasis on speaking in tongues, a feature found in both Pentecostal practice and fetish priests, often used to invoke the spirits (whether Holy Spirit or spirit of the gods). This blend served as fertile ground for the reintegration of religion and healing - where religion was used to solve the myriad of social and spiritual problems including misfortune and physical ailments [27]. These efforts, coupled with the commitment to freeing people they ministered to from the power of evil spirits, made the gospel relevant to their deeply felt needs and aspirations.

## 5. Searching for Knowledge: Second Wave

The second wave has its roots traced to the historical event of the descent of the Holy Spirit of God and its consequent manifestation of speaking in tongues and prophecy [29]. Known as the classical Pentecostal denomination, the origin of this wave is traced back to Apostle Peter Newman Anim, formally called Kwaku Anim Mensah, born in the Volta region of Ghana [19]. This wave is partly rooted in the indigenous initiatives, dating back to the late 1930s. As has been pointed out, Anim is believed to have developed a great deal of interests in the Christian periodical, 'The Sword of the Spirit,' from the Faith Tabernacle Ministry. This was made possible because the periodical was in circulation in Ghana at the time, and its editor, it is believed, was Pastor A Clark, founder of the Faith Tabernacle Ministry in Philadelphia in the United States of America [19]. Anim found the teaching of the ministry a real blessing and the knowledge he gained from reading their teaching was eventually incorporated into his daily evangelisation. During this period, Anim was also suffering from chronic stomach trouble and guinea worm disease. Out of curiosity, he decided to test the efficacy of Clark's teaching on healing. Fortunately for him, he was intrigued when he realised that the chronic stomach disorder and guinea worm he was battling with had simultaneously been cured apparently miraculously.

Using his own personal experience in the power of prayer in healing, he embarked on an evangelistic gospel and healing crusade around 1917 [28]. It is believed that many people joined him after receiving healing. After healing the first people who contacted him, the news of his personal cure, the patients as well as his divine power went viral, attracting several other sick people to him searching for healing [19]. All along it is believed that Anim was corresponding with Clark, and in 1923 Clark issued him with an ordination certificate empowering him to recruit his own workers. As Anim continued with his evangelisation to spread the message of holiness and faith healing, his attention was drawn to yet another periodical, The Apostolic Faith, a Pentecostal periodical based in Oregon in the United States

of America. Information contained in the periodical was about the working of the Holy Spirit, and apparently, as he continued reading it, he became attracted to its tenets. What is believed to have won his admiration was the doctrine of Spirit Baptism, with its evidence of speaking in tongues, referred to as Holy Spirit Outpouring. Anim incorporated this knowledge into his daily preaching and soon it became a widespread practice among his followers, earning them much popularity both near and far. To sustain his interest about the working of the Holy Spirit, they expressed the desire to learn more about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and subsequently, they were linked to the Apostolic Church of Bradford, England. In view of their admiration for the teachings of the Bradford church, they became affiliated with it and adopted the name in 1935. Subsequently, the Apostolic Church of Bradford sent James McKeown and his wife Sophia to Ghana in 1937 to help Anim and his followers enrich their knowledge and understanding of the Holy Spirit [28].

Though the visiting missionaries were not much enthused with healing and deliverance, the practice of healing and deliverance that was part of Anim and his followers did not wane. However, the focus of the missionaries was on speaking in tongues as an evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit, and as a powerful weapon for evangelisation. It was only after the appearance of the Holy Spirit that manifests as speaking in tongues that healing and deliverance was to occur. In view of this development, they opposed healing and deliverance, even though Anim and his followers denounced all forms of medicine except healing through prayer [28]. Regrettably for them, McKeown who was sent to help them, contracted malaria shortly after his arrival and had to be taken to a European health facility at Kibi, a community in Ghana for treatment. This move did not go down well with Anim and his followers. With their experience of the wonders of the Holy Spirit, Anim and his followers felt McKeown should have been prayed for to recover just as Anim recovered from his chronic stomach and guinea worm diseases. As soon as McKeown was discharged, he faced some opposition from Anim and his followers apparently because they felt McKeown had betrayed them the moment he accepted the alternative treatment, a practice their divine industry was strongly against. All attempts to reconcile them by the mission in Bradford did not yield the desired outcome because they felt their position on no medication was non-negotiable. McKeown on his part described the action as unfair and disgusting [29]. Consequently, because of these entrenched positions, Anim and his team subsequently seceded and a new divine industry, the Christ Apostolic Church was formed while McKeown's group maintained the old name The Apostolic Church of Gold Coast.

