

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



EXPLORING THE READING OF JOHN 9:1-41 IN DOCTOR JESUS
PRAYER CAMP AND MINISTRY INTERNATIONAL, GHANA

BISMARCK ABBAM

2021



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PRAYER CAMP AND MINISTRY INTERNATIONAL, GHANA

BY

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This Thesis Submitted to the Department of Religion and Human Values of the
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Philosophy Degree in Religion and Human Values

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

Name: Bismark Abbam

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: Date:

Name:

Co-Supervisor's Signature..... Date:

Name:

ABSTRACT

The subject of this research is 'Exploring the Reading of John 9:1-41 in Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International, Ghana. With the background of how biblical interpretation influences the lives of people or Christians, the nature of John's Gospel, the nature of prayer camps in Ghana, and how the blind man's narrative has been conceptualized and appropriated by the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. Given that, the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International church live the Bible, thus, their activities and programs undergirded by biblical text, this work, sought to assess the interpretation of this church through literal and historical criticism, using the Tri-Polar exegetical model by Jonathan A. Draper to see how they read and live the text. The work firstly looked at the nature of churches in Ghana, to situate the church among the denominational group it fits into. Also, the interpretation of John 9 in the context of the focused church was also done to see the understanding the text has for them. Further, the setup of the church was also considered to see who they are. The study, however, found that their interpretation is symptomatic and esoteric. This is because, their interpretation leaves meanings latent, repressed, and unique to them. This allows them to assign meanings to every biblical text, thus their interpretation of John 9 differs from what the narrator seeks to communicate to his audience. The study has shown that their way of interpretation skips important hermeneutical details. This makes them strange, and different in the Christian community concerning the way they have understood the blind man's narrative in their lives.

KEY WORDS

Miracle Clay

Biblical Interpretation

Blind man

Congenital

Healing

Sin

Pool of Siloam

Born

Wash

Parents



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DEDICATION

I specially dedicate this thesis to my late mother, Madam Grace Mankoe, as a symbol of my love for her, and to Prof. Richardson Ansah of Department of Classics and Philosophy, University of Cape Coast for his inspiration.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The Doctor Jesus Prayer camp and Ministry International Church seems to have their way of interpretation and appropriation of the Bible as a faith community. The Church which was started as a prayer camp now claims to be classified as a charismatic Christian church, located in the central region of Ghana under the supervision of Prophet Samuel Koffie now deceased. Their practices and belief systems are undergirded by biblical text. For example, their interpretation of Matthew 10:7-9 underpins their doctrine of an offering-free and Tithe-free Church as compared to other charismatic Churches. This practice distinct the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church from other Churches in terms of tithe and offertory.

Their distinctiveness is evident in the way the congregants live their lives in accordance to the way the leadership of the Church interpret any biblical text. This is because, members show commitment in their responses or obedient to the meanings leaderships assign to any biblical text. The uniqueness of the Church manifests in many ways in the lives of the members within the community in which they reside.

The blind man's account in the Johannine gospel means a lot for the Church and the congregation as a whole. A man who was born blind is mentioned in John 9:1-41. The narrative has it that Jesus and his disciples encountered him begging for arms by the roadside. Jesus' disciples attempted to ascertain the possible cause of the man's blindness. Thus, they asked whether it was the sins of the man or his parents' that has resulted in the

blindness of the man. Jesus' reply indicated that, the blindness of the man was not as a result of any sin of anybody, but the man's blindness was meant to manifest the work of God in his life. Jesus then made a mud with spittle; smeared it on his eyes and subsequently asked him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. The narrative tells that, he obliged and came back seeing.

This narration concerning the man who was born blind in John 9:1-41 has influenced the lives of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church based on their interpretation of the text. They live the story according to their understanding of the story. For instance, their healing activities are purely based on the way they have conceptualized the blind man's story in John's gospel. Their interpretation allows them to depend mainly on a special clay for their social lives, spiritual lives, businesses, as well as insuring their lives and properties against danger. Their entire lives seem to depend largely on John's report about the man who was blind from birth which consists of Jesus' approach to the healing of the man, the application of spittle that Jesus used to form mud, and so on. In one's thinking, the interpretation of John 9 by the Church, can be said of having gained significant convincing traction in the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church as well as being a pivotal bedrock for the Church.

Statement of the Problem

The Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church can be said to be among the prominent churches in Ghana, in the central region. They are classified among the charismatic Christian Churches by the authorities or the leaders, but their ways of live are inconsistent with the usual lifestyle of other Christians and charismatic Churches in the society.

Their prominence and the unusual characteristics are based on the array of their practices, teachings and their strange ways of living in the community. Many of their activities are underpinned by biblical text. Chief among these texts is the narrative about a certain man who was blind from birth in John 9:1-41.

Their eccentric attitude leaves many un-answered questions in the minds of people in the community based on the way they have interpreted or conceptualized John 9 and lived it. This is because, other Churches or Charismatic Churches also read the same text but the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church seem to interpret it differently from them, and thus, their lives confuse other Christians in the Ghanaian society. The society therefore finds it difficult to categorize them under any Christian faith community in Ghana especially concerning their understanding about the blind man's narrative.

For instance, some of the ladies in the Church use 'powdered' clay as a 'face make-up' because of their understanding of Jesus' usage of the mud to cure the blind man in the story and the members of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church largely depend more on this clay in terms of seeking medical attention. Their lifestyle and activities in the community are distinct among their neighbors in all spatial of life, thus, many people wonder the kind of people they are as a Church.

Given that their interpretation borders on human lives or the society, and in view of the fact that their eccentric attitude leave many un-answered questions in the minds of people in the community based on the way they have interpreted John 9 and lived it, thus, this thesis to explore their interpretation

of this Johannine story about a man who was born blind to see the nature of their interpretation as charismatic strand they ascribed to be. In other words, the thesis seeks to inquire the type of interpretation the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church have assigned to the text under study for which reason their lives are distinct.

Purpose of the Study

This work is investigating how the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church understand the story of John 9. In other words, the thesis seeks to explore the meaning this story of John 9:1-41 has for the members of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the understanding and interpretation of John 9 of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International church
2. To find out how John 9 has influenced the lives of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International church

Research Questions

1. What is the understanding and interpretation of John 9 of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church?
2. How has John 9 influenced the lives of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International church?

Significance of the Study

This study is very significant as it attempts to address the variations and appreciation in biblical interpretation among Christian community, especially in the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. Furthermore, the recommendations made at the end of the work will show the

extent biblical interpretation can influence any faith community. The thesis will as well add to the frontiers of academia. It will also serve as a source for future work in the same vein, the topic is ongoing scholarly investigation.

Limitations

Many of the research participants were unwilling to commit their time to interview sessions and Focused Group discussions because of their hectic schedules. The participants' initial collaboration was also a challenge. Some of them had the feeling that, the researcher was an outsider whose interest was to assemble delicate information to tarnish the good name and image of the church. Furthermore, the emergence of Covid-19 within the research period made it virtually impossible for the researcher to be readily accepted by the Focused Group. This delayed the field work to some extent.

Literature Review

This section presents a review of books and articles that have something to do with or express views on some of the issues the thesis is addressing. The form presenting them will be thematic and will be on issues such as prayer camps, the book of John, and biblical interpretation.

A. Prayer Camps and their Activities

Prayer Camps are faith based and religious establishments where sometimes non-Christians who strongly believe that the underlying cause of their predicaments have spiritual background. These predicaments may include financial distress, mental health and related issues, impotency and infertility challenges, unemployment difficulties and other forms of sicknesses et cetera (Daar et al, 2014 & Sharan et al. 2007).

Mental health forms a crucial aspect of human well-being and happiness, however available facilities to care for patients, particularly those facing mental sicknesses are scarce all over the world (WHO, 2013). In sub-Saharan Africa, issues of mental health in particular, has less priority (Daar et al, 2014 & Sharan et al. 2007). For instance, in Ghana, only few patients with mental ailments and associated challenges have access to medicinal treatment (Morgan & Asare, 2014; WHO, 2011). Therefore, a considerable number of persons with serious mental illnesses in Ghana rely on traditional and faith healing procedures for purposes of seeking mental health attention (Aengibise et al, 2010; Alem et al. 1999; Barke et al. 2011; Crawford, 2004; Gureje et al, 2006; Kilonzo et al, 1998). Only 12 psychiatrists are currently in active practice, and there are only three psychiatric hospitals statewide, drastically underfunding Ghana's mental health institutions (Morgan & Asare, 2014; WHO, 2011). Therefore, prayer camps have existed for a long time in bridging the gap with no government oversight supervisions.

The families of many mentally challenged individuals seek remedy for their relatives at various prayer camps, which are Christian-based facilities mostly run by faith healers for patients facing spiritual illness and other spiritual attacks (Adiboka & Nyame; 2009). Prayer camps are mostly found in Nigeria, Togo, and Ghana. (Estrin, 2013; Carey, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2012). It can be argued that the profound lack of medical resources couple with low-income levels of most households has given rise to the prevalence of faith healing or Prayer Camps as an alternative to seeking medical care and services (Patel, 2011).

However, there is currently an on-going debate as to whether medical care providers must foster closed alliance with Prayer Camps in Ghana as a means to ensure effective strategy to overcome the gaps in treating serious mental illnesses (Ae-Ngibise et al, 2010). In Ghana for example, data has been exploded on institutional collaborations between prayer camps and community mental health units. The data examined has indicated that partnerships may be possible when based on respect for one another and understanding on both sides (Ae-Ngibise et al, 2010).

There have been conflicting viewpoints on the best practices and the nature of running prayer camps particularly based on human rights violation of the patients seeking treatment for their underlying mental conditions. Some of these human right abuses include chaining and forced fasting of patients (Adiboka & Nyame, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 2012; UN-HRC, 2013; UN-HRC, 2014). Some of the patients are also severely flogged on the basis that they are being exorcised of demons or evil spirits. The aforementioned among other things, have been identified as potential challenges for faith healer collaborations with biomedical psychiatric services (Senah, 1992). Human rights activists and campaigners have claimed that People with mental health issues are typically shackled, abused, and banned from leaving the prayer camps in Ghana.

(Ae-Ngibise et al, 2010).

According to Reverend Okai, the treatment for patients entails Bible reading, worship services, and voluntary fasting. Prayers are frequently uttered in the healing name and in the blood of Jesus (Senah, 1992). However, the camp's policies may do more harm than good for the 80 people with mental

health issues who are now residing there. Reverend Okai, who is seated outside a contemporary concrete home marked "Prophet's Villa," maintains that the patients, who suffer from conditions like drug addiction, mental depressions, and symptoms of broken hearts, are well-treated and that the facility hasn't used chains to restrain patients in for some time. But when a team from Human Rights Watch visited the camp in 2012, they found that employees had locked up the patients, made them fast for up to 36 hours, and barred them from leaving.

According to local mental health experts, numerous individuals are stuck in spiritual centers (HRW, 2012). Since the majority of prayer camps were founded by self-styled prophets who frequently lacked medical training, human rights violations are commonplace there. Because of their mental health issues, people who have been sent to these spiritual centers by their families may stay there for months and endure physical abuse, hunger, chaining, and other human rights violations. (UN-HRC, 2013).

In eight prayer camps reviewed across the nation, Human Right Watch (2012) found cases of multiple arbitrary detentions, overcrowding and poor hygiene, chaining, food denial, and a lack of adequate shelter. In the compound, almost all of the mental patients were shackled at their ankles to trees, where they slept, defecated, and washed. People with mental disorders in these camps, including children under 10, are frequently forced to fast for weeks, usually beginning with 36 hours of so-called dry-fasting, and they are refused even water as part of the "healing process.

Many clients have developed complications at faith based religious organizations also known as prayer camps through the processes or the steps to ward off malevolence spirit (HRW, 2012).

B. Bible Interpretation

In general, the term hermeneutic refers to the theory and process of interpreting passages from the Bible, wisdom literature, and philosophy (Ferguson, 1988). Verbal and nonverbal communication, as well as semiotics, presuppositions, and pre-understandings, are all included in contemporary hermeneutics (Audi, 1999). Humanities studies, particularly law, history, and theology, have used hermeneutics the most. Hermeneutic was initially used to interpret the Bible, but it has since been expanded to include all interpretation (Perry, 2005).

Biblical hermeneutics is typically conceived of as a type of special hermeneutics based on the idea that the status of scripture demands a certain way to comprehend and interpret the Bible. (Jones, 2000). Although many interpretations were frequently contested, reading Scripture like any other written work became more and more popular in the nineteenth century. Schleiermacher (1998) argued in favor of a general theory of hermeneutics that could be applied to all texts, including the Bible, as opposed to a division between "general" and "specific" hermeneutics.

The goal of many higher critical approaches was to comprehend the Bible only as a book of human history. There are currently at least two uses for the term hermeneutics, both of which are related. First, biblical hermeneutics can be viewed as the theological exegetical principles, which are frequently practically equivalent with "principles of biblical interpretation" or

"methodology of biblical exegesis," in the earlier sense. Second, a more recent trend is to consider the word "Biblical hermeneutics" to refer to a broader linguistic and philosophical framework for interpretation. Biblical academics have observed the variety of Protestant and, to a lesser extent, Catholic interpretations, among others (Perry, 2005).

Goldingay (2011) postulates that, we frequently read the Bible to align it with our worldview and interpret its meaning in the context of our predetermined theological framework rather than to seek for truth. He goes on to say that our preconceptions are not the adversary but rather our friends. Preconception offers a collection of perceptions through which we might interpret what we read. We are all "reader response" interpreters in this way.

According to (Klein, 2000) every biblical interpreter comes to the text with already constructed form of meaning. The interpreter is as well confronted with many issues with regards to interpretation of the Bible. However, Goldingay (2011) argues that, the interpreter must use his already existed ideas to study meaning rather than to create unavailable meaning. Klein (2000) intimates that, biblical interpreters seek to bridge the historical, linguistic, social, and cultural gaps that existed between the ancient and the modern world in order to understand what the text means. We must therefore seek the author's intentions in interpreting the Bible.

There is a significant hermeneutical gap between the interpreter and the Bible, and hence, biblical interpreters must make the efforts to fall within the authors intended purpose. (Thiselton, 2011). But Aryeh (2016) is of a different view, he argues that, the biblical text is always written in the present tense, suggesting a reenactment of the biblical story without the need to fill in

the historical backdrop. He emphasizes further that this is risky since it lacks a solid scriptural basis. Scripture must be read not just in the context of conventional ideas, but also in the context of those beliefs.

African Biblical hermeneutics, according to Adamo (2015), are the rules for interpreting the Bible for African transformation. He continues by saying that African biblical hermeneutics is the method of interpreting the Bible that takes into account the social and cultural background of Africa. This is confirmed by Aryeh (2016), who remarked that it is a deliberate "Africentric" rereading of Christian scripture. He specifically claims that the examination of the biblical text is done from the standpoint of the worldview and culture of Africa. Africans therefore interpret the Bible from African context with the aim of making meanings out of the Bible in relation to what they already have and know in order to shape their society for the better.

On a contrast distinction, Upkong (1999) states in his work titled "Development in Biblical interpretation in modern Africa" that whereas the Africans situate interpretation of the Bible in their African context, the Westerners approach the Bible with the intention of focusing on the text. That is to say that there is a clear African and Western biblical interpretation dichotomy.

Aryeh (2011) comments that, biblical interpretation in Ghana among the Pentecostals and Charismatics are audience based. Even though his focus was in Ghana, he posits that without challenging any of the difficulties highlighted in Scripture, African Christians embrace the Bible as the "Word of God." According to him, biblical interpretation plays a major role in nurturing the church and it is largely influenced by the various religious denominational

positions. He further articulates that these ministers of the Pentecostal/Charismatic ministries in Ghana only put emphasis on seeking the internal evidence and support for their interpretation. He cited (West, 2013) to establish that Africans treat and respect the Bible to the extent of labeling anybody who questions the Bible as a Hypocrite.

West also cited (Ossom–Batsa, 2006) and reiterated that Africans interpret the Bible by putting themselves into it and playing the role of biblical characters so as for God to continue using them do what ancient characters exactly did. According to him, due to the increasing growth of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement which has resulted in the largest Christian group in Ghana, their interpretation also influences the larger portion of the Ghanaian community. Interpretation of scripture is essentially done at the popular or lay man's level where the environment becomes the hope and aspiration of a contemporary audience as a key factor in determining meaning. (Aryeh, 2016). Pentecostal/Charismatics are not guided by any stringent rules in conducts and in the interpretation of the Bible. Biblical interpretation in Ghana among the Pentecostals/Charismatics over depends on the Holy Spirit. This is a problem because it doesn't encourage formal theological training in interpreting the scriptures. (Aryeh, 2016).