Around 1953, a movement known as the Latter Rain from the United States of America, visited Ghana [28]. Their mission to Ghana was to revitalise the Pentecostal movement that they felt was experiencing dryness of faith and needed to be reactivated. It is believed this team was part of the Azusa

Street revival, in view of their striking similarities. Having realised the dormancy of healing and deliverance the Pentecostal divine industry had experience because of the struggle between Anim and McKeown, they felt the need to revive it. Their presence in the country is believed to have rekindled the activities of the movement, and as such, lay prophets and prophetess emerged in their midst, and began delivering people from afflicting spirits. But again, this style of ministry was short lived due to crises that rocked the church leadership. By 1958, almost all the lay prophets and the prophetesses had left the classical Pentecostal movement to establish their own divine industries. This second wave was dominant in Ghana, especially the Assemblies of God until in the early 1970s when a new breed of denominations started emerging. What distinguishes this wave from the first wave is the fact that while the first wave was purely made up of local people who did not even have much interest in planting divine industries, the second wave was made of local people who used ideas of foreigners and subsequently collaborated with them.

## 6. Responding to Poverty and Unemployment: The Third Wave

The third wave started in 1979 with the rise of interdenominational fellowships across educational institutions in Ghana. Its emergence was led by a group of graduate elites, who's identification with it (the movement) seems to have enhanced their social rating [13]. What is observed is that the increase in formal education provided a platform for the emergence of young, upwardly mobile educated professionals, having realised the social ills, decided to appropriate modern marketing techniques to project the image of the movement [11]. Two trends have been identified in the development of this third wave. The first within this period is the use of books and cassettes from western preachers, especially Americans, including Oral Roberts, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Reinhard Bonke and Benny Hinn. Out of these, the most listened to, was one from Roberts on the, seed faith principle, which focuses on prosperity, and Hagin's faith healing [28]. The second trend, in the later part of 1979, was filled with interest in books and video-cassettes whose content created people's awareness about the presence of demons and the possible ways these demons could be exorcised. This view is significantly different from the classical Pentecostals who were sceptical about whether a Christian could be possessed by a demon. This doctrine was highly embraced because within that period, Ghana was experiencing social and economic distress due to the World Bank Structural Adjustment Program and over-liberalisation of the economy.

The experience of hardships coupled with the prosperity teachings of the divine-actors led to an increased desire of some of the educated elites in the various tertiary institutions and other professional bodies to appropriate what were considered goods of modernity [13]. As a result, many of them were able to blend this new knowledge with existing

knowledge to carve new religious messages in line with the desires of local consumers. Some of these elites, who were professionals, decided to resign from their jobs to take up the challenge of restoring hope and dignity in a society that was losing hold of its responsibilities. The ideas of these divine-actors were drawn from the imported books and cassettes, especially those that dwelt on prosperity, wealth and faith healing. Not only were they preaching of faith healing and prosperity, they were also designed to increase public awareness about the presence and reality of demons and witches, and how divine-actors could exorcise victims of these evil forces [28]. The expression 'neo-Pentecostal' is designated for this wave, and encompasses Pentecostal renewal phenomenon associated with trans-denominational fellowships, prayer groups, scripture unions, ministries and other churches that came into existence and rose to prominence over the last four decades [4]. It has been argued that the presence of this wave is due to the plural religious scene - the existences of the AICs against which these new movements are defined [23].

One other observation in connection with this period is the marked increased in the integration of liberal ideologies, characterised by rapid movement of people and materials including growth of the mass communication industry. The interplay of all these served as a watershed of religious change in Ghana, a phenomenon described as *laissez-faire*, 'anything goes' type of prophetism [29]. The zeal and vigour with which the movement started served as a catalyst against the mainline mission inspired Pentecostalism that had been in existence since before the Second World War [32]. Its sustenance is informed by the ability of Christian intellectuals and non-intellectuals alike to add a cultural dimension to their sermons, with interpretations that are culturally acceptable both locally and internationally. This development is in keeping with Anderson's observation about the need to 'give special attention to the hitherto neglected area of the relationship between the Christian gospel and the traditional pre-Christian religion that continues to give meaning to people's understanding of life' [2]. Apparently, one such innovative action was its successful incorporation of local ideas and practices pertaining to old gods, witches, and water spirits popularly called Mami water in the Ghanaian context, confirming the realities and existence of supernatural entities [24].

One other important observation about this movement is that they have a specific doctrine which separates them from other groups of Christian faith - the belief that they constitute special servants of God who alone are saved and favoured. They conceptualise a saved Christian to be one who is born-again with sanctification and complete change of the inner person, with an inward feeling of holiness [23]. To be sanctified is to be cleansed of all forms of sins and evil deeds. Thus, prophets and members of Pentecostal prayer warriors often seek to cast out demons by invoking the Holy Spirit to turn the demonically possessed into born-again Christians. The presence of the Holy Spirit is evidenced externally in the form of speaking in tongues, having visions, deliverance,

and prophetism [32]. To be born-again is to change radically, from one's past sins. While Meyer and other scholars contend that born-again Christians break ties and links with extended family members and their village of origin [23], others maintain that the break emanates from the notion that African culture and tradition breeds jealousy among people, preventing them from making progress in their lives if they continue living with their extended families in their respective villages. This break has been categorised into two levels; one is the person's immediate, undesirable past life-style including drinking, stealing, and other forms of wrong-doings. At the other level is deliverance of persons from their relation from ancestral worship [3]. It is however important to note that in as much as people move away from their families to the cities for obvious reasons, it does not mean they have cut ties. People travel in and out of their villages regularly and take part in traditional celebrations that symbolise their identity as a people regardless of one's religious affiliation. It is thus important to point out that the third wave is experiencing a steady growth across the country (Ghana), especially amongst the urban dwellers [26] as it represents the face of Christianity.

## **7. Explanatory Account of Pentecostal Explosion**

The growth and explosion of the Pentecostal movements have been attributed to several factors including political, economic as well as religious [29]. Just as its development took place in different phases, it would be necessary to attempt the discussion by considering these factors in the context of pre 1979 and post 1979 account to get an understanding of how circumstances during a particular period accounted for the occurrence and escalation of the movement. In doing so, it is important to note that since the inception of the Pentecostal phenomenon in the 19th and 20th centuries, most theories explaining the explosion were opinions expressed based on the perspectives outsiders (etic) whereas others were opinions of insider's (emic).

## **8. Pre 1979 Account**

### **8.1. Issues on Socio-Political Factors**

The earliest account of the explosion of Pentecostalism was nationalistic in outlook and was centred on resentment of the local people against colonialism. According to [3], it was the impact of colonialism in the latter part of the 20th century that resulted in a situation where many people felt oppressed, marginalised and disoriented. In their effort to restore their dignity as human beings, they formed groups with the aim of acting against colonial influence and domination in their respective divine industries. It is in view of this that people chose to describe the actions as nationalist protest and in some cases revolutionary [29]. Two views

have been expressed with respect to this opposition. The first view indicates that the actions of the local people were in response to racial discrimination in leadership position between the local people and their western counterparts in the divine industry. As has been alluded to by [3], little attempt was made to give positions to African leaders in the divine industries they worked in. According to Jean Comaroff, the African healing divine industries were the ones that exerted significant pressure on the missionaries [3]. The second view contends that the development was in response to a new social order, resulting from deprivation of security, leadership, and the economic role traditional societies provided the local people. This view is also expressed by Anderson when he indicated that the formation of the prophet healing divine industries was a response to the breakdown of African traditional society, providing security and order in the new social grouping [3]. Be that as it may, people felt that there was the need for them to also assume leadership positions in the divine industry so that they could facilitate the provision of these desires that were denied them. In keeping with these views, it is important to note that the emergence of these divine industries was due to acculturation, partly as a result of the invasion and domination of local culture by imported Christian culture. As a result of the dominance that was backed by colonial power, the local culture could not be totally reconfigured. Consequently, a new synthesis has to occur, taking elements from both the traditional and foreign cultures.