Gross (2004) shares that, one of the things any interpreter must consider when interpreting biblical text is that, the meaning of any biblical text is determined by its author, the intended audience of the message being communicated, the circumstances that occasioned the writing of the text, and the intent and purposes for which it was written; thus if a biblical text is taken to be the message itself without situating it in context, the meaning may be

distorted. Erkel (1999), also attests to the fact that, when biblical words or texts are taken out of context during interpretation of the Bible, it distorts the meaning of it and therefore leads to misleading interpretation of the Bible.

However, Menn, (2017), has noted that, the interpreter of today is faced with the challenge of bridging the gap between Bible times and today. This is because, several factors including cultural, societal, economical, and language variations and changes have affected the meaning of what the biblical text sought to communicate in the then world.

The style of presentation of any given text plays an important role in biblical interpretation. This is because, it helps to determine the audience, the intent, the circumstance, the author, largely by the language used in communication. Thus, the vocabulary, grammar, style, syntax, idioms, allusions, symbols, types, and so on, indicate whether the verse or the passage one is dealing with was literal, metaphorical, poetic etc. (Gross, 2004).

Gross, (2004) again argues that, it is best and more appropriate to rely largely on the Greek and Hebrew language for better and accurate biblical interpretation than the various bible translations. Guthrie, (2010) agrees with Gross, (2004) that knowledge of the original language of the Bible augments better understanding of the Bible, in addition to the broader knowledge of the numerous subjects as presented as part of biblical content.

The following three-step interpretive process must be adhered to in order to appropriate the Bible correctly. Thus, what the text says, what it means, and what it means to the interpreter; the definition of words, grammar, syntax, structure, and images. The broader context of a text in other related passages

in another book of the Bible, topical events in different scenes, and how one applies what the Bible says to contemporary life situations. (2004).

D. The Gospel of John

Adams, (2006), and other biblical scholars agree that Jesus' disciple who was known as John authored the fourth gospel. Pratt, (2012) also attests to the position that John is the author of the fourth gospel in his commentary on the book of John. The authorship of this gospel has raised many debates and both Adams, (2006) and Pratt, (2012) have captured this argument in divers ways, thus, whereas one faction believes that John wrote this book with his own hands about AD 85-90 but not later than AD 100. So, AD 100 was 100 years after Jesus' birth hence John might have been a very old man when he authored his gospel. Others hold that, John might have been too old to have been able to write this Gospel himself. It is therefore possible that he dictated his Gospel to another person. This was usual in the first century AD.

Wiles, (1960) also asserts that the gospel was dictated by John to his disciple identified as Papias while he was still in the body. Therefore, he concludes that, the writing down was the work of John and the Gospel was, thus published under his name. By assumption, it implies that the Gospel had characteristics of the last will of John and testament of the aged disciple.

Pratt (2012) makes a statement that, no information is given in the book that allows it to be definitely dated. But he cited Johansson's conclusion that the book was written between 75 and 90AD. According to him, some skeptics contended that the gospel of John was actually written after AD 150. Such a viewpoint has the effect of denying that the apostle John was the author or any other author who was inspired. However, it has been established that the John

Ryland's fragment, found in the 1920s, is only a small section of a manuscript of the gospel of John that dates from about AD 125 and 150. The gospel itself must have been written before this time because this is a copy. So, Pratt, (2012) dates John's gospel between AD 90 and 150.

Wiles (1960), opined that, John's paramount purposes of the fourth Gospel is to be a spiritual Gospel in the supplementation of the earlier ones, whose concentration had been upon the bodily facts. Thus, the intent of this Gospel was not meant to distinct itself from the other three Gospels, but to stand in contrast to the first three Gospels. He further argues that, to preserve the divinity of Jesus Christ for eternal life, he thus wrote the fourth Gospel. Adams, (2006) states that, John wanted his inferred readers and the actual readers of this gospel to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, God's Son (John 20:31).

In their gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke mention numerous miracles. However, John decided to mention only 7 miracles. He described them as signs. Pratte, (2012) and Adams, (2006) agree that the major purpose and or the theme of John's gospel show that Jesus is the Christ whom we must believe in order to be saved (see 20:30, 31; 21:24, 25). He provides evidence for this allegation frequently. He frequently employs words like witness, testimony, and similar phrases. According to Bruce (1983), the purpose of writing this gospel was to bring his recipients to faith in Christ. However, both Tenney (1948) and Bruce (1983), agree on the score that the gospel was written to urge the followers of Christ to have faith in Christ.

Bruce (1948), comments that, even though he wrote to strengthen the faith of the Christians didn't record anything about the organization of the

church. According to him the writing of this gospel was occasioned by the doctrinal variations that started showing up, so John's gospel was more theological (1948). The combination of complexity and easiness in the structure of the gospel of John conveys the obvious impression that it is the product of one mind.

Blindness

Resnikoff & Sydney (2008) has shared on the issue of blindness that, blindness until recently has not received the needed attention, thus, it is about health and social concern of important public health facet on the global health agenda. Koplitz (2020) intimates that, in the times of Jesus, Jews attributed blindness to either the sins of the victim or the parents' sin. It was considered as an act of divine punishment, and hence blindness was irreversible. He further argues that, blind people automatically became beggars by the roadside because, family members could not cater for them.

In terms of causes of blindness, McAllister (2010) noted that, the physical cause of old age is the prime consideration. He however, observed that, gods have ways of infecting people with blindness through individual's sin and this is often induced by fellow human.

McAllister (2010) postulates that, in accordance to the Hebrew Bible, blindness conveyed meanings of imperfections and weakness. By extension, blindness could mean lack of mental or spiritual insight.

In the Hebrew setup, persons with blindness were disadvantaged and described as the most devastating state of life especially compared to other physical deformities. With respect to ritual system among the Jews, blindness

was classified as a blemish, disqualifying a priest from officiating as well as any animal from being an offering (Koplitz, 2020).

McAllister (2010) intimates that, in terms of social justice the Hebrew Bible considers right treatment of victims of blindness in the context of true holiness. He further indicates that, apart from the Jews, there are other ancient Near Eastern cultures who addressed the issue of blindness in the context of wisdom literature as an act of good conduct.

Razafiarivony (2018), also indicates that both blindness and lameness are considered cultic blemish among the Jewish society, because it is believed that the presence of people with deformities in the temple of God renders it unwholesome hence their exclusion stemmed from fear of polluting the house of the Lord. Koplitz (2020), further debates that, as per social justice in accordance to treatment in the context of the Jewish tradition, holiness is the way out. Among other ancient Near Eastern cultures, treatment of blindness was linked to the act of good conduct by victims. He however mentions that, in the Hebrew Bible, blindness was an indication of weakness and imperfection.

In the Jewish religious practices, the blinds were not allowed to memorized the Law in public, this is because the congregation could not fulfilled their obligation by hearing the Law from memory instead they needed to hear from the one reading the text (Nevins, 2003). He however noted that, blind Jew may find a way of reading the Law through electronic devices.

Healing and Saliva

Hasel, (1983) argues that, in Bible times sin was seen as the cause for all sickness and other deformities, as well as healing preceded by forgiveness.

He further shares that, healing in the biblical sense is the experience or steps which restore the human race to intimate relationship, or communion with God. There were, not enough evidence to proving that, there were a few or many physicians among the ancient Jews, instead, God was seen as their healer, hence, they relayed largely on God for healing of diverse kind (Hasel, 1983).

However, Flam (1994) noted that in a Jewish setup, the concept is that, healing at its complete state involves two main aspects of humanity, thus, the body and the soul; the healing also includes finding solutions to victim's emotional needs by having a sense of community and avoiding isolation or lack of association with your immediate environment. All these are considered as steps leading to the restoration of wholeness.

The words of the psalms and blessings have been spoken by millions of Jews throughout Jewish history specifically for those who desire for healing. This gives us comfort when we pray in community and follow traditional Jewish liturgy (Flam, 1994).

With respect to the tool for healing, Flam, (1994), opined that, the Jews traditions demand that the psalms are recommended by the rabbis to recite portions such as 10, 18, and the 36, at the time of illness. Sermer (2014), also attests to the assertion that, Jewish concept of healing mainly depends on the Law and other biblical passages for both spiritual and physical related health issues. Citing (Praglin,2003), he intimates that, their law codes obligate them as Jews to seek healing from both medical treatment and offer prayers to God, who is believed to be the ultimate healer of both body and soul. Sermer (2014) posits that, in Jewish tradition certain songs were composed to invoke

healing from the God of their forefathers for both physical and spiritual wholeness.

Dube (2020) also states with respect to healing that, within personalistic healthcare system, healing manifests in the form of exorcism of the invisible spiritual power. He further indicated that, the sick people at the time were enjoined to pray and invoke the deity for rapid healing.

Ebhomienlen & Ogah (2013), define Saliva as "The fluid released by the salivary glands and ejected into the oral cavity, which aids in mastication, swallow, and digestion, has been classified as saliva." They further indicate that Saliva is an important element among African and the Jews. Thus, in Africa, saliva usage is in two ways, positively and negatively, and among the Jews it has been shown that saliva serves as an essential symbolism in the Bible.

In the African and Jewish traditional medicine, saliva is believed to have increased in quantity and spiritual potency when it is combined with bitter kola for healing (Ebhomienlen & Ogah, 2013). On the issue of using saliva as a means to cure persons of any ailment, Ebhomienlen & Ogah (2013), argue that, the fasting spittle of human has been recommended to have a healing magic. Spittle in the first century Palestine, like the case of many African traditions, was believed to possess healing, blessing or contemptuous qualities for many victims of sickness or deformities (Dube, 2020).

Hirsch (2013), Postulates that in both primitive and civilized community, saliva is seen as defiling and impure when it is discharged from the body to any human or into the immediate environment. However, according to legends, spittle has the ability to "fashion and transfer life," "cure

and prevent so many ills and evils of all kinds," "ensure good fortune," and, when necessary, "take vengeance on one's enemies." These attributes have been attributed to saliva throughout the ages and throughout human history' (Hirsch, 2013).

Spittle was also seen as a means to ward off evil spirits or appease the unseen forces or gods among the Greeks. Furthermore, this concept was seen as a superstition practice because it was believed that spittle aided in the healing of certain diseases based on the assertion that the gods could be induced in this regard (Dube, 2020).

Conclusion on Literature Review

This section of the work has looked at the review of existing literature related to the topic. In terms of Prayer Camps, it was noted that, these camps play major role in the lives of Ghanaians with respect to seeking solutions to human needs, physically and spiritually. For instance, the review has shown among other things that, many people pay attention to finding solutions to mental ailment at the religious healing centers otherwise referred to as prayer Camps more than visiting professional medical centers for cure. It was also observed that, most of these centers are located at remote places in Ghana. It is also detected in the literature review that, there have been inhuman activities against participants of their activities, and unhygienic environment sometimes defined their setting.

It is also noted that, biblical interpretation requires basic steps such as asking the right questions thus attempting to find out what occasioned the authorship of the text, who the author may be, the expected audience of the message, the intent and purposes for which the passage was crafted, the

cultural setting, and so on. These questions play important role in interpreting biblical text comprehensively. The review has again shown that, most biblical interpreters create their own meaning based on their understanding instead of using their understanding to understand meanings. Further, the review also considered some of the themes of John 9. In that, the Jewish concepts of healing, blindness, saliva and more were reviewed to ascertain how Jews conceived these happenings in their socio-cultural construct.

Methodology

In order to answer the proposed research questions the Literary Critical method was adopted for the work. Under this, the Historical critical method was as well employed. This is because, whereas the Literary Critical method allows me to appreciate the literary composition of the text, the Historical on the other hand facilitated in constructing meanings historically. The combination of these two research tool were guided by the tri-polar exegetical model by Jonathan A. Draper's contextual reading of the biblical text understudy in three stages, thus, distantiation, contextualization, and appropriation.

A. Distantiation

Distantiation is the process of studying the biblical text or scripture by allowing the text to speak for itself. This facet is a crucial preliminary point for exegesis, because it aids in finding answers to questions such as, "why read the Bible?" and "Why the choice of the text?" Thus, this stage of the model stresses that, the faith community or readers allow the text to speak for itself by creating space between themselves and the text. It must be allowed to be other different above

against the worldview, concerns, and the questions of the readers or the faith community. This requires for another reading tool hence the combination of literary critical and historical critical criticism as noted before.

B. Contextualization-

Contextualization, the second of the tri-polar holds that the meaning of a chosen, or a selected text is determined by its readers or specifically by community of readers as well as their context. Thus, the reading of this Johnnie story, John 9:1-41 concerning a certain man who was born blind by the church in focused can best be understood by situating it in their context to determine the meaning the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International church have assigned to the text. At this stage, the meaning of the text was determined by the various targeted group. This aided in expediting contextualization by way of analyzing and evaluating the church's context with regards to the selected text.

C. Appropriation

Appropriation is the third feature of the model and it is the crux of the interpretation of the chosen text in the light of the setting of the church under study. This section uncovered or discloses the praxis distinct to the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International church in Ghana based on John 9, especially from (vv 1-7). This made the exegesis so important because, it brought to light the reasons behind their actions including their practices as faith community.

Historical Criticism

Historical criticism is the study of texts, precisely the ancient texts, the biblical text, in connection to the historical origins and development within their contexts (Bull and Paille, 2015). The term is used to classify the mostly used method by biblical scholars in the modern world. This method seeks to know the historical context of a particular biblical text among other things, to know the authorial intentions for the use of certain words or phrases. The historical criticism is able to address questions such as; who wrote the text, when was it written, what was the happenings at the time of its writing, how was its form then and how did it come to be in the form we have it now, and what did it mean to the first recipients? This methodology also seeks to put the word behind the text, within the text, as well as putting the word before the text.

The choice for this methodology is imperative since it helped the researcher to seek answers to what is called "authorial intent" in order to relate it to how the texts under study have been interpreted and appropriated by the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church.

Literary Criticism

The literary criticism method seeks to analyze the single pericope as part of the whole unit which contribute to arriving at a complete meaning (Hayes and Holladay, 1988). In another sense, biblical passages are examined in accordance to their components in their larger contexts. This method assisted in analyzing the literary context of the text in connection with the preceding text and what follows. This approach further aided the researcher in putting the selected passage within the structure of the major context as well as within

the structure of the sub-units to construct meanings which resulted in getting detailed analysis of the text in focused.

The following literary function questions of John 9:1-41, were asked: How has these biblical texts function with respect to their immediate and larger context? Were they traditional, thus, has these selected passages served as literary bridge from one section to another? Were they climatic or did they serve as culmination of several paragraphs or sections immediately preceding them? Did they serve as illustrative to preceding assertion? And were they extrinsic to the bigger literary unit, in other words, did they match or fit at all into the literary context? (Hayes and Holladay, 1988).

In an attempt to find answers to these questions which helped the researcher to do a comprehensive analyses of the passage under study, and compare it to how they have been interpreted and appropriated in the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and ministry International Church, the combination of historical critical criticism and the literary critical criticism method was imperative because, whereas meanings are constructed through the historical contexts, the literary contexts also assisted in examining all literary components of the selected literature in order to arrive at more convincing meanings.

Sources of Data Collection

Data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Whereas secondary data were gathered from books, articles, journals, Bible commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and other print media, primary data were collected mainly from the field via tape recording. Data were stored and managed, at each section. This study was also based on exegesis of the

passage under study, and hence, the Greek text was relied on in this regards. This is because, the Greek language has been generally accepted as the language of the Bible (New Testament), and it also serves as the main source of the New Testament translation, and other related sources were employed to ascertain how biblical interpretation is done in the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International church.

Sample Size and Procedure

In addition, as part of the approach, interview guides were employed with the aid of recorders to gather data from the field. The interview guides involved a set of pre-determined questions which were asked differently with the view to soliciting appropriate responses that answered the research questions of the study. This was intended to obtain detailed first-hand information in an attempt to ascertain the respondent's understanding of how biblical interpretation is done in the focused church, especially John 9:1- 41. The interview guides allowed the researcher to probe further by asking follow-up questions that were not found in the guides. The idea was to get a better understanding of the issues under study.

This interview comprised both the structured and unstructured interview procedure. The structured interview assisted the researcher to ask straight forward questions and restrict questions and answers to the issue under investigation. The unstructured interview on the other hand, assisted the investigator to discover the broad understanding of the interviewees on the topic. This eventually allowed the researcher to gain general and exhaustive understanding into the topic. The data assembled with these various methods were analyzed to attain the stated objectives.

In all, twenty-eight (28) individuals took part in the study. Out of this, twenty (20) of them were church members, one was the prophetess or the lead minister, and seven (7) of them were members of the church board.

In-depth Interview

During the study, one-on-one interviews were engaged using interview guide. The interview questions were designed to cover the key themes raised in the research questions. The questions asked were open-ended. Interviews were conducted during the meetings with the respondents individually and at group level. In order to obtain appropriate answers, the instructions and the items on the interview guides were read and explained in the language they were all familiar with, the Twi language, to the respondents.

Focus Group Discussions

In all, three focus group discussions were held and discussants were drawn from the prophetess, Mrs. Comfort Koffie, who is a lead minister of the said church. Interview guide was used purposely to extract enough data concerning the setup of the church, including, formation of the church, and other related issues. Another category of focused group was the church board. The church board was made up of the lead minister, other pastors, deacons and deaconesses, and others. In this category, interview guide was employed to examine the subject matter from the leadership point of view (purposive sampled), persons noted for their in-depth acquaintance with regards to interpreting the Bible (John 9:1-41) and practices of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. Interview guide was as well designed to target a section of the members of the church under study.

The focused group discussions were held separately on Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays as determined by the discussants. According to them, these days were the only days the researcher could be granted part of their schedules. All focused group discussions were personally facilitated by the researcher. This was meant to limit individuals from championing the discussion and further avoid deviating from issues under discussion. The purpose for employing Focused Group Discussion in the study was to enable the researcher to gather reliable collective views on the topic under consideration leading to finding answers to the research questions.

Organization of the Work

This work has been structured into five chapters with chapter one dealing with the background to the work, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, methodology, and so on. Chapter two focused on the nature of Churches in Ghana, specifically the four main Christian denominations in Ghana as far as their outlook, activities, and more are concern. Chapter three was an assessment of how the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International church has conceptualized and appropriated John's narrative concerning a certain man who was blind from birth. Chapter four was dedicated to the focused Church. In it, it records about the whole setup of the church which includes the formation of the church, how they arrived at the name of the church, their practices, and belief systems. And finally, the fifth chapter consists of the summary and conclusion of the entire thesis followed by the recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURE OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN GHANA

Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the general introduction of the thesis. Among the things discussed were the background of the work. This was done to give a general overview of the topic. It reviewed existing works concerning the topic of the thesis. The chapter looked at the thesis statement, research questions, and so on, to constitute the first section of the work. This chapter has the aim of situating the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church among Ghanaian churches. This is done by looking at the various Christian churches in the country, especially in terms of how they are grouped and what their teachings and practices are. The discussion however, begins with an introduction about Ghana where these churches are found. The next, is the strands of all Christian religions in Ghana and their corresponding periods they were established. It further looked at their teachings, practices, as well as what they believe.

Ghana

Ghana is located along a few degrees north of the equator is the Gulf of Guinea on the west coast of Africa (Bird and Herman. 2004). The country shares a boundary with Côte d'Ivoire to the west, while the south is bordered by the Atlantic and the Gulf of Guinea, at the eastern part of the country lies the Republic of Togo and its boundary to the north is Burkina Faso. Ghana is said to be the country nearer to the Centre of the planet Earth than any other country. In terms of land size, Ghana covers a total area of 238 540 km² (92,098 square miles). The country has a north-south and east-west extent of

about 670 km and 560 km respectively (FAO, 2005; Owusu-Ansah, 1995). The highest point of Ghana is said to be 883 meters (2,900 ft.) above sea level. (Owusu-Ansah, 1995). The country has a total of sixteen administrative regions. According to Ghana Statistical Service (2021), Ghana's population from the 2021 Population and Housing Census stands at 30,792,608. This figure is made up of 15,610,149 females and 15,182,459 males. In general, females make up 50.7% of the population while males make up the remaining 49.3%. From the statistics available, there is a national sex ratio of 97 males for every 100 females.

Ghana has three main religions, the African Traditional Religion, Islamic Religion, and the Christian Religion. Traditional African religions or African people's traditional beliefs and customs are a set of highly diverse beliefs that include various ethnic religions or racial groups and the rest. These traditions are typically oral rather than written, and they are passed down from one generation to the next through a variety of mediums such as folk tales, songs, and festivals. These traditions include belief in a number of higher and lower gods, occasionally including a supreme creator or force or a transcendent, and belief in spirits, veneration or worship of the dead, which manifests in the use of magic and traditional African medicine (Asante, 2009). The second religious group is Islam. Muslims are the people who practice Islam. The word Islam means the one who submits to God (Allah). (Lewis, Barnard, Churchill, and Ellis, 2009).

A monotheistic Abrahamic religion that claims Muhammad is a messenger of (Allah), God.

Their understanding of Allah is based on the Holy Qur'an's public witness. The belief is that Allah is unique, the creator, sovereign, and judge of all humans. The next strand of religion is Christianity. Christianity was introduced during their expedition of West Africa in the 15th century, the European settlers on the Gold Coast discovered Ghana. During the colonial era, Christian activity grew quickly, which prompted the construction of social amenities such as mission schools and other church-related organizations (Debrunner, 1967). The Ghana Statistical Service (2021) indicates that Christianity makes up 71 percent of the population. They are followed by Muslims with 17 percent, the traditional religion constitutes 6.2 percent, and other religious groups, 0.9 percent in all.

Christian Religion in Ghana

In the 15th century, the Portuguese Catholic missionaries were the first to come to Ghana, a then Gold Coast. However, the foundation for the Ghanaian Christian Church was laid by the Wesleyan/Methodist and Basel/Presbyterian missionaries. This was in the 19th century (Debrunner, 1967; Owusu-Ansah, 1994).

Presently, there are several Christian denominations represented in Ghana. This includes Christian Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran, Baptist, African Methodist Episcopal Zionist, Methodist, Anglican, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Evangelical Presbyterian, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and the Society of Friends (Owusu-Ansah, 1994). However, Ghana has four primary Christian denominations, including the Orthodox, the Evangelicals, the Pentecostals, and the Charismatics.

The Orthodox Churches

Basically, Orthodox refers to following the recognized standards and beliefs, especially in religion. But in the Christian perspective, orthodox implies adhering to the Christian faith as reflected in the early Church's creeds' (Amanor, 2009; Assimeng, 2010). Churches that are categorized as orthodox churches are the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches (2009; 2010). Churches that are classified under these strands of denomination are distinct with practices including the teachings and practices of the early church.

The branches of Christianity that have been practiced in Ghana for millennia and that missionaries brought there during the colonial era are described in the Ghanaian context as referred to as "Orthodox". These churches are embedded in traditional Ghanaian collectivistic culture.

Thus, the word "Orthodox Christianity" is used differently in Ghana than it is in the West since it refers to a variety of Christian denominations, including Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Anglicans, and Methodists (Amanor, 2009; Assimeng, 2010). Theologically and organizationally, the Orthodox Christian churches in Ghana are similar to those in the West. This implies that the orthodox Christian groups that exist outside Ghana are not different from their counterparts in Ghana in terms of teachings and practices. Services in Orthodox Christian Churches in Ghana are influenced by other factors including charismatic activities (Heaton *et al.*, 2009).

The Practices and Teachings of Orthodox Churches in Ghana

Even though the teachings of Orthodox Christians are based on the Holy Bible and the belief in Jesus Christ, there exist some differences in the

teachings of each Christian Orthodox group. Whilst the Roman Catholic teaches that the Pope is infallible, the other groups do not believe in that. They recognize Jesus Christ as the head of the church and the only infallible entity. The priests of the Roman Catholic Church do not marry and raise families but this is different for the other groups of orthodox Christians. The Roman Catholic Church believes in purgatory, a state between Heaven and Hell, whilst the others do not believe in it (Osei-Tutu *et al.*, 2020; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005).

In as much as there exist diverse differences, there are similarities in their teachings and practices. All the orthodox Christians believe in the miraculous birth of Christ and as such mark 25th December, every year as His birthday and celebrate Christmas in His honor. They all teach members to be morally upright and leave at peace with all. They also believe in the second advent of Jesus Christ, the son of God. They again believe in the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, Death, and Resurrection among others (Osei-Tutu *et al.*, 2020; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005).

According to Yirenkyi (2000), some of the Orthodox Christian churches' customs are that they play significant roles in the society in the country. The author stated that Orthodox churches have defended press freedom and human rights from armed forces ever since the 1980s. Additionally, they have entered to provide health care and education because the nation lacks fundamental social assistance and insurance through the establishment of hospitals and educational institutions (Yirenkyi). The leaders of these orthodox churches serve as the parishioners' main sources of mental health care. These individuals command respect in society as moral authorities

who offer counsel on how to handle challenging life situations in a manner that is socially acceptable (Osei-Tutu, A., Dzokoto, V, A., Akosua Affram, A., Adams, G., Norbert, J., & Doosie, B., 2020).

The Ghanaian Orthodox Christians sense an interconnected self as a result of being ingrained in traditional Ghanaian collectivism (Omenyo, 2011; Salter & Adams, 2012). As a result, they prioritize reciprocity, kindness, moderation, and the fulfillment of social commitments to kin, employers, and God (Osei-Tutu et al., 2020; Suh & Oishi, 2004) (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2005; Fadiji, Meiring, & Wissing, 2019). They place a strong emphasis on the priesthood of all believers, justification by faith alone (*sola fide*) rather than by good works, the teaching that salvation is by divine grace or "unmerited favor" only, rather than something earned (*sola gratia*), and the affirmation that the Bible is the only authoritative source (*sola scriptura* or scripture alone) rather than also including holy tradition, among other things (Scott, 2010).

The Evangelical Churches

Generally, the emergence of this Christian group can be traced back to 1738, with major theologians such as Pietism, Puritanism, among the rest. The first great awakening of the evangelicals saw John Wesley and other early Methodists at its root (Balmer, 2002).

The formation of Evangelicals in Ghana can be linked back to the 1960s to 1970s, when young graduates of the Africa Independence Churches broke away and formed various associations or groups, Non-denominational evangelical Christian Fellowships sprang up and began to spread in towns and cities of Ghana, such as the Scripture Union (SU), the University Christian Fellowships or the Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical Students (GHAFES), and

Campus Crusade for Christ, which had been operating primarily in second and third cycle Educational Institutions (Atiemo, 2000).

In Ghana, the Evangelical fraternity can be said of being the bedrock reason for the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement's rapid widespread growth and acceptance in Ghanaian Christianity. They created the smooth changeover from the long-standing Predominance of the former Western forms of Christianity compared to Ghanaian Christians' broad acceptance of the mostly Pentecostal versions (Atiemo, 2000). Among the churches that identify with the Evangelicals is the Ghanaian Evangelical Presbyterian Church. In Ghana, there is a mainstream Protestant Christian denomination. It has deep roots in the Evangelical and Reform traditions and is often referred to as the "EP Church." (Presbyterian Nyanyui Hame le Ghana, 2007).

The Practices and Teachings of Evangelical Churches in Ghana

Some of the teachings and practices of the Ghanaian Evangelicals include the centrality of the Scriptures, and the new birth which is a cornerstone of the theology of the fellowship. They also believe in the Holy Spirit and his role in the new birth, and other doctrinal expositions of the Christian faith. They believe God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are one co-eternal person. The beliefs of the church are based on the Holy Bible and as a result, undertake practices and teachings based on the Bible (Tosu, 2007). They are involved in the celebration of Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter. They believe in baptism and perform baptism by immersion. They also undertake the Lord's Supper from time to time. They believe in the power of the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. They practice and teach morals and living in coexistence with neighbors (2007).

The Pentecostal Churches

The Pentecostal churches in Ghana fall under some categories depending on the points at which they are observed. Basically, there are two strands of Pentecostals in Ghana. Ghana's early Pentecostal movement could be traced to Apostle Peter Newman's creative output. His Work produced the formation of three significant churches in Ghana, namely; the Christ Apostolic Church, the Apostolic Church– Ghana and the Pentecostal Church. These churches, in addition to the Classical Pentecostal churches in Ghana are made up of American Assemblies of God and a few other smaller organizations. The second strand of Pentecostalism in Ghana was initiated by Archbishop Nicholas Duncan- Williams (of the Action Chapel International). The Charismatic Ministries/Churches, which was formed in the late 1970s and the early 1980s, are these groups, which is referred to as the neo-Pentecostal churches (Bevans, 2002). For the purposes of doubt, Pentecostal Churches mentioned in this section are about the Classical Pentecostal churches which existed before the advent of charismatic churches.

However, Pentecostals in Ghana cannot be grouped among the world's Pentecostals movement, or the Western missionary initiative as most of the theological scholarship in Ghana has attempted to establish (Amanor, 2004). The term Pentecostals lump all facets of Christian shapes into one term "Sumsum Nsor" in the Ghanaian language, which literally means, "Spiritual Churches", thus, rather sinks precisely with the African Independence Churches, AICs (Amanor, 2004).

Amanor (2004), has argued that Pentecostals in Ghana are indigenous initiative. The Pentecostal wind started blowing in some of the mainline

missionary churches by some of their young Pentecostal members. This initiative was born out through the knowledge and assistance of Sampson Opong, a Ghanaian, and one of the movement's pioneers as postulated by Kimble, (1963). A contrast between the African Independence Churches AIC and the Pentecostals in Ghana resulted in what scholars referred to as classical Pentecostals. Comparing the former to their traditional Pentecostal counterparts, who are "more orthodox in belief and founded their discipline and practice on Biblical principles," scholars have noted that the latter have a tendency to change course more towards syncretism and occultism (Amanor, 2004). In Ghana, persons who belong to Churches that are members of the Ghana Pentecostal Council were also referred to as classical Pentecostals (2004). Examples are, The Church of Pentecost, and Assemblies of God.

Furthermore, when it comes to the delivery of the social services, the Ghanaian Classical Pentecostal churches are no different from their counterparts in sub-Saharan African countries.

For instance, Kalu (2008) contends that Pentecostal churches have helped thousands of people find work through industrial ventures like bakeries, laundries, transportation, banking, electronics, construction, and many more. He claims: Pentecostals in nations like Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and others incorporated agency involved in the government's development initiatives and poverty reduction interventions.

The Practices and Teachings of Pentecostal Churches in Ghana

Pentecostals, like other branches of evangelical Protestantism, uphold the Bible's inerrancy and the requirement that each person receive Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. It is characterized by the conviction that a Christian

can live a Spirit-filled and empowered life to the baptism in the Holy Spirit (William, 2011).

The classical Pentecostal church usually integrates robust prayer meetings hooked on the lives of its faithful. It has been reported that there are several prayers and prophetic ministries which are set up in churches. For instance, the prayer centers of the Church of Pentecost provide patients with unofficial healthcare. The attendees of these prayer and prophetic gatherings gain assurance from the prophets and also experience psychological and emotional healing (White & Niemandt, 2015).

Additionally, Ghanaian Pentecostals make sure that their members are spiritually whole by providing them with individual religious exercise which is undertaken regularly. Both church members and non-members can approach pastors seeking advice on a range of different topics, including personal ones. Once more, the prayer and prophetic centers set aside specific days and hours for client/patrons consultation and counseling (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2002). Guidance for Ghanaian Pentecostal churches touches every aspect of believers' life. The areas of counseling may include the needs for spirituality, relationships, marriage, health, education, the economy, and politics (White & Niemandt, 2015).

One important practice and teaching of the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches is the provision of support to the less fortunate members of society. Even though the exertions they make are not sufficient, it is a manifestation of their sensitivity to social issues. They undertake these support services of help to supplement the government's efforts in resolving the issues and challenges

of communities. It is the belief of the church that the Government cannot support society's needs on its own (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2002).