### **8.2. Vernacularization of the Bible**

There is also another school of thought that posits that the situation emanated as a result of the desire of the local people to worship God in their own languages using their local belief systems. This, it is argued, called for the localisation and de-westernisation of the gospel to make it meaningful for the local masses [29]. According to Anderson, the translation gave the local people a sense of what the Bible contained [3]. Local people were able to criticise the missionaries for not being biblical enough, in view of the many things they said that were not consistent with what the Bible said. These calls on moral grounds were genuine concerns expressed in response to their dissatisfaction with 'the white man's' way of doing things that alienated them from what they were used to. Anderson asserts that after the translation the Bible became central in the people's faith and they felt that the missionaries concealed the proper message of the Bible from them [3]. When it was made known that the Bible supported several customs that the missionaries condemned, they objected. A case in point is polygyny, an integral part of the people's culture, but which the missionaries sought to prohibit by imposing sanctions on members. They were much convinced that the Bible was much more sympathetic to their tradition than the missionaries had wanted them to believe. According to [3], the AICs allowed the practice of polygyny because they saw

it as a fundamental feature of African marriage.

### 8.3. Religious Orientation

Harold Turner has argued that the wave of prophet movements that rocked the colonies of Africa was led by Africans prophets and was fundamentally spiritual [3]. The way and manner the orthodox missionaries handled issues relating to the Christian faith made it akin to a religion with taboos that sought to discredit most of the things the local people engaged in [21]. It is alleged that the orthodox divine industries were providing answers to questions the local people were not interested in [3]. It must be remembered that healing and religion in the local context are intertwined; as a result, all those who were converted to Christianity were made to denounce their association with the traditional religion, and by extension, African traditional medicine [29]. It has been observed that prior to conversion, these people were promised better healthcare as a result of which they were made to abandon their traditional practices. This promise of healthcare was not fulfilled, putting a lot of them in difficult situations.

While African indigenous religion and medicine was suppressed and taboo for Christians, biomedicine was also denied them [29]. This influenced many of the converts to reassess their relationship with the wider society, in that being alienated from familiar cultural and religious traditions they were used to, they began to subscribe to religious syncretism or re-contextualization. It is based on this re-contextualisation, some experts claimed, that the culture and traditional religion in Africa have long been acknowledged as the womb out of which African theology will be born [11]. Thus the pioneers of this phenomenon articulated aspects of African and Christian religions in a

new synthesis, which corroborates assertion made by [11] that divine industries in Africa and its theology must bear an African 'stamp'. However, the degree of synthesis is dependent upon the sway of dogma of individual divine industries, whether they lean more towards African or Christian culture.

## 9. Post 1979 Account

The current account of the Pentecostal explosion varies and dates back to the 1979. Before attempting any explanation, it is important to point out that there are two dimensions to the current explosion of Pentecostalism in Ghana. The first is what I describe as a unilinal explosion denotes a case where the new divine industries sprung up from existing divine industries as branches and continue to maintain the ideology and vision of the 'mother' divine industry. The 'mother' divine industry could either be local or foreign, serving as a reference point for all other divine industries that qualify as branches, planted in other parts, locally or internationally. The second is multilinal-explosion, denoting an explosion resulting from secession, where the divine industry in question starts as an autonomous entity, with an ideology different from the divine industry from which it seceded. After some time, these divine industries also start planting new branches in different localities to disseminate their ideologies. It is worth noting that all of these divine industries, whether unilinal or multilinal, recruit their members through healing crusades and 'aggressive' evangelisation. Figure 1 illustrates how a typical Pentecostal divine industry expands both vertically and horizontally.

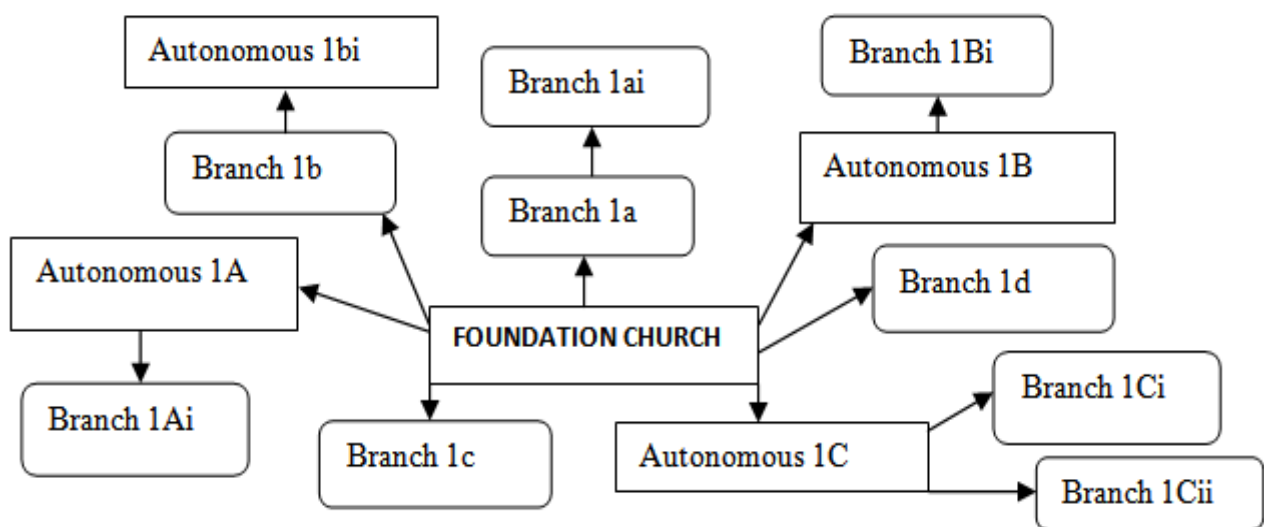


Figure 1.

As Figure 1 shows, the foundation divine industry is a reference point as it is the first divine industry planted under this case. As it expands, the first branch 1a was planted, then branch 1b in that order. For obvious reasons, the divine industry experienced secession and the first autonomous divine industry 1A was planted, then 1B in that order. Each of these divine industries also starts as foundation divine industries on their own and also start planting branches, or as the case may be, experiencing secession. Some of the branches also have branches under them like the case of 1a, or they could also experience secession like the case of 1b.

What account for the unilinal explosion is the self-propagation and dynamism of some Pentecostal divine-actors who see a good working relationship with their associate divine-actors as a priority, and operate an 'open-door' type of dialogue where issues relating to the members of the congregation are dealt with in an atmosphere of respect, openness and transparency, a development which serves as a recipe for Pentecostal growth. Such leaders finds it easier planting new divine industries in other parts of the country and beyond within a short period. This observation was made during interactions with the Kings Christian Ministry's founder, Rt Rev Albert Luguterah, who emphasised that he deploys many of his associate divine-actors, mostly young men with university degrees to manage new branches as full divine-actors. This strategy is meant to convince disenchanted associate divine-actors who may have seceded if things were not working well, as well as help the founder entrench his legitimacy and authority. Similar strategies from similar but autonomous divine industries all contributed to the explosion.