The Pentecostal church leadership encourages the involvement of Christians in active politics and other public issues. From the viewpoint of these Pentecostal churches, a Christian's involvement in politics is not as evil as they are usually thought to be (Familusi, 2011). They believe that Politicians are responsible for creating and enforcing laws for the entire nation; these laws can be good or bad. It is therefore imperative for Christians to enter politics using Kingdom values in politics to make it more human (White & Niemandt, 2015). These strands of Christians are very much aware of the relevance of education and good health in the course of a person's life and the nation at large. To help in ensuring quality education and quality health in the country, the Pentecostal churches are involved in the construction of healthcare and educational facilities (White & Niemandt, 2015).

They provide initiatives that address the need for a modern, productive nation at the state level (Agbeti, 1991). Through sermons and other platforms, the leaders of Pentecostal churches in Ghana teach their members the need to maintain civility among citizens. They believe that the nation would not develop amid ethnocentrism, favoritism, and nepotism. They, therefore, draw attention to these things and warn them against being part of those whose actions do not promote peaceful coexistence (Dovlo, 1994).

The belief in miracles is another frequent habit among Pentecostal congregations in Ghana. Therefore, their prayer teams are required to pray that God will perform miracles through healing, signs, and wonders in the lives of those attending the crusade and the convention during times of crusades and

conventions. Additionally, intercession is performed for the unsaved in order to open their hearts to the gospel and bring them to an understanding of Jesus Christ's atoning power (White & Niemandt, 2015). On other occasions, the prayer ministry is dispatched ahead of time to spend time praying in the neighborhood and on the ground when the church is going to build a new church at a new location or in a community (2015).

In recent years, social services have been provided by Pentecostal movements. The theologies of health and prosperity as well as the requirement to meet their members' basic necessities have been incorporated to their evangelistic and healing activities. According to Miller and Yamamori (2007) who reported that, despite the fact that the Pentecostals are addressing the social concerns of individuals in their communities, they also place a lot of emphasis on the apocalyptic return of Jesus Christ.

At least twice a year, particularly during the Christmas and Easter seasons, many traditional Pentecostal churches in Ghana host large mass evangelism programs and activities. Depending on the organizing body of the church, these massive crusades are referred to as "National Conventions," "Regional Conventions," or "District Conventions." These large-scale crusades serve to both strengthen the "one-on-one evangelism" of individual believers and to share Jesus Christ with the unsaved (Anderson, 2005; White & Niemandt, 2015).

Some of these crusades may be hosted in communities, districts, or regions where the church hopes to establish new churches, grow the membership of existing congregations, or intensify evangelistic efforts already underway. Depending on where the souls are rescued, the gained souls are

then dispersed to nearby churches, and follow-ups are carried out in the weeks that follow to make sure the new believers continue attending church (2005; 2015). Pentecostals typically hold that the ability to do "signs and wonders in the name of Jesus Christ" to support and validate the gospel message comes with the arrival of the Spirit. The Pentecostal movement places a lot of emphasis on signs and wonders, especially those involving healing and miracles (Anderson, 1997).

The Charismatic Churches

According to Justin (2007), charismatic worship is defined by a desire for supernatural, euphoric experiences like healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues. Charismatic Christianity which is a type of Christianity that places a strong focus on the operation of the Holy Spirit, Spiritual gifts, and contemporary miracles as an everyday part of a believer's life is recognized by its adherents as Spirit-filled Christianity (Pew Forum, 2011).

In another sense, this type of movement emphasis the Baptism and the Holy Spirit's gifts which include the availability of individuals' lives for miracles, signs, and wonders. Further, charismatic Christianity anchors the acts and the enablement performances in the spiritual realm of the Holy Spirit sense that is evident in their everyday lives (Pew Forum, 2011).

Greggs (2009), noted that the establishment of Charismatic churches on the African continent including Ghana was as a result of the desire to build African Indigenous Churches (AIC). According to Parratt (2004), Africans in general are very united and are passionate about helping one another out and worshipping God together. The arrival of the charismatic Churches in Africa

was therefore viewed as the continent's 21st-century reformation of charismatic churches in Africa (Adogame, 2011).

Omenyo (2006), reported that charismatic churches made their presence in Ghana around 1960. The author said that charismatic churches were established owing to the need for charismatic restoration between the 1960s and 70s. The charismatic restoration commenced as Town Fellowships, and these organizations subsequently developed into Charismatic churches.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2013), thought that, earlier than the 1970s, the only source of membership for the charismatic churches was the evangelical fellowships. He mentioned that some of the evangelical organizations that helped establish charismatics in Ghana include the National Evangelical Association (NEA), Hour of Visitation Choir and Evangelistic Association (HOVCEA), Youth Ambassadors for Christ Association (YAFCA), and Ghana Evangelical Society (GES).

The struggle against established evangelical movements' beliefs and methods resulted in the surge in the number of Charismatic churches in Ghana. Asamoah-Gyadu (2005), observed that the majority of the Charismatic congregations in Ghana were inspired by the Ghana Evangelical Society when they first began (GES). According to the author, Archbishop Benson Idahosa, who held his first crusade in 1977 in Accra and was marked by amazing miracles and wonders, had an impact on the development of Charismatic churches in Ghana. This campaign which was termed "...the spiritual revival tempo in the existing evangelical fellowships" began specifically in Tema, and Accra, (Larbi, 2001).

Duncan-Williams returned from Nigeria in 1978 and started having fellowship with a small group of individuals at his father's residence in Accra. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2005),

The Duncan-Williams Fellowship was later relocated to the Association International School parking lot before being set up in the Accra International Students' Hostel. According to the author, Duncan-Williams is responsible for starting the first Charismatic church in Ghana. This is due to the fact that in May 1980, his fellowships changed into the Christian Action Faith Ministries. In stark contrast, Larbi (2001) noted that Idahosa launched the Redemption Hour Faith Ministries in 1978 before the Christian Action Faith Ministries were established. The Redemption Hour Faith Ministries, according to a 2005 study, founded the first charismatic congregations in Ghana.

Omenyo (2005:50), advocates that the renewed sense of religious authority based on the Bible in mainstream Charismatic churches could be likened to the authority of the old African community, where authority is unquestionably respected. Omenyo goes on to say that the Bible is frequently used in relation to Charismatics. The Bible is God's spoken word and a primary source of spiritual power, making it an important tool for overcoming evil and achieving monetary prosperity.

This is evident in the literature review that, because Africans easily accept authority without any effort to question, in much the same way, Christians readily accept whatever their leaders say without making any attempt to scrutinize what the Bible says or what is being said and preached. According to Omenyo (2006:256), the Charismatic movement in Africa is appealing in part because of how it responds to African spirituality. In other

words, the charismatic movement has gained popularity both in Africa and Ghana, largely as a result of the fact that the majority of its activities were in consonance with both African and Ghanaian viewpoints.

The Practices and Teachings of Charismatic Churches in Ghana

Gordon et al (2007) noted that, the style of worship of the charismatic church is similar to the African Traditional Religion which was in practiced locally. The authors further stated that, in addition to presenting the gospel to individuals within the framework of their culture, charismatic congregations occasionally incorporate some traditional African forms of worship into their religious practices. The Writers concluded that there is a motivation for the adherents of charismatic because their leaders promise them an economic and social breakthrough. In the literature review, it came to light that, biblical interpretation among the charismatic and Pentecostal Christian Churches is done to meet the spiritual and physical needs of their congregants without paying attention to important hermeneutical details. Hence every effort to get this done is explored and this is evident in their practices as seen above. They believe that nothing just happens in this life without a purpose, thus, an indication that every action has a reason, which can be spiritual. It is believed that because a man is composed of a spirit, a soul, and a body, whatever occurs to the human spirit also impacts the physical, soul, and body (Gordon et al, 2007).

According to Diara and Onah (2014), charismatic churches tend to meet the desires of their members more than orthodox churches. The charismatic believers perceive that the practices and teachings of the orthodox churches are powerless and will be unable to meet their basic needs.

The charismatic movement strongly entertains the belief that people can be completely healed from any kind of sickness through prayer that is said in the name of Jesus Christ. A common dogma in charismatic churches is a prayer for divine healing. This belief caused some charismatic churches in the 1970s to discourage their church members from seeking medical care for illnesses at health facilities. The churches made their members believe that holding onto divine healing alone was the best for the sick (Dena, 2013). According to Hylson-Smith (2007) the trend of relying solely on divine healing has changed. The author reported that Charismatic churches congregants depend on divine healing as a supplement to traditional medical care when they are ill and seek medical attention.

Spirit's churches are another name for charismatic congregations. This is so because some elements of the African Traditional Religion are found in the teachings and practices of the churches. Some of these practices are prophecy, speaking in tongues, and having vision (Turaki, 2007). Asamoah-Gyadu (2002) reported that, the charismatics encourage people to attend church services and take part in church activities. These churches have religious entrepreneurial ambitions to translate salvation into realistic everyday successes in education, business, family life, and economics. Once more, charismatic churches have produced salvation sermons that are brimming with optimism and deliverance from sickness, poverty, and all manner of injustices.

As per observation, Charismatic Christians believe that prosperity is only actualized when one has successfully dealt with his or her enemies and has meticulously pursued his/her spiritual guidance, without any mistake. This

explains why many Ghanaian religious consumers patronize any religious products and services or anything capable of affecting their successes. Some of these guidelines include bathing herbal concoctions, special fasting and prayers, and special anointing services. Again, in the literature review, it came to light that, biblical interpretation among the charismatic Christian Churches in Ghana is done to provide for the physical and spiritual needs of their congregants without paying attention to important hermeneutical details (Aryeh, 2016). Hence every effort to get things done is explored and this is evident in some of their practices as seen above. It was reported that another practice of the charismatic churches is to enable women to make decisions about their own health, sexuality, careers, and children's education. This indicates that these churches focus on more than just the spiritual side of life (Kojok, 2007). According to Nterful (2013), Charismatic churches have over the years implemented programs and activities that have led to the conversion of criminals and prostitutes to become Christians. He further mentioned that, churches give criminals and prostitutes' employable skills making them shun their previous trades and lifestyles.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the nature of Christian Churches in Ghana. It was noted that, Ghana is a secular nation but its religious coexistence has been excellent. Among the many religions in Ghana are the three main leading religions. Thus, African Traditional religion, Christianity, and Islam. But in terms of numbers, Christianity is the largest followed by Islam and African Traditional religion respectively. There are many Christian denominations or churches that constitute the Christian landscape. Among them are, the

orthodox churches, the Evangelical Churches, the Pentecostal churches, and the Charismatic Churches.

It was observed that, even though Christians within the orthodox strand based their teachings on the Bible and the belief in Jesus Christ, there exist some differences in the teachings of each Christian Orthodox group. For instance, whilst the Roman Catholic teaches that the Pope is infallible, the other groups stand in contrast to this believe. In as much as there exist diverse differences, however, there are similarities in their teachings and practices.

The Evangelicals can be said of being the bedrock reason for the Pentecostal- Charismatic movement's fast widespread growth and acceptance in Ghana. Among the churches that identify with this strand is the Ghanaian Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Tosu (2007) shares that, the beliefs of the church (Evangelical) are based on the Holy Bible and as a result, undertakes practices and teachings based on the Bible. The Pentecostals like other branches of Evangelical Protestantism, uphold the Bible inerrancy and the requirement that each person receives Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. The Charismatic Christianity worship is characterized by a desire for supernatural, euphoric experiences such as healing, prosperity, and speaking in tongues (Justin, 2007).

Some of the things that distinct this group of Christianity are that, there are motivations for the adherents of Charismatic because their leaders promise them an economic and social breakthrough. They seem to address the problems of their followers at all times. Hence, every effort to get things done is explored and this is evident in some of their practices as indicated beforehand. The next chapter discusses the interpretation of John 9:1-41. The

exercise was guided by the Drapper's Tri-Polar model for the exegetical textual analysis. The intent was to assess how the church, the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International has contextualized and appropriated the text under study.



CHAPTER THREE

INTERPRETATION OF JOHN 9:1-41

Introduction

The previous chapter described the discussion centered on Ghana and churches. Among some of the things the chapter looked at were, Ghana, the types of religions in Ghana, and Ghana's main churches. With regards to Ghana, the Chapter showed that the modern-day Ghana was previously known as Gold Coast. It further indicates that the British ruled the region of the Gold Coast until the nation's 6 March 1957 declaration of independence under the leadership of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. It is located West of Africa having a population of 30,792,608 along the Gulf of Guinea. In terms of the religious landscape, it was noted that Ghana is a secular state, however, religious liberty is guaranteed at all times for all citizens. The chapter also indicates that, Christianity has the largest adherents followed by Islam, the Traditional African religion in that order. It tells of the African traditional religion being an indigenous faith in Ghana as against Christianity and Islam.

The chapter discussed the prominent churches in Ghana and their relationship to Orthodox Churches. Churches that are classified as Orthodox are the Roman Catholic churches and Protestant Churches. The next main church was the Evangelicals. It was noted that some churches categorize themselves as Evangelical churches based on their practices and believe system. It has also shown that, the Pentecostals and the Charismatics Churches have a lot of things in common. This is because, the Charismatics immersed out of the Pentecostals. It is also observed that the Pentecostal churches in

Ghana can be categorized in two ways. The earlier Pentecostal movement in Ghana and the churches of Pentecostalism.

In this chapter, the chapter three, the focused is on the analysis of the healing of a certain man who was blind from birth in John 9:1-41. The exegesis of the passage begins with a delimitation of the text. This discusses the reasons why the researcher considers the chosen text (John 9:1-41) as a unit to be studied. The next is a workable structure of the text to expedite the exegetical work. Then the analysis of the text follows suit. Thus, Distantiation, contextualization, and then appropriation, based on the church's reading. The outline of Andreas Köstenberger in the Baker's Exegetical Commentary on John was roughly adopted and followed for the study. The preference for this structure is because the first block of Kostenberger's outline contains the passage for this study with the simple title, 'The healing'. This makes the analysis interesting and straight forward. In other words, this chapter discusses the church's interpretation of the Gospel of John, especially the areas that form the basis for the Church's life from John 9:1-7. Thus, the third chapter is looking at the exegesis of John 9:1-7 in the context of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church, Ghana.

Delimitations

John 9:1-41 is selected for the study since it is a unit. In considering the healing of the blind man narrative, many scholars have different views, however, the pericope can be regarded as a single entity for the following various causes. First, despite the text is a continuation of the immediately preceding chapter, the characters involved in the narrative are different from the characters in chapter eight. The characters in (vv.1-7) are made up of Jesus

and his disciples, and the man who was born blind. (Vv.8-12) introduces us to another set of characters.

This time Jesus and his team had left, making way for the neighbors and the unidentified group of people the author describes as the people who had previously seen the blind man. In (vv.13-34), we see the addition of the Pharisees to the characters in vv.8-12. Also, (vv.35-41) introduces another set of characters which consists of the blind man, some of the Pharisees, and Jesus Christ and his followers. In light of the characters present, the conversation between them can therefore be considered as a unit. This text's literary coherence can be seen after this analysis or inspection.

In addition, the contexts for speaking in chapters 8 and 9 are different. In the immediately preceding chapter, the setting was in the Temple but the setting in John 9:1-41-10:21 was outside the Temple. In the concluding part of chapter eight of John's fourth gospel, the discourse was concerning Jesus's claim of his relationship with God. But chapter 9 of the same gospel, the discourse was mainly on the healing of a man born blind. Biblical scholars use setting in literature in narratives because "it helps to set the tone, affecting how people act, dialog, foreshadowing events, evoking an emotional response, reflecting the society in which the characters inhabit, and occasionally even participating in the plot narrative" (Benedict, 2009). Therefore, the setting in the healing of the man born blind according to Johannine account plays a very significant role in understanding the circumstances surrounding the healing. Once the narrative took place in one setting with the same discourse, it can constitute a unit.

Third, the alteration of themes in the previous and the following verses indicate that the text under study can be considered as a unit for the thesis. Scholars have thematized the healing of the blind man narrative in four semantics. In (vv.1-5) the account leading to the healing is evidenced. (Vv. 6-7) record the healing proper which is quite different from the preceding happenings, (vv.8-34) contain the investigation into the healing, highlighting the violation of the sabbatical laws, including the verification from the parent, whereas the (vv.35-41) talk about Jesus's second appearance into the scene. The difference in themes and scenes as well as the discourse, are obvious, but they are all in connection to the healing of the blind man and therefore can be treated as a unit. In the light of these observations, I consider John 9:1-41 as a unit within the broader block of the healing of the man with congenital blindness narrative with regards to Johannine gospel.

Exegetical Analysis of John 9:1-41

The exegetical analysis focused on (vv1-7) of the entire chapter of John 9:1-41 as stated before, because, it addresses the issues directly relevance to the goal of the research.

Structure of John 9:1-7

This passage may be divided as follows:

Vv. 1-12: The healing of the blind man

Vv. 13-17: The initial interrogation of the formerly blind man

Vv. 18-23: The Pharisees' interrogated the man's parents

Vv. 24-34: The Pharisees' second interrogation of the formerly blind man

Vv. 35-41: The Pharisees' spiritual blindness

Generally, it may be observed from (vv. 1-41) that the movements of activities in the passage were greatly informed by the various incidences and the activities of the various characters in the passage. However, in all, the man with congenital blindness, and the Pharisees were at the forefront coupled with their actions and statement generating a response from each other. But ultimately, Jesus' approach to the recovering of sight spawn the whole narratives which resulted in the actions and reactions of the Pharisees.

From (v.1), Jesus initiated a major movement by his attempt to heal the man who was believed to have been born blind which attracted the attention of the Pharisees and the neighbors with the man being the center of attraction. But, from (vv.13 to 34) the interactions of both the man and the Pharisees dominated the passage even though Jesus initiated the whole conversation until he was introduced into the scene again from (v. 35) to the end of the narrative. Hence, based on the movements in the text, I came out with this structure so that the movement of the activities by all the actors, and the occurrences which constituted one of the outstanding miracles of the Johannine miracle account will stand out.

The events in (vv.35-41) reintroduced Jesus into the scene in his interaction with both the Pharisees and the man which highlights the Pharisees' disapproval of the healing especially because of the violation of the Sabbatical law. This outline encompasses all the activities that took place in the passage under study, John 9:1-41.

Distantiation

Textual Analysis of John 9:1-7

This section deals with the analysis of the compositional structural elements of the text subsequent to the structure of the text that the researcher have provided. It thus examines how words, phrases, clauses and sentences as well as the syntactic arrangement to reveal the authorial purpose. In this exercise, the Greek text was also analyzed subsequent to the structure that I provided in line with the various grammatical functions in the text to arrive at an informed understanding of the text. As noted before, the analysis was based on the first seven verses of John 9. This is because, the main issues concerning the reading of the focused church are found within the purview of John 9:1-7. Therefore, the textual analysis followed the structure provided below which falls within the first block of Kostenberger's outline for easy assessments.

Vv. 1-3: The cause of the man's blindness

Vv. 4-5: Night and the work of God

Vv. 6-7: Jesus' method that led to the healing of the blind man

The Text in Greek and New International Version

Καὶ παράγων εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς. **2** καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες, Ῥαββί, τίς ἡμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῆ; **3** ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς, Οὔτε οὗτος ἡμαρτεν οὔτε οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῆ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ. **4** ἡμᾶς δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἕως ἡμέρας ἐστίν· ἔρχεται νῦν ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι. **5** ὅταν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ᾧ, φῶς εἰμι τοῦ κόσμου. **6** ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἔπτυσεν χαμαὶ καὶ ἐποίησεν πηλὸν ἐκ τοῦ πτύσματος καὶ ἐπέχρισεν αὐτοῦ τὸν πηλὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς **7** καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ὑπάγε

νίψαι εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν τοῦ Σιλωάμ (ὁ ἐρμηνεύεται Ἀπεσταλμένος).
ἀπῆλθεν οὖν καὶ ἐνίψατο καὶ ἤλθεν βλέπων

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. **2** His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" **3**"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life. **4** As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. **5** While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." **6** Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. **7**"Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So, the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

The cause of the man's blindness John 9:1-3

(Καὶ παράγων εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς) (As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth). The first question that comes to mind is how Jesus and his disciples got to know about the man's status that he was blind from birth. It is easy to identify a blind person by the roadside, but it is difficult to detect the cause of blindness without any previous connection. The phrase (εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν ἐκ γενετῆς) "he saw a man blind from birth" literally suggests that the moment Jesus saw the man he concluded that the man's blindness or the inability of the man to see, was from birth without any investigation done to ascertain the cause. Most probably, the man's blindness was an open knowledge, known in the community by all.

The phrase (παράγων), "as he passed" is in the adverbial form and it can best be treated as temporal or progressive, meaning that Jesus was in the process of moving or leaving the scene when he encountered the man with

congenital blindness. The case in which the (ἐκ) “from” is rendered expresses source or origin, but with a temporal sense, indicating the period within which his blindness occurred. Thus, from the time of his birth. A more Semitic way of putting it would be "from the mother's womb", as seen in Matt.19:12.

Blindness from birth underlines, or is an indication of the seriousness of the state and also transpositions the argument that the man's condition was as a result of sin in (v.2) as it is in their tradition or belief system.

Night and the work of God John 9:4-5

(Καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες, Ῥαββί, τίς ἥμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῆι) “His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

“The disciples seem to have already made answers to their quests to know the cause of the man’s blindness. It is an indication that Jesus’ disciples were with him at the time Jesus met the blind man. (Τίς ἥμαρτεν) “who sinned” this is (aoris) and it can be rendered as, this man or his parents”. From the disciples’ query, it is inferred that the possibility of a Festus in the womb to commit sin that leads to physical defect afterward is most probable. Exodus 20:5; 34:7; Num.14:18; and so on, certainly embolden the opinion that the stain of a parent's sin may distress a child at a specific period of time.

The phrase, (ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῆι.) “That he was born blind?” when pooled with the subject is probably playing the role of presenting a consecutive clause, which articulates and demonstrates result, which is compelled by the result that, or the reason why there are effects, thus, the blindness. In other words, it is generally known and accepted that there is a cause for every sickness in two ways, either one is victimized or oppressed by

the sins of the parents or by the victim himself or herself. Köstenberger (2004) intimates that, Jesus, however, while acknowledging the possibility that suffering may be the direct result of sin (John 5:14), denied that such was invariably the case in the next verse. Paul likewise acknowledged that a specific illness or experience of suffering in any way, may be the consequence of sin (Rom. 1:18–32; 1 Cor. 11:30), but he also made it clear that this did not follow automatically (2 Cor. 12:7; Gal. 4:13). He further states that, the disciple's avowal can be placed directly within the milieu of present-day rabbinic views. Fundamental to the disciples' statement or admission is the concern not to charge God with perpetrating or effecting evil on innocent people (Exod. 20:5; Num. 14:18; Deut. 5:9).

By deduction, it is obvious that there is always a cause that leads to effect. All occurrences are under pinned by actions and dithering of humans leading to suffering in many form, including blindness. From this background, the disciples attempted to assign a possible cause or reasons to why the man was born blind. The pursuit to unravel the mystery behind the man's blindness lies in the display of theological construct locus regarding sin and suffering in the world. Thus, sin being the causative factor for suffering, either by the sufferer or by external factors including parents. But in the ensuing discourse, Jesus reply changed the narrative.

(Ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς, Οὔτε οὗτος ἥμαρτεν οὔτε οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ) "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life". Jesus' response to his disciples seems to present a contrary and an antagonistic view with respect to the cause of the blindness of

the man. That is, the blindness of this person is not occasioned or induced by any sin of his own, nor of his parents or any external factor. This means that the assertion, that sin can directly be connected to suffering is out of the argument, this time, it is ruled out to make way for a novel development as far as Jews' concepts of cause and defect in their society are concern. However, these words do not contradict or suppressed the universal sinfulness of man either (cf. Rom. 3:9-20, 23). Instead, Jesus meant that this man's blindness was not caused by some specific sin. Contrary, the problem existed so that God could display his works in the midst of seeming tragedy (cf. Ex. 4:11; 2 Cor. 12:9).

(ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῆ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ) “But this happened so that the work of God may be displayed in his life”. Marsh (2016) shares that, in 644 occurrences throughout the New Testament, the logical function of this word (ἀλλ') “but” dictates its dominant usage as a contradictory (or adversative) conjunction. That is, its main purpose is to state a contrast or a gap between opposing thoughts. As such, it can be interpreted as, but, rather, or however. The role of (ἀλλ') “but” in the phrase above as seen in the text, is more of connecting two dissimilar or divergent thoughts or ideas, hence it can be termed as connective conjunction. Thus, the author tells that Jesus' view contradicts the notion that sin is always the cause of all human interrelated issues.

Again, the common function of this particular conjunction proposes a contrast or divergent thought to the impression to which it is connected. It is therefore palpable that Jesus was unambiguously making a statement of purpose by setting up the purpose for the man's congenital blindness as

indicated by the immediate preceding word, the conjunction (ἵνα) “that, or so that”. Thus, Jesus and his disciples were in the business of manifesting the work of God in the life of humanity notwithstanding the caused. Literarily, the narrator is informing readers that even evil ultimately contributes to the greater work of God, not necessarily suggesting the impression that God intentionally made the man go through blindness from birth.

4 ἡμᾶς δεῖ ἐργάζεσθαι τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με ἕως ἡμέρας ἐστίν· ἔρχεται νύξ ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι. 5 ὅταν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ᾶ, φῶς εἰμι τοῦ κόσμου. 4 As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5 While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Jesus makes a public declaration concerning the time frame for both himself and his followers. “We” meaning Jesus and his disciples has been assigned to work to accomplish a divine mandate as long as it is day. (τὰ ἔργα τοῦ πέμψαντός με) “The one who sent me” is an indication of Jesus’ exceptional prominence as the one sent or commissioned by God.

The term (δεῖ) “must” as seen in John 3:14; 4:4; 10:16; 12:34, connotes divine compulsion for Jesus Christ and his followers. In other words, God’s work must be accomplished irrespective of any opposition in the process. The term also appears to place God’s work ahead of anything else in Jesus’ life and the life of his disciples. Jesus further makes another statement (ἔρχεται νύξ ὅτε οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι) “Night is coming, when no one can work” to note that, his time to work is defined within a certain restricted time.

Even though Jesus is the light of the world as noted in the text, his task is limited to this darkness. Thus, day means the allotted time for Jesus and his

disciples to work, and night is the limit that has been set for him to do God's work. In this case Jesus is seen as the light of the world (John 8:12), but after his death his disciples would be his light (Matt.5:14; Eph.5:8-14) intended to bring Christ (the light) to others.

Jesus' method that led to the healing of the blind man John 9:6-7

6 ταῦτα εἰπὼν ἔπτυσεν χαμαὶ καὶ ἐποίησεν πηλὸν ἐκ τοῦ πτύσματος καὶ ἐπέχρισεν αὐτοῦ τὸν πηλὸν ἐπὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς 7 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ὑπάγε νῖψαι εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν τοῦ Σιλωάμ (ὃ ἐρμηνεύεται Ἀπεσταλμένος). ἀπῆλθεν οὖν καὶ ἐνίψατο καὶ ἤλθεν βλέπων

6 Having said this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means Sent). So, the man went and washed, and came home seeing.

The statement (ταῦτα εἰπὼν) "Having said this," the participle is adverbial and it can best be treated or considered as temporal; "when he had thus spoken", this specifies that immediately after Jesus had answered his disciples he engaged the blind man and further proceeded to the healing process. Again, the phrase "having said these things" ties (9:6; NIV) tightly to (9:5; NIV), as a preceding statement making the sign as an illustration of the saying in (9:5; NIV) (Carson 1991: 363; cf. Barrett 1978: 357–58, as cited in Köstenberger, 2004).

(Ἐπτυσεν χαμαὶ καὶ ἐποίησεν πηλὸν ἐκ τοῦ πτύσματος) "He spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva". Now, Jesus' use of saliva is reminiscent of the healing of the deaf and mute man in the Decapolis (Mark 7:33) and of the blind man in Bethsaida (Mark 8:23). Historical account has it that, some Jewish rabbis believe that the saliva of a firstborn had healing

properties. Among the nations surrounding the Jewish culture, saliva was recurrently associated with magical practices that many rabbis seem to have condemned the use of saliva (Köstenberger, 2004). He further noted that, Palestinian Jews apparently believe that human excreta which includes saliva were all forms of dirt that result in rendering individuals ceremonially unclean, and hence, the command to wash.

(Ἔπαγε νίψαι) "Go, he told him, wash", the aorist of this phrase shows that, the command expects an immediate or an instant response. This phrase also has a parallel with 2 Kings 5:10-13 and the implied object is the "eyes" or "wash your face". So the blind man was compelled to go and wash, or, Jesus commanded the man to get rid of the spittle from his face and in the process, his eyes were opened. This approach or method is unswervingly interrelated to the process leading to Naaman's healing. In Naaman's case, Elisha didn't heal him instantly, rather, he sent him to wash in the Jordan according to the Hebrew Bible (2kings 5:10 13).

Now, just as Naaman was cured after obeying the command to wash, so it is for the man who was born with the congenital blindness. This is apparent in the statement (καὶ ἦλθεν βλέπων) "and came seeing". In another sense, the healing or the recovery of sight took place after washing, not instantly after applying the soil on his face. Hence, he went to the pool blind but came back seeing.

Contextualization

Here, the contextualization of John 9:1-7 among the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church in Ghana was done to ascertain what meaning the text has for them as per their interpretation. This

was done to give a thrust to the goal of the work concerning their reading of the text. The purposive sampling method was employed to select the respondents that enabled the researcher to determine the desirable information tied to meeting the second pole of the model chosen to guide the thesis. The following are the issues that emerged from the interpretation of the text as shown earlier:

- i. The cause of the man's blindness
- ii. Night and the work of God
- iii. Jesus' method that led to the healing of the man

Facilitation Process

The researcher followed the protocol of the Church by sending a written letter from the Department to the authorities of the church, introducing the researcher as a student from University of Cape Coast. In all, the researcher visited the Church premises five times: the first day was when the letter was presented to the authorities as indicated, the second and the third days were meant to meet with the lead minister but the appointments were canceled. But, in the fourth and fifth days, three focused groups discussion were formed to discourse the intents of the research. The first engagement was with the lead minister, the second was the church board which comprises the lead minister and the deacons, and the third group was the church members (the ordinary members). In all, 28 sample size were employed: the head minister, seven deacons, and twenty church members.

One-on-one interviews for Church members took place after the authorities of the church announced to the congregation to permit the researcher to conduct interview. In all, the interviews lasted for two hours

thirty minutes and data were recorded and stored electronically. The responses from the group discussions and the interviews differ as per their experiences especially with regards to how the text under study has influenced their individual lives. In terms of their interpretation of the chosen text, both the lead minister and the rest of the board members held the same view without ambiguities. In both interviews and focused group discussions, respondents were allowed to read and interpret the text in the language (Twi language) they were acquainted with as a faith community.

Response on the cause of the man's blindness

Responses from the church leaders especially the lead minister on their interpretation concerning the cause of the man's blindness, revealed that, the sins of men or women, parents and grandparents underpin the woes of their offspring. According to them, anything considered to be sin including, cheating, fornication, abortion, gossiping, murdering, and all other societal vices in any form against humanity are perceived as sins and thus considered as the main cause of all human deformities or troubles. An attempt to establish the views of the focused group on the word "blind" in the blind man narrative in John's gospel brought to light that, the blindness of the man has many meanings and interpretations for them. They read that, the blindness of the man represents all troubles, whether deformities or any type of sickness, as much as every physical problems are concern. This is not the only meaning of blindness, but apart from the physical challenges of humanity, the blindness of the man is also tied to every "spiritual" issues of life.

For clarification, they noted the following as examples: sickness in any form such as Diabetes, Cerebrovascular accident (also known as stroke),

and Hematochezia. Other human related issues including Challenges in business, poor profit margin, childbearing related issues, poor academic performance, and many more. In other words, sin underscores all problems; either by the victim himself, or by the parent or by transgenerational sin.

Response on the meaning of night and the work of God

The leaders responded to the question that sought to know their interpretation of the work of God as used in the narrative and it came out that, the work of God means the glory of God and hence, to address the issues of sin and deformity, as well as mitigating all spiritual problems of humanity we must pray for the glory of God to manifest. It also came out in their interpretation that, the man was born blind so that he would believe in Jesus Christ.