The multilinal explosion results from situations where grievances are not well managed, and a subsequent challenge of the legitimacies of the senior divine-actors by associate divine-actors. Though confrontations are often conceived of as pride and the quest for power and money on the part of these associate divine-actors, most senior divine-actors do not often take it seriously. When threats become serious and attempts to discipline disgruntled members are activated, they secede to plant their own. It is important however to note that calling oneself a divine-actor, without any additional back up vocation anywhere, becomes an issue especially when it turns out that these actors only work for their superiors without earning any reasonable income in a country with escalating cost of living, a phenomenon that places many of them in tight financial situations. For such people, any attempt to act against their interests leads to secession, borne out of frustration and a quest for autonomy, legitimacy, and survival. An ideological conflict is not a new phenomenon, and continues to linger on in many Pentecostal divine industries. Of interest is the case Rev Jonathan who recounted his difficult moments with his superiors after attending a conference of Pentecostal divine industries in the United Kingdom to improve his knowledge regarding the gospel, and the penalty he suffered, as he put it:

*Establishing this church was not preconceived. Formerly I was with the Assemblies of God as a head pastor of one of the*

*branches. It was in my absence to the UK to attend a conference that leaders attempted bringing another pastor into the church to replace me. Members and leaders of my branch did not agree and information was sent to me while I was still in UK. When I returned, I thought they would review their decision, but they persisted and even withdrew my credential as a pastor of the Assemblies of God church. Having no way out..., I had to start somewhere. So I went with most of the members to form a new church called 'Elshadai Love International Ministry (ELIM Gh)'.*

In the opinion of many divine-actors, some senior divine-actors act out of fear of losing their legitimacy to the young, dynamic and vocal divine-actors with chains of university degrees. These actors easily blend theory and practice to the admiration of their followers. Indeed, when these disciplinary actions backfire, tempers rise and the resultant effect is often resignation and subsequent planting of new breed of divine industries as in the case of Jonathan as stated above.

### 9.1. The Social Factors

For a successful evangelisation, the type of language used plays a very important role. The Pentecostal faith thrived and grew to its present state in Ghana because of the use of the English language. All the Pentecostal denominations trace their roots to English-speaking nations (UK and USA), making evangelisation in Ghana very successful [13]. Even though much of the preaching in Ghana is done in the local languages, the evangelical missionaries penetrated the country using English as a language of evangelisation before the various scriptures were later translated into the local dialects. The biblical books and cassettes that were developed by the western evangelist were mostly from the United States of America and the United Kingdom, making it easy to read and understand, especially among the elite group in urban towns and cities.

Other observations point to the African response to the new social order, resulting in deprivation of the security and leadership role traditional societies used to offer. As [5] has observed; 'Men and women who assume religious leadership positions have in several instances, previously been denied prestigious positions in secular spheres of society' [5]. Due to the globalizing nature of society, the youth are 'divorced' from their families, due to their migration to towns and cities in search of greener pastures. These divine industries serve as buffers for the frustrated young men and women who for obvious reasons, become disenchanted due to the absence of the greener pastures. Pentecostal divine industries often play the role of surrogate extended families, typically in the large divine industries where members are surrounded by people who care for them like family. Contextualizing cultural beliefs in Pentecostalism serve as a necessary institution in handling existential problems. This ties in with Anderson's observation that, 'One of the reasons for the growth of Pentecostal divine industries may be that they have succeeded where orthodox divine industries have often failed – to provide a contextualised Christianity in Africa' [2].

Interestingly, Africans have always known poverty as a threat and attempts are often made to explain and deal with the problems from a religious perspective. When they read or hear the promises of spiritual power that can deal with issues of wealth and prosperity, and protection of people from the devastating effects of poverty and evil forces in an ever-changing society, then this becomes dominant in their minds.

## 9.2. Political Factors

It is obvious when one observe the recent religious intolerance in some African nations that religious organisations are striving for control of the religious and political spheres of the human endeavour, a situation which does not augur well for peaceful co-existence of people with different religious affiliations in a pluralistic religious society. The rapidity with which the Pentecostal movement is growing is indicative of the effort it is making to 'religiously colonize' Ghana which may subsequently lead to religious monopoly, indicating that Ghana will only progress under a God-fearing leader, and would experience challenges if the country is entrusted to leader relying on occult forces [24]. Consequently, the Christian Council of Ghana and the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council are very influential in the politics of the country [13]. These councils have a stake in the direction they think policies in the country ought to go before they are implemented. It is in the light of this influence Gifford asserted that Christians in Ghana, in the wake of the drafting of the 1992 constitution, wanted to influence stake holders working on the constitution to declare Ghana as a Christian nation, and advocating the need for traditional religious practices such as public pouring of libation (alcohol) during national functions to be discontinued [25].