According to the leadership, night is coming has been understood in three ways. Firstly, very soon Jesus will come for the second time and at that period, the whole world shall be full of darkness, making it impossible for anybody to do anything or work. So here, night represents total darkness that will ensue the entire world at the second coming of Jesus Christ. Secondly, the word night apart from it being or representing total darkness expected to accompany the second coming of Jesus Christ, also stands for death. That is, because death is destined for all human under the sun, we must work toward the salvation of mankind.

A further probe by the researcher into their understanding of the word work in this context revealed that, work includes sharing of the gospel and anything that will bring people to the shared salvation every Christian professes. Not only that but also, night is interpreted in the Church as old age.

According to them, at old age human beings are less likely to do vigorous work.

The leading minister, Prophetess Comfort Kwoffie shares that, the best period to work for the salvation of people is at youthful stage. According to the leadership of the Church, Jesus' statement, "I am the light of the world" is the season preceding times of darkness, of death, and of old age, where a man can work.

Response on Jesus' method that led to the healing of the blind man

The researcher's pursuit to find out what their readings are concerning Jesus' approach to the healing of the blind man, they recounted how the founder of the church, Prophet Dr. Samuel Koffie came by the "Miracle Clay". They narrated the story of how God directed him to use the clay to perform many miracles, by praying over the Clay and ministering it in accordance to his faith. According to them, the formation of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church came about after a dream by Prophet Dr. Samuel Koffie, the founder of the said church. In that dream, it is belief that, Prophet Dr. Samuel Koffie, met God, and in the dream, he found himself in the middle of thick darkness. Then he was given a certain soil or Clay and subsequently there was light around him, but the rest of the world was left in darkness following the application of the soil. Thus, he was told that anybody the soil touches will come into the light. The light according to their interpretation of the dream represents the salvation of humanity. In other words, anybody who uses the soil shall be saved from the world of darkness and troubles.

They also responded that, Jesus' application of the mud on the face or the eyes of the blind man must be seen as an example and a format for application of the soil, or the mud on any part of the body as much as the needs arrive. They added that, the blindness of the man cannot be limited to only blindness but, also, any human problem can be categorized in the class of blindness. They further noted that, if Jesus smeared the mud or the clay on the blind man's eyes then the application of the miracle Clay cannot only be tied to the external application but, the use and the application of their type of mud, (Miracle Clay) can be extended to oral administration.

Reference was made to (Genesis 2:7) with regards to the mud application by Jesus that human beings were created from the dust of the ground and thus the application of mud by Jesus. Their reaction to the application of the mud in Jesus' method also revealed that, all creation including plants were also created from the soil hence, the reason why Jesus used mud to cure the blind man.

Appropriation of the text

This is the third aspect of the Tri-Polar according to Drapper (1991). This section deals with the appropriation of the text under study in light of the context of the faith community, the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International church, Ghana. This is the crux of interpretation of John 9, because, the church is largely influenced by what it stands for in accordance to what they believe (Patt and Grenholm, 2000). In this exercise, the light will be on the areas discussed in the preceding interactions.

Response on the assessments of the impacts of the cause of the man's blindness on the church

All the response from the leaders of the church including the lead minister specified that, impacts of the cause of the man who was born with congenital blindness on the church in the text is very enormous especially in the area of deformities and any other human related issues. Even though Jesus' response indicated that the blind man's blindness was not occasioned by any sin of himself or the parents', the members in the church blame all their problems on their sins or mostly on generational sins. The head of the church specifically indicated that, the sources of all problems are in three phases: first, the sins of the victim, the parents' sins, and the sins of ground parents. She further noted that, many of the problems of the members especially those whose lives were challenged in many ways were as results of curses from the parents or the members themselves.

The ordinary members also responded that, many of the problems they have been facing were mainly caused by their parents. They further intimated that, "we are victims of family curs, but there is hope in the miracle clay". Both the leaders of the church and the ordinary members opined that, their concepts about the text has positively impacted their lives, because, firstly, they are able to discover the underpinning factors that are responsible for all forms of sickness or problems, and secondly, they are able to mitigate every problem based on their conceptual ideations of the text as a Church.

The leaders advanced that, they consider every problem as a strand of blindness and needs to be addressed through the application of their type of mud, the miracle clay. According to them, this concept has positively

influenced the lives of the members as well as helping the church to progress in many ways including growth in numbers. This is because, the church is perceived as a solution center for all their problems. As a result, many people patronize the church by bringing many sick people including persons with physical deformities, and marital issues. Again, the leadership also stated that, blindness also has spiritual connotations. Thus, apart from classifying every problem as blindness, they also label every problem as spiritual, therefore they are able to provide solutions to all underlining human issues including spiritual distress. The ordinary members also confirmed that, the impact of the text on both their Christian lives and social lives are enormous.

In terms of their spiritual lives, they depend on the miracle clay as a means to ward off every malevolence spirit either by sprinkling it around their environments or by smearing it on their bodies. A lady respondent responded that, she uses the miracle clay as a face makeup and as a body lotion for both spiritual protection and physical protection. This is because, it is conceived by the congregants and the leaderships that, the miracle clay is potent to mitigate all problems based on the conceptual ideation that all problems are types of blindness.

Response on the assessment of the impacts of the meaning of night and the work of God on the church

Leaderships of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International church intimated by way of responding to how the meaning of the word night and the statement the work of God has impacted the lives of the Church noted that, their existence are coded in three strands. Thus, that their works are confined firstly within the purview of death. This is because, as per

their concepts, the word night means death, and that death is the final phase of their works as a church and hence they are working tirelessly by establishing churches as much as they can. But the ordinary members responded conflictingly. Because, to them, the word night means the literary night we experience in daily lives. Secondly, the word night has been conceived as old age.

In other words, at their old age, they cannot work aggressively as expected of them. But this is not the case with the church members, their understanding and the understanding of church leaders stood opposed. Finally, the word night appear to further impact the lives of the leadership than the members; the leaders responded that, night also has a futuristic implication for them as a church. This they postulated that, the coming of Jesus Christ shall usher in a world full of darkness such that, work will become an impossible task for all humanity, as a result they are determine to work before that day. Again, the members' responses indicated that the word night seem not to have impacted their lives as compared to the lead minister as well as the rest of the board members.

Response on the assessment of the impact of Jesus' method that led to the healing of the man

All respondents from the three focused group discussions revealed that all their healing activities center around how they have understood Jesus' approach to the healing of the blind man, and that, no healing is done without the use of the miracle clay. This clay is chipped from an enclosure in the compound where the church is located. The church is in a compound, walled, and behind it is this enclosure. The influence of the role of the blind man's

story in John's gospel in the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church is enormous. This is because two out of twenty respondents from the ordinary Church members prefer visiting the Health Post against eighteen who rely absolutely on the miracle clay for treatments of any ailments.

For example, one respondent shared his experience with the researcher by intimating that he has not visited any hospital for the past eleven years. This is because, all this while, the miracle clay has been the main cure for all ailments for him and most of the members in the Church.

In terms of appropriation of the text in this church, the board members responded by indicating that, the impact of the blind man story is seen in two ways, their spiritual lives as well as their physical lives. In terms of their spiritual lives, it was noted that, members who are challenged spiritually apply the miracle clay. For instance, victims of spiritual attacks, and spiritual marriage rely on this clay. They define spiritual marriage as when people consistently experience having marital affairs in their dreams, or any dream concerning anything associated with marriage. For example, dreaming about nursing children, breastfeeding in dreams, and having sexual intercourse are termed signs of spiritual marriage.

To discover how the clay has been used in this regards, they noted that, the application of the clay includes, putting the clay into their bathing water daily, or sometimes they are asked to put the miracle clay into their food each time they prepare their meal by leadership. In terms of their physical lives, they recounted that, all human-related problems are considered as another form of blindness and hence, the miracle clay is a reliable source of

solution in this regard. In another sense, diseases such as stomach ache, cancer, and Cerebrovascular accidents (CVA) otherwise known as stroke are all forms of blindness.

Problems including, lack of occupation, failure in business or trading, academic challenges, nightmares, and visa acquisition-related problems are considered blindness in this Church. The leaderships and the ordinary members responded in affirmation that the text has impacted both their spiritual lives and physical lives immensely. They further retorted that, basically, the application of the clay varies as per the faith of every individual. Thus, members are not restricted with respect to how the miracle clay can be applied.

The usage includes, sprinkling the clay in houses, work places, and cars to ward off any malevolence spirit or to mitigate any problem. Others administer the clay orally or internally to cure any form of ailment; some also opined that the clay can as well be applied by smearing it on their skins or externally to heal any form of sickness that requires the application on the skin.

The influence of the text on the church, based on their concepts about the blind man in John as revealed in the interactions with both the leaders and the ordinary members, has widely been convincing for both new and old members.

Conclusion

From the analysis above it is clear that the blind man's narrative has gain significant traction in the focused Church. The analysis has revealed how the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church has

conceptualized the text as per their views to suit their set up as faith community. This is evident in the examined data generated from the respondents' responses during the interactions with all the focused group discussions as indicated before. The exercise has again shown how they have conceptualized the cause of the man's blindness, the mud in Jesus' method that led to the healing of the man, and the rest. In it, it was observed that, the Church assigns sin to be the underlining cause for all deformities and human related concerns. It was further revealed that, the miracle clay and its usage as found among the Church was an ideation of Jesus' method and the usage of the mud in the church.

Again, it was also noted that, the blind man's narrative has extensively influenced this faith community in many ways. This is seen in the way they have appropriated the text in accordance to how they have conceived the text. For instance, in it, it came out that, the state of the man's blindness has been spiritualized in order to fine-tune their spiritual activities. Again, their views regarding blindness has been understood and equated to every problem in their lives, and hence, the miracle clay to alleviate all manners of problems in the lives of the members, as well as the leaderships of the church.

Furthermore, there were variations concerning the understanding of the leaders and the ordinary members. Thus, concerning the word night as found in the text, both shared different views, as against other areas of concerns. It is therefore conclusive that, this Johannine narrative plays a major role in all sphere of both the Church and the lives of all congregants. The next chapter will discuss the focused Church into details. Among some of the issues are: the processes that culminated the establishment of the Church, the

practices and doctrines of the church, the miracle clay, the profile of the founder of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church, and their administrative system.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHURCH OF DOCTOR JESUS

Introduction

The previous chapter has looked at the textual analysis of John 9 in the context of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. Drapper's Tri-Polar model was adopted for this exercise. In it, the text under study was assessed in three ways in accordance to the model: Distantiation, Contextualization, and Appropriation. In terms of the first Pole was the exegetical analysis of John 9:1-7. The next was how the said Church has contextualized the text as a faith community in Ghana, followed by how their reading of the text has affected or influenced their lives; thus Appropriation, how they have lived the blind man's narrative. These were arrived at through the researcher's interactions with the three focused group discussion at different levels and settings.

The fourth chapter of the work seeks to look at the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church in details. It seeks to answer questions about the Church, thus, the formation of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church, its teachings, activities or their beliefs, and more. It will be observed in this chapter that, the Church was started as a strand of Prayer Camp before its current Charismatic status. The chapter will as well show how the church started in the Eastern part of Ghana, and the reasons that occasioned the movement from Eastern region to its current place in the central region of Ghana. It will tell that, a lot of considerations and efforts were engaged before arriving at the name Doctor

Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. This section of the work is intended to shed light on the setup of the focused Church.

The Beginnings

The Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International was founded by Prophet Samuel Koffie (according to his wife). The wife, Mrs. Comfort Koffie recounts that, the founder was a member of St. Paul's Catholic Church at Asuokaw in the Eastern region in the year 1988, and rose from being an ordinary member of the Catholic Church to the catechism class with the aim of becoming a catechist. According to her, the husband satisfied all the conditions for him to be baptized in accordance to the Church's doctrines from the beginning of his initiation as a new member to the final state in order to be accepted as a full member. She further recounts that, Prophet Samuel Koffie travelled to Togo his hometown, with his family for greener pastures, but his health condition failed him due to serious ailment which made him returned to Ghana in 2001, and resided in a town in the Eastern region called Asamankese.

The decision that led to the beginning of Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and ministry International became the best option for him after his recovery from that unfortunate ailment in 2001 at Asamankese. As per observation, there was not enough evident to show in his ministry as somebody who has had adequate level of formal education. For instance, he read and preached in the local language. In his dealings as a lead minister, he was seen as an illiterate, or semi-illiterate by the people in the Church as well as the outsiders.

The formation of this Church is largely linked to the initiative of Prophet Samuel Koffie by all members of the Church. The formation became

imperative for the founder upon the realization of the rejection of his desire to start a charismatic ministry by the authorities of his formal Church, thus, the Roman Catholic Church at Asamankese. It is believed that, while the founder was serving as a catechist in his formal Church, he expressed his pursuit to commence a Charismatic strand of ministry in addition to the main Church (Roman Catholic Church).

The founder's wife postulates that, this decision was occasioned by his claim to have had a divine direction to start a charismatic type of ministry which was aimed at addressing both bodily and spiritual needs of people. But this decision did not sink well with the Church leaders.

Responding to the question by the researcher which sought to find out why the leadership of his former Church refused to his request, the wife stated that, the authorities considered his position as a sharp contradiction to the Church's doctrinal position and principles, and hence he opted out of the Catholic Church to start the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church in 2001 at Asamankese in the Eastern region.

The founder's decision to start this Church as indicated before, was based on an encounter he claimed he had with God in a vision. Respondent's response has it that, the vision was characterized with two significance scenes. Firstly, he saw a world full of darkness around him. This scene has been described as a sinful world representing people who have no allegiance with Jesus Christ. Another scene that is significant with the vision was light. Thus, he also saw a section of the world covered with light. According to the interviewee, the light represented a group of people who are identified by them as believers of Christ Jesus.

The lead minister postulated that, the founder was instructed by God to administer through the application of a certain mud in his ministry as a pastor. It is further noted in the vision that, the mud or what they called the "miracle Clay" could be used to address victims of many problems, physically and spiritually. For example, it is believed that, Prophet Samuel Koffie who happens to be the founder, was given a special enablement via the "mud" to heal various diseases such as Cerebrovascular accident (CVA), and many more. Spiritually, he was supposed to also provide answers to persons who have spiritual issues such as, the ability to ward off malevolent spirits.

According to the wife, Mrs. Comfort Koffie, this vision was a preparatory stage for her husband for the ministry God has designed for him. It is a belief that the vision was in one day, but it depicts a twelve-year training for Prophet Samuel Koffie. She further opined that, the founder of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church was ordered to play the role of Jesus Christ in his ministry in the vision. Thus, as Jesus used soil mixed with saliva to open the eyes of the blind man in John 9:1-41, in much the same way the founder was asked to function in the vision. And as a symbol of his servanthood and humility, he was ordered to always dress in knickers to symbolize his servanthood. That is why Prophet Samuel Koffie was mostly found dressing in knickers till he died in 2019.

The first Church service which saw a small membership of seven was made up of family members at a place in Asamankese known as James Town in the Eastern region in 2001. According to the Prophetess, the wife of the founder and the lead minister of this Church, the beginning of the Church attracted many critics because of the gains the newly founded Christian

Church was making in the community at Asamankese. Thus, many miracles were happening at regular basis during Church services but some of them seemed strange to the people in the community hence the criticism. For instance, people were criticizing the usage of the miracle clay and its validity.

Among some of the miracles were healing of diseases such as stomach pains, barren women were being ministered to and so on. Within a year, the newly founded Christian Church was characterized with fame, and known for extra-ordinary miracles in the community. These instances continued until a new direction was initiated to change the location of the Church to Kasoa after a year of its existence in the Eastern region in 2002. Under the direction of the leader, the Church was relocated from Asamankese in the Eastern region to Kasoa in the central region in 2002, a year after its inception in 2001. It was noted as per the interaction with the wife that this decision was based on the husband's choice and what she believed to have been the plan of God. The Church continued with its' services and programs at Kasoa in 2002 predominantly with the founder's children and a few family members.

With regards to the Church's expansion, they recounted that, the Church started growing steadily within a year. According to them, the growth was measured based on their two main activities or programs. Thus, their Wednesday special prayers program was marked with about seven thousand attendance from the neighborhood where the Church is situated, as well as people from beyond the community. It is further noted that people from the neighboring country such as Nigeria, Togo, etc., also patronized their Wednesday special prayer program. They again postulated that their Sunday services record about five thousand attendance on regular basis.

They hold that, the changed from the Eastern region to central region has been a success and it has lived to their expectations. Therefore, they can conclude that, leadership decision was in the proper direction and Kasoa as a choice was an appropriate option. Currently, it has six (6) branches across Ghana: Cape Coast, Winneba, Bawjiase, and Kasoa all in the central region, Takoradi in the Western region, Agbogbloshie in the Greater Accra Region, and one branch at Hamburg, Germany in Europe. The Kasoa branch serves as their headquarters Church with the largest congregation and infrastructures. Respondents further shared that authorities are hopefully working feverishly to further extend their branches to the rest of the regions in Ghana and beyond.

The Church's Name

According to Prophetess Mrs. Comfort Koffie, many efforts were invested in choosing the name for the newly established prayer Camp. She further indicated that the name Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International was finally arrived at after several prayers and fasting exercises. According to the information gathered, the name Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International came about based on their understanding of the man who was born blind's recovery in John 9:1-41. The story in John 9 has it that, one day Jesus in the company of His followers came across a man who had been born blind. Jesus used mud made from spittle and applied it on the man's eyes and ordered him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam after that, he obliged and came back seeing.

Thus, the name Doctor was given to the Church, because, they believed that Jesus was a Doctor as per their understanding in the text stated above. They further noted that, Jesus is both physical and spiritual Doctor;

being able to manifest the ability to mitigate difficulties relating to requirements for the body and the soul of human. In other words, the name of the Church is a reflection of what they represent with respect to the congenital man's recovery in John's Gospel.

From Prayer Camp to Charismatic Church

Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International used to operate as a prayer camp suit. As a prayer camp group, they were branded with chaining the congregants who came to the premises with mental issues and other related ailments. These people were kept at the prayer camp for a certain period of time as per their routine practices. Sometimes, their clients (people with all sorts of problems including sicknesses) were made to undergo periodic fasting and prayers designed by the Prophet for the alleviation of whatever the challenge might be within a brief period. According to the authorities, the practice of keeping people under their roof is now a thing of the past, thus, clients are ministered to occasionally and discharged at the same time, contrary to what they used to do. In the past, and as a prayer camp, those who patronize them were made to stay at the Church premises. Those with mental issues and who were extremely violent were kept in chains to tame them and to keep them under control. These per the respondent were the common practices among the camps for prayer in Ghana.

The practices of prayer camps in Ghana were more or less in competition with the various Psychiatric Hospitals. Many people with mental illness and mental health-related issues were patronizing the prayer camps in Ghana. A work conducted by the Ankaful Psychiatric health post indicated that even those who were educated and who were expected to know the cause

of mental challenges ended up assigning the cause of psychiatric related problems to spirits, or demons, and hence, they were all trooping to the various prayer camps in Ghana for solutions instead of the Orthodox scientific means (Ankaful Psychiatric Hospital, 2018). This was the state of the now Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church until 2015.

According to the Prophetess and her board members, the change from a prayer camp to a Charismatic group in July 2015 became imperative due to the increasing demand by members who saw the prayer camp as a solution to their various issues in all spatial of life. At a point when Prophet Koffie's services were being overstretched in terms of patronage by members of various Churches, he acceded to include Sunday service and other activities dissimilar to their traits, to depict a charismatic Church more than a prayer camp. This aligned with the Prophet's initial desire to start a charismatic ministry in his former Church, the Roman Catholic Church at Asamankese as stated before. This decision did not sink in well with the authorities of the Catholic Church, and hence leaving the Church to found the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp Ministry International Church at Asamankese in the Eastern region, in 2001.

As to why the old name of the Church was maintained, they stated that, the name was given to the founder through what they described as divine intuition, and hence, changing it will amount to a deviation and disobedience to God, and a change of the founder's intents and purposes. The leadership has plans to spread their wings as a Charismatic Christian Church to all the sixteen regions of Ghana, and beyond Africa.

Doctrine

Generally, doctrine is a set or a body of teachings adopted by a group of people. Among Christian fraternity, doctrine is define as a belief in the biblical teachings which discuss things like who God is, what we are, why the world is, etc. The topic is essential to every existing Christian Church (Nielson, 2010-2017). Doctrine can be said to be an act of teaching or that which is taught. It is indispensable to Christianity. Thus, Christianity cannot do without it, because it is the core of Christian principles. It condenses God's word, ensures the viability of God's church, and produces fruit in the lives of God's people (Nielson, 2010-2017). For example, the doctrine of salvation, one true God, and so on.

Healing activities of this Church is based on their teaching on healing. The belief that they have solutions for victims of various ailments and sicknesses is based on their belief in John's account of the man who was born blind. In that narration, it is noted with respect to the blind man's recovery, and the methodology with which Jesus healed the blind man. In Jesus' approach to the healing of the man, mud was at the center of the process that resulted in the healing. Based on this, the Church has identified itself as a healing Christian Church in Ghana. The belief is that the miracle clay can mitigate every kind of sickness. Therefore, all sorts of sick people and victims of many deformities are brought to the Church's ground for healing.

They hold that, the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church believe in and practice soul-winning as their doctrinal position. This is because, they believe that, Jesus Christ is a soul winner and a restorer of the God-human relationship, restoring fellowship between God and

all mankind. They assert that, soul-winning is one of their cardinal doctrinal teaching as a Christian religious entity in Ghana, and hence, all their programs and activities are targeted at winning souls. It is on account of this that, the use of the Miracle Clay is not limited to the congregants of this Church alone.

According to them, there are some of the members of the Church who belong to other Christian organizations and Islam.

They affiliate with the Church because of the healing benefits they experienced, and as a result, there are now more individuals who attend their programs and activities regularly according to respondent response. The belief and teachings on the "miracle clay" for healing seems to be attracting the attention of people within the community and beyond. This has become the crux of the growth of the Church since its inception. The opening of many branches in Ghana and beyond aims at increasing their number, thus fulfilling their doctrine of soul winning.

Also, the church belief and teaches concerning the dual nature of Jesus Christ. According to this teachings, they hold that the human nature of Jesus Christ links him and identifies him as the descendant of king David in ancient times as found in Mark 10:47. This is a story about a certain blind man who begs for arms by roadside during Jesus' time. On the way to Jericho, Jesus met the blind man who is described as Bartimaeus. He described Jesus Christ as "the son of David" when he attempted to call Jesus' attention consistently in order to get his kindness, which he did. Again, in Romans 1:2-4, the author describes Jesus by tracing his lineage to David as his descendant with respect to Jesus' human nature. The author also links Jesus to God as his

father. Thus, explaining the reason and bases for the Church's doctrine about the dual nature of Jesus Christ.

In Hebrews 12:2, the story has it that, Jesus is sited on certain throne at God's right hand in heaven. According to them, this is an indication that Jesus Christ also has God-nature in addition to his human-nature. Thus, the three biblical texts which underpin the belief of the Church concerning the dual nature of Jesus as their doctrine. In terms of his divine nature, the Church asserts that Jesus has enormous power and abilities to perform great and awesome miracles among humanity based on the fact that he is God's son. This belief explains the Church's view of the fact that, as much as Jesus was endowed with such great divine abilities to wrought amazing miracles, so are they made to function in the miracle-working performances as a Christian entity. The ministry of the founder is being compared to Jesus' ministry in terms of working miracles in many ways. Thus, the founder was considered as a type of Jesus commissioned to win souls through miracles.

Not only is that, but another doctrine they also believe in is what they describe as “the blessed hope”. According to them, “The blessed hope” is believed to be an event where Christians shall be taken away to a place they describe as heaven. Thus, this place is seen to be where God lives in his kingdom, and hence, all believers live in an anticipation of a certain day when they shall be no more citizens of earth. This teaching is seen in (1Thessalonians 4:16-17; Acts 1:11). This Bible passage presents an assurance for believers in an unpredictable day set aside for an occasion where the dead and the living shall be caught up and thus be with the Lord for the

rest of their lives. The Acts account (1:9-11) denotes a promising return of Jesus to the Christian in a manner in which he ascended to heaven.

Thus, they postulate that, the followers of Christ will one day be taken to heaven to be with Jesus Christ forever. This teaching gives them hope and assurance of Christ's second coming for all those who believe in Jesus, and therefore they live in anticipation of this religious event in the nearest future. The Prophetess, intimates that there comes a time when everything shall come to an end and all human activities shall be restricted, and therefore this Church is determined to fulfill its duties in readiness for the blessed hope in all their programs and activities.

Responding to questions that sought to ascertain information about their doctrinal position on the Holy Spirit, the Prophetess shared that this Church holds that both speaking in tongues and the existence of the Holy Spirit are instruments of the same Spirit. On the contrary, they subscribe to the interpretation of what is termed as tongue-speaking immediately preceding what is described as Prophecy rather than speaking in tongues without interpreting what is being said. This is in reference to (1 Cor.14:5) which talks about prioritizing interpretation of Prophecies as against speaking in tongues without interpretation. Tongue-speaking is being related to a situation where a member of the Church speaks in an unknown language to the congregants during Church services without interpretation.

Another doctrinal position of the Church is the Lord's Supper, Holy Communion, or Eucharist. This rite commemorates the Last Supper that Jesus had with his disciples. This ordinance is seen as an act of thanksgiving and it is the central act of Christian worship and it is thus observed in some form by

the majority of Christian Churches. Two elements are at the center of this practice. Thus, the elements used are bread and wine. It is believed that, both the wine and the bread serve as symbols for the flesh and blood of Christ. The Holy Communion is based on a history that highlights the interaction between Jesus and his disciples.

Jesus took bread while his disciples were eating and, after giving thanks, broke it and offered it to them, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." He then took a cup, handed it to them after giving thanks, and instructed them all to drink from it. This is the covenant blood I gave in order to atone for many people's sins" in Matt. 26:26-28. It is a unique time of worship for Christians, because, they Remember the Lord's death by praying and reflecting, along with eating some bread and drinking some wine (or grape juice). It is considered as one of the ordinances of the Church. Its significant has been described as an opportunity for Christians to make peace with God in good standing. Thus, it is believed that, those who participate in this practices identify with Christ's demise and resurrection. This Church also practices Holy Communion in another form. They observe it on monthly basis, but with a pre-preparation toward the occasion.

According to them, the members go through series of teachings concerning the Holy Communion to prepare them in advance before the actual date. This is because, the members prepare themselves purposely for the occasion, and therefore, there are conscious strives to exempt themselves from sin and subsequently live better lives. The Holy Communion is administered consistently on every first Sunday of every month. As stated before, bread and wine are the significant items needed for the occasion. Members of the Church

are served with these emblems, bread, and wine, simultaneously and they are expected to eat the served items at the same time.

It is believed that, the Holy Communion must be observed in uniformity. Thus, members are expected to wait for each other by following the same instructions from the lead pastor subsequent to which of the items to be taken in the first place. They postulate that, the bread is normally taken first, followed by the wine. It is a solemn occasion for both the congregants and the leadership of the Church.

They also believe in and practice baptism by water as a Christian rite. It is through immersion. But, before the baptism proper the candidates go through four weeks of preparation to put them in proper state of mind. This is because, their teaching on baptism by water demands that, the candidate repents of his or her sins before baptism based on Acts 2:37-38, and when one is immersed in water, the person is seen to have died with Christ and risen with him at baptism by water. Acts 2:37-38 record Peter's response to a question by the crowd. He tells them the conditions that one must satisfy before baptism. In his statements, he mentions that, candidates must repent of their sins before taking part in the baptism exercise.

This is because, baptism by water in this Church is considered as a sign of one's repentance, which shows one's public identification of submission to God. For their practice, one is identified as a saint when he/she is baptized by water and so this doctrine is of much importance to them. That is why candidates for water baptism are taught about baptism in a form of preparation before the day of baptism.

Most churches raise funds through tithes, offertory, appeal for funds, and others. But one of the Church's doctrines holds that, they do not believe in taking monies in a form of offertory, or what they describe as collection. Collection is an organized gathering of funds or resources among Christian Churches in Ghana. In this, members are allowed to give financially in a sequence one after the other, during service time. In Christianity, offering is considered as a gift of money to the Church by the members of a particular Church. Generally, offerings can be differentiated from the tithe as being an amount given by the congregants for the over-all purposes over and above what constitutes a tithe. It is a common practice among many Christians in Ghana.

However, this church seems unique from other Christian churches with respect to collection or offertory as a Christian church. In this Church, collection or offering is frowned upon as per their teachings or belief. This is because, what they teach contradict any form of collection or an offering based on Matthew 10:7-9. In this text, Jesus commanded his disciples not to accept or take anything in an exchange for their services to people. In other words, the disciples were supposed to administer freely without charge to people because they received the gifts freely.

This teaching has gained the confidence of the members and the non-members, and it has also made the Church attractive to people who have financial challenges.

Another of their doctrines is head covering. "Head-covering" is compulsory for all female worshippers in this church at all services and programs. "Christian head covering", also known as Christian veiling, is the

conventionally exercise of women covering their head in a diversity of Christian groups. According to them, the doctrine demands that, head covering must be maintained both at Church and in their private religious lives. This doctrine is underpinned by 1Corinthians 11:2-10. In this text, the Apostle Paul admonishes the female worshipers in the Corinthian Church to have their head covered during prayer session.

This the Apostle Paul explains that wearing a head covering is a sign of their husbands' authority over them. Hence, it is compulsory for all women or female members in the Church to cover their head during Church services as well as their private prayer times. This teaching has also gained significant grounds among the women in the Church and thus, in all Church occasions, or programs, every woman abides by it.

Another of their doctrines is belief in Christ's death and resurrection, a teaching based on 1 Cor. 15:13-22. In the text, Paul teaches about the resurrection of Jesus, and how the followers of Christ shall be raised from death. This doctrine admits the resurrection of all Christians in general as per their belief. The Doctor Jesus Prayer Cam and Ministry International Church teaches that, when they die, they will be raised from death to life in the near future based on 1 Cor. 15:13-22. In other words, the dead will be raised from their graves, and all those who were once members of the Church and have died will be raised to life in different forms or bodies. As per their teaching, those who remain alive till Jesus comes, will be changed instantaneously and together go to heaven.

The 'Miracle' Clay

The "Miracle Clay" is a special soil discovered by the Prophet Samuel Koffie, the founder of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. It is largely known as 'miracle' clay among the members of the Church. It is administered in diverse ways to address various human needs, spiritually and physically based on John 9:1–41 that tells about a certain blind man.

The history of how it came about can be linked to an interaction the Church's founder had in a vision privileged to him. According to the vision, he saw himself at a dark environment that was unknown to him, and in the process, he saw an amount of clay in his palms. This experience was followed by a shining light which dispelled the darkness around him. Whiles he was wondering about the scene, he heard a voice which they describe as the voice of God, instructing him to throw the clay substance in his palms to a certain direction. They recounted that, when he threw the clay in his palms in accordance to the instruction he received from God, it ended up lighting up the entire place. They stated that, any direction the clay went was lighted up, leaving other places without the clay still in darkness as it was from the inception of the vision.

They narrated that, the darkness and the light represent two groups of people. Thus, according to them, the darkness represented those who refused to listen to the founder and further ignored the application of the clay. Again, in an interview with the head of the Church, Prophetess Mrs. Comfort Koffie, showed that the darkness also represents a world of sin for those who hold no allegiance to Jesus Christ otherwise known as unbelievers. But the light

represented those who will believe in the ministry of the founder. This they believe it is because, the clay was given to him to perform many miracles with the aim of saving people from the darkness into the light.

The history about how the 'Miracle' clay came about also has it that, in 2007, there was a heavy rainfall which resulted in creating trenches on the Church's premises, leaving pillar-like molds in different forms, coupled with Marble stones on top of each of them within the trenches. According to them, the stones and the molded pillar-likes were in distinctive and typical shapes or styles, which have meanings and implications in the usage of the 'miracle' clay.

Thus, the distinctive nature of the molded pillars with the Marble stones which were found in the trenches were interpreted to represent the various cases and or issues the 'Miracle' Clay was tied to mitigate as far as human needs are concerned. The wife of the founder recounted that pictures of the scene also became very useful among the members of the Church.