These divine industries have equally been used as avenues for gaining social mobility as well as providing status and power for its leaders [5]. These aspirations coupled with the relative peace and stability of the country is partly responsible for the steady growth of the movement. This type of development is expected in an environment of pluralistic religious organisation that learns to mutually co-exist with each other. Unlike the neighbouring West African nations of Nigeria and Mali which are currently experiencing a series of confrontations between the two major religions (Islam and Christianity) that dominate the sub-region, and who constantly battle each other physically for control of both the religious and the political spheres, in Ghana, the battle is one centred on ideas and strategies on how to woo a majority to their side without necessarily resorting to mass physical confrontation, a situation that serves as a fertile ground for the Pentecostal faith to thrive without fear of repression or intimidation.

## 9.3. Economic Factors

Inequality and poverty associated with developing countries continues to be a burden for government and civil society groups of which Ghana is not an exception. The

appeal of Pentecostal divine industries in recent times is explained with regard to the role the movement plays in dealing with deprivation, disorganisation, and defection that have bedevilled developing societies. Societies that are faced with difficulty in meeting their existential need resort to alternative means of meeting these needs [29]. The Pentecostal faith asserts itself as an alternative, and eventually makes its influence stronger as the state, quite contrary to the spiritual development of its citizens, failed to live up to its expectations [22]. The movement is highly embraced in view of the fact that it has been able to carve messages that are appealing, self-authenticating, and community validating religious experience of members. In many instances, these divine industries are positioned as alternatives to moral legitimacy [17]. The mass defection of youth from the orthodox divine industries to the Pentecostal movement is an obvious sign of disenchantment about the way these orthodox divine industries have gone about addressing the spiritual and material needs of their younger followers. This growing disillusionment is an indication that the swelling number of Pentecostal Christians does not consider it enough when divine industries just make critical statements about worsening social and economic conditions, and in many cases condemning the few who live in obscene opulence while the majority wallow in misery and poverty, but they want such comments to be backed with action that yields results [21].

In 1979, Ghana experienced one of its worst economic challenges due to corruption and an eventual series of coup d'états that plunged the country into an 'economic-coma'. In search of survival and descent living, many citizens migrated to other West African countries to make ends meet. In the midst of this hardship, there was the need for external support to revamp the ailing economy. Thus the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), a World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic recovery policy was introduced during the reign of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government in the early 1980s to save the ailing economy from total collapse [25, 23, 32, 29]. The conditions set by the IMF were to lay off some of Ghana's public sector workers and also privatise some state industries. This directive created additional hardships for the poor and the middle-income earners to the point that persons who could not cope with the hardships committed suicide, whilst others committed crimes that sent many of them to prison. The recommended state-owned industries, factories and warehouses were put on the divestiture list, rendering many of the people who were employed there redundant [24]. The situation put cinema halls in bankruptcy because many of the night entertainments centres were obstructed.

Interestingly, some of the convicts were converted to Christianity while they were serving their prison terms, and upon their release, they founded new divine industries to demonstrate to Ghanaians the influence of God in their lives. This development provided platforms for new divine industries with their roots in western countries to emerge in

the country. Their messages centred on promises of hope, prosperity, wealth and health [1]. This ultimately boosted the moral and aspirations of many citizens. The educated elites, most of whom had finished university and who also found themselves in economic difficulties, eagerly appropriated what was considered to be the 'goods of modernity', and were able to blend their knowledge to create new religious messages that were good for local demand. In explaining why the gospel was embraced by the so many people, Rev Wuni pointed out that;

*Africans appropriated Christian teaching on prosperity and wealth not because they were gulled by the evangelists, but because the evangelists were addressing important issues in the indigenous world view.*