It is also said that, the hold the 'Miracle' Clay has on the members of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church was to the point of it being misapplied. Hence, the leadership was compelled to devise a means to coordinate and control the accessibility and the use of the Miracle Clay. Before this, members could get the 'Miracle' Clay from anywhere on the Church's premises based on their faith. To regulate the usage of the 'Miracle' Clay in the Church, the leadership, however, thought it wise to designate the place where those trenches with pillar-like molds were found purposely for the chipping of the 'Miracle' Clay. They subsequently added value to it by

converting the clay into powdered form in rubber bags. This has encouraged easy carriage both within and outside the country.

The use of the 'miracle' clay preceded the establishment of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church back in a town called Amako in Ghana's Eastern region. The people of Amako started experiencing the benefits and the potency of the 'miracle' clay at a time when the founder was working as a medical dispenser, administering both the 'miracle' clay and the Orthodox medicine until the 'miracle' clay gained the confidence of both the Prophet Samuel Koffie himself, the founder of the Church in question and the people of Amako. By 2016, the 'miracle' clay has gained significant traction in and beyond the walls of Ghana resulting in the tremendous growth of the Church.

This is because, many miracles were being experienced consistently among the members of the Church, and many testimonies about the 'miracle' Clay also spread about in the communities in which the members lived, making it a very popular product, and well known hence the name the 'miracle' clay. For example, deaf and dumb were being healed, cripples were walking, people with issues of barrenness were being addressed, and even people with a hole in the heart medically known as a ventricular septal defect (VSD) according to the lead minister's responses were cured, the mentally challenged otherwise known as mentally retarded were as well being addressed, people with "spiritual problems" and many more humanly related problems were addressed.

The 'miracle' clay is given to the members or clients according to their needs or problems. Periodically, a specific month or time is dedicated to

the distribution of the 'miracle' clay, and or upon the request by the individual members. It is believed that, the 'miracle' clay is not ordinary soil on the phase value, on the contrary, it has spiritual potential as well. Thus, the 'miracle' clay has many benefits to humanity; both physically and spiritually. It is also easily accessible by all the members of the Church. The 'miracle' clay has also gained the confidence of the congregants and hence, it is highly reliable in the Church.

It is a very important useful product understood to be applicable in all life situations, spiritually and physically based on their understanding of the biblical text chosen to expound, as indicated in the thesis. This is as a result of how the text has been interpreted and appropriated in the Church. Their concept or understanding of Jesus' usage of the spittle mixed with the clay as a cure for an individual who was born blind believes that the clay can be applied in many ways as much as it depends on "faith", or how one believes.

Some of the women in the Church use it as a cosmetic as well as having spiritual potency for spiritual protection, and hence they use it as face makeup. Because they believe it is spiritually potent, many of them mix it with their body cream with the view that it wards off evil spirits and also makes it possible to dream about the possible cause of chronic diseases and other problems. For example, in their response to how the clay substance has influenced their lives, some of the members shared that, at a particular experience, one lady smeared the clay on her body before going to bed at night and subsequently dreamt about the Prophet directing her as to what to do according to her issues at hand. In another instance, another person also

dreamt about the spiritual force behind her troubles after applying the clay on her face before going to bed at night.

The congregants of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church see the clay as a vital component in their business lives.

The belief is that, the 'Miracle' clay has the ability, spiritually, to attract more customers to patronize their business and to protect their lives. The people of this Church see their lives safe against any spiritual attack on their lives. This is because, the 'miracle' clay serves as a neutralizer diverting every spiritual force against them when it is being applied on the body, as well as when sprinkled in their houses or their rooms. Others use the 'miracle' clay as a remedy for what is known in the Christian fraternity as a "spiritual marriage". Per the evidence at hand, a respondent applied the 'miracle' clay and subsequently had her long-standing "spiritual" marriage challenges solved. A member of the said religious organization who happens to be a victim of "spiritual marriage," defines "spiritual marriage" as when one experiences having sexual intercourse in dreams, and nursing children in dreams or visions.

They rely absolutely on their understanding of John's story about the blind man who was born blind in all spheres of their life. For instance, some believe that the 'miracle' clay which has been created based on John's narrative is a source of good omen or portent especially when you apply it before one embarks on daily activities. In the case of an interview appointment, the 'miracle' clay is seen as a means for fortune. This is because, they believed that, since Jesus was able to heal a man with the issue of blindness, it, therefore, conclusive that, anything one uses it for according to

faith, is achievable. One respondent shared his experience in that regard intimating that he consistently used to have a negative outcome at the various job interviews he has been attending until he came to the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church, and after applying the 'miracle' clay in one instance, he was successful at the next interview appointment. The influence of this clay does not exclude the children of the said Church. This is because, it has been found to have healing potent for children with sleeping challenges. That is, it is considered to have a cure for children who hardly sleep at night and scream throughout the night or even during the day.

In the event of the probability of choice-making concerning whether to choose Hospital first or the 'miracle' clay, two out of twenty respondents opted for medical attention at the Hospital as against the majority of the members who would opt and rely on the 'miracle' clay. This is because, there are enormous evidence of people who have been cured of all sorts of ailments over the years the Church has been in existence. In other words, most congregants attest that the 'miracle' clay has a healing potency and has been the crux of the faith of the members' strong allegiance to the Church. Members administer the 'miracle' clay to all sorts of sicknesses at various forms in diverse ways without any professional assistance or advice. It is also cheap, it is free, and easily accessible to all members at all times, making it very convenient to use. This has accounted for its popularity among the congregants of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church.

Among some of the various ailments or sicknesses is what is popularly known as 'chickenpox', also known as varicella. Varicella is an

infection caused by the varicella-zoster virus that is extremely contagious. A blister-like rash, which first starts on the face and trunk and then spreads across the human body, is one of its symptoms. It is said to be very uncomfortable, but most victims recover within 1-2 weeks. It is said to have no specific medicine (Brazier, 2017).

But at the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church, 'chickenpox' is treated with this 'miracle' clay, members applied it to the body by smearing it on the skin.

That is, the 'miracle' clay is a medicine for the treatment of varicella in this Church, and this is affirmed by some of the congregants of the Church. For eleven years, the 'miracle' Clay has become the main source of medicine for some of the members of the Church. Some use it anytime they experience headaches or other related head ache. In the case of those who have any stomach-associated disease, a concentration is prepared from it for oral administration. In another sense, the "miracle" clay can be administered orally as well as externally.

The members of the Church have made the 'miracle' clay as part of their meal especially when they are sick. They do this by putting it in their food and water without considering whether or not the aftermath effects it may have on them. Some have had solutions to the various degrees of addictions, including nightclubbing, smoking, and drunkenness through the application of the "miracle" clay on the body and or adding it to their water. Some claimed to have never been sick since they joined the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church because of the 'miracle' clay. It is a common

and popular product among the people of the Church as well as non-members or outsiders.

The 'miracle' clay as stated before, has become the prime variable product at the point of any physical needs or spiritual needs. It is the core influential factor for both old and young as far as life's dictate is concerned. Children with various sicknesses rely on the 'miracle' clay for relief and sustenance through their parents. It believed that, the 'miracle' clay is the main driving force of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. Its' influence is extremely compelling on the people of the Church and its benefits are countless.

Administrative Structure

The leadership of the Church describes their system as a form of hierarchical structure. Thus, the Church's chain of command is typically from the senior Pastor or the lead minister, followed by the direct family members (the wife and the children) to the executives or the deacons and the deaconess, also known as the Church board, to all staff members. In other words, the Church's organizational structure is applicable to groups having a single head and a chain of command below them. Thus, the Church has divided its leaders into four groups, the founder, the family, the Church board, and other disciples. They all report to the lead pastor who happens to be the founder of the Church. The Church can therefore be said to have a number of levels, the top level containing the greatest power and authority, as per observation.

This practice seems to have benefited the Church immensely in many ways. The subordinates are Knowing the many chains of authority enables individuals to understand how they might progress within the Church through

time. Experienced individuals are more likely to be hired for these high-level roles in the Church. They can clearly see and are drawn to the prospect of a promotion. The leaders in various positions are highly motivated to perform better, they also have high morale, and hence, the Church's day-to-day administration has been effective at all levels.

As per the hierarchical system, the leadership comprehend how each level of organization works. This is due to the fact that managerial responsibilities are specifically their administrative structure. Additionally, there are different levels of control, which make day to day operations in the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. Some of the members of the board narrated that, the founder's wife has been the lead minister since the death of the founder. They stated in addition that, the children and other members of the leadership take instructions from the wife as the head pastor in addition to their core duties.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this section of the work has shown that the founder of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church broke away from his mother Church when he realized that his desire to start a charismatic strand of ministry within the Catholic Church would not yield positive result. The authorities of his former Church rejected his intent to form a Charismatic ministry because they found his position as a sharp contradiction to the church's doctrinal position and principles. It was also noted that, the step to form a Charismatic Church was informed by a supposed encounter the founder had with God in Asamankese in the Eastern Region in 2001. Thus, he started the Church at Asamankese in 2001 but he relocated the Church to Kasoa in the

central region in 2002 under the direction of God. The name of the Church came about after many efforts by the founder. According to them, several prayer and fasting exercises were engaged by the founder before he came out with the name Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church.

The discussion concerning the Church has revealed that, their healing activities are based on John's narrative about a certain man who was blind from birth. In this narration, the steps Jesus took to heal this man has formed the bases for this Church's healing activities. Their healing activities involve a certain clay which is known in their context as the miracle clay. Their doctrines include the belief in Christ's death and resurrection, a teaching based on the 1 Cor. 15:13-22. The Church used to operate as a Prayer Camp suit before they changed to a Charismatic ministry. As a Prayer Camp, they were characterized with camping their clients who came to them for solutions to their problems.

Sometimes, their clients (people with all sorts of problems including sicknesses) were made to undergo periodic fasting and prayers designed by the Prophet for the alleviation of whatever their challenge might be within a brief period. This and many more characterized their activities as a Prayer Camp ministry until 2015 when authorities decided to change to a Charismatic group in July 2015 due to the increasing demand by members who saw the Prayer Camp as a solution to their various issues in all spatial of life. Thus, they identify with the Charismatic type of ministry because of the excessive demand by congregants on their services.

But their characteristics are inconsistent with the characteristics of the Charismatic strands in Ghana. For example, whereas the charismatic Churches

believe and practice speaking in "tongues" and the infilling of the Holy Spirit which is believed to be a gift by the charismatics, this Church differs. They believe that the Holy Spirit is real, on the contrary, they do not speak in tongues. Again, Charismatic Christianity which is a type of Christianity that places a strong focus on the operation of the Holy Spirit, Spiritual gifts, and contemporary miracles as an everyday part of a believer's life is recognized by its adherents as Spirit-filled Christianity (2011 Pew Forum). But this is not the case with the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. According to Justin (2007), charismatic worship is defined by a desire for supernatural, euphoric experiences like healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues. In another sense, this type of movement emphasis the Baptism and the Holy Spirit's gifts which includes the availability of individuals' lives for miracles, signs, and wonders.

But in the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church their healing activities, miracles, signs, and so on are based on the miracle clay. The charismatic movement strongly entertains the belief that people can be completely healed from any kind of sickness through prayer that is said in the name of Jesus Christ. A common dogma in charismatic Churches is a prayer for divine healing as against the practice in the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. These and many more variations make it difficult to identify the focused Church as a Charismatic type of ministry. The next chapter is the final section of the work, which looks at the general conclusion, summary, and the recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The study's findings, conclusions, and recommendations are summarized here. The research sought to ascertain the interpretation of John 9:1-41 in the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church in Ghana, specifically located around Kasoa in the central region. To do this, the thesis attempted to meet two goals that were each inspired by one of two themes; first, to investigate the understanding and interpretation of John 9 of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church, and secondly to find out how John 9 has influenced the lives of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church.

Summary

In chapter one, the work dealt with the general introduction to the thesis. Some of the items treated included the background of the studies, the theory, the hypothesis, the purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, a review of existing literatures, the methodology, and so on. The chapter sought to give an overview of what the thesis intended to achieve at the end of it.

Since this Church is found in Ghana, the second chapter has attempted to assess Ghana in the light of its religious landscape with much emphasis on Christianity. The chapter has shown that Ghana has many religious groups lumped into three main fashions. Accordingly, the Traditional African religion, Islamic religion, and Christianity. But among these three main religions Christianity has the larger followers, followed by Islam, and the African Traditional Religion in that order. The chapter has shown that Ghana

experienced the European hegemonies during the colonial invasion which steered the introduction of Christianity from 1475 till 6th March 1975 when Ghana gained independence under the leadership of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Ghana is known to be a secular state but it has a strong religious freedom.

As a result, its citizens are free and at the liberty to associate with any of the religious groups without state interference. Chapter two focuses on creating an environment for the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. The chapter has further shown that the charismatic strand of Churches are purely African indigenous. In this chapter, it is also understood that the Doctor Jesus prayer Camp and Ministry International Church are covered by this category of Christianity in Ghana as claimed by the authorities.

The third section of the work has demonstrated how the narrative of the congenital man helps to understand the occurrences in the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church and the Church itself. Thus, the chapter has shown how the people of the Church as well as the Church have been influenced by this Johannine text about a certain man who was born blind as well as its significance for them. This it did through the textual analysis of the blind man in John's narrative through the three poles by Drapper.

In another sense, the chapter three has shown how the studied Church has contextualized and appropriated the passage through their world view as a Christian community. For instance, their concept about sin and suffering, their miracle clay and its potency to mitigate all sorts of sickness, how they have spiritualized all sorts of human occurrences, and many more are based on their reading of the passage.

The fourth chapter paints a picture of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. It has shown that the said Church was initially identified with the prayer camps until it was officially changed to a Charismatic Christian Church in 2015. It establishes that they are of the Bible.

Thus, all their activities and practices are undergirded by biblical texts.

The chapter also shows adequate information about the processes that led to the formation of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. It also describes in detail the extent to which their reading of John 9 has influenced their members' lifestyle, and how strong the "miracle" clay has gained appreciable traction among the members and hence making the Church a very popular Christian Church in Ghana and beyond.

Conclusion

The research has explored the interpretation of the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church, especially how they have come to understand the Johannine story concerning a certain man who was blind from birth (John 9:1-41). As per their reading, the story has many meanings in both their religious lives and social lives as a Church because of their understanding.

This Church's interpretation skips important hermeneutical details that aid in constructing meanings that are close to or meet the authorial intentions of biblical writings. This is because, their interpretation of the tale of the man who was born blind ignores the role and the intent of the introduction of the contrasting "but" or better still adversative conjunction, that is meant to put Jesus' view about the link between sins and deformities and the concept of

Jewish people apart. According to the narrator, Jesus' reply to his disciples didn't agree with the disciples' question.

It is observed in the work that the blind man's case was to manifest what God had done in his life. Historically, scholars have shown that the introduction of the conjunction collapses the long-standing ideology that sin is a cause of pain or ailment. But in this Church, their reading or interpretation of the story makes victims of congenital issues guilty of sin either by the parents or the victim's sin. In another sense, the Church's interpretation lacks scrutinizing words and their meanings within biblical passages, the roles of words, and the 'Sitz im lebem' of words (the context in which a text has been created). Their interpretation fail to consider factors such as social-political and cultural background of a text, not excluding the underlying themes to ascertain the entire view of the visible text, and many more.

It is therefore conclusive that, their reading or their understanding of the congenital blindness as presented by John's gospel is inconsistent with what the biblical text intended to communicate. One would want to know the type of reading it is that this Church employs. This is because, their reading seem to differ from what the author intended to communicate; thus their approach to interpretation, especially of John 9 is largely esoteric, and symptomatic.

Esoteric because, their interpretation of the blind man narrative seem to be intended for only their consumption, or for their special interest and knowledge. In other words, their understanding of the text varies from what is being told by the narrator in the passage. For instance, the name of the Church came about based on how they have understood the role Jesus played in the

story. Again, how they have conceived the mud in Jesus' method in the story is inconsistent with the way Jesus' approach in the passage under consideration intended to indicate or show.

Not only is their reading esoteric, but also symptomatic. Symptomatic because, they interpret a text by assigning meanings too latently to repress what the text visibly or physically says. In other words, the meaning of texts is always concealed to them alone, hence they create meanings different from what is physically obvious in a text or a set of texts. Their focus is on the elements present in the text and somehow construes them as symbolic of something latent or concealed. This approach to reading always leaves the meaning of the text to what it does not say, which allows the reader to reveal meanings or truth from what is absent to the reader