These important issues are related to poverty and unemployment, the root causes of many people's problems, and how they could overcome them. Many youth who finished school and found that there were no jobs for them migrated to the cities in search of greener pastures. The messages from the divine industry provide hope to the hopeless and disenchanted who thought they had no purpose in life. In fact, because of the American civil war and the Azusa Street phenomenon, these inspirational messages that had existed for many decades in the United States of America were imported to Ghana and other countries that were facing similar crisis. The remarkable influx of people to urban towns and cities with its unanticipated hardships calls for a sober reflection on the reality of private responsibility and the renewal of society. With the growing suggestions in research circles that Pentecostal Christianity is mainly an urban phenomenon [26, 4] with its continuous emphasis on wealth and success, many young men and women who find life in the cities and towns unbearable get attracted to these movements, an attraction associated with people suffering from what Durkheim described as anomie in the cities, contrasted against their birth place where they have stable life with social norms that serve to guide their daily activities, they experience the opposite in cities.

There is a rising speculation that the Pentecostal explosion is due partly to the desire for economic gains and self-fulfilment. This is against the backdrop of the ostentatious lifestyles of some men of God such as the self-styled bishops who are alleged to have conferred to themselves honorary doctorate degrees [29]. They further contend that founding a divine industry is not costly but rather rewarding and enriching, once the divine-actor can lay claim to divine calling and a spiritual gift, eloquence and confidence with a few verses they can memorise from the Bible [5]. They are of the opinion that these are the ingredients for access to religious economic prosperity. In the light of this, divine industries are seen as avenues for making quick money to resurrect individuals from economic dogma and the bitterness associated with poverty. Contrary to this, investigations revealed that some of the divine-actors invest their life savings into founding these divine industries. Throughout the interactions that form the basis for this research, no divine-actor confirmed the assertions that they

are into divine industry for economic gains. What is important is that many of them invest a lot before reaping the rewards, a development that leads to the assertion that Pentecostal divine industries are materialistic in orientation, with their gospel centred on prosperity, which reveals their external origins and capitalist inclination. Because of the publicity divine-actors get from making prophetic pronouncements, many of them create a market for themselves by getting attached to and supporting politicians to win their favour and funding, and many divine-actors are even becoming 'religious celebrities'. As [22] rightly indicated, politicians use Pentecostal divine industries for ritual cleansing and for votes. It is speculated that many politicians sponsor divine-actors to do prophesy for them. This development entices others into the 'prophetic ministry' to win favour from politicians and many stake holders who need their services.

## 10. Conclusions

The paper discussed the historical development of Pentecostalism in Ghana, outlining the different waves of the movement that have swept through the country at different points in time. The paper revealed that this development was the result of rational actions that was engineered by African prophets, who were aided by divine inspirations in the execution of their divinely inspired task. At each given period, their actions were both rational and religious, and are equated with instrumental reasons because it aimed at means-ends relationship and in the service of self-satisfaction. Each wave was in respond to a situational problem. Through this, divine-actors creatively used their divine blessing to alleviate the suffering of society. The actions of the divine-actors at each point in time were hailed by masses within the communities they operated. Many of the people they served had lost faith in the orthodox divine industries that had failed to provide them with security against threats of witches and misfortunes.

The rate at which the movement has been embraced served as a catalyst for the explosion of the Pentecostal faith in Ghana. Several factors contributed to this phenomenon among which were English as the language of the gospel, which played a facilitating role in the influx of American Evangelist and the gospel books and cassettes whose messages were mainly centred on prosperity and wealth. The paper further reveals that this phenomenon peaked around the 1979 when Ghana was experiencing series of coup d'états and economic crises, a situation that subsequently led to the introduction of a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). This and other factors including a desire for individuals to climb the social ladder, poverty and social deprivation, and the quest for wealth all accounted for its continued growth. This is in view of the fact that the Pentecostal divine industries played the role of surrogate families for many adherents in urban towns and cities. It thus goes without saying that Pentecostal divine industry go through metamorphosis and is able to adapt in any given

situation. Their continued existence is thus due to the fact that divine actors are very innovative and easily tailor their activities towards areas that society cherishes so much.

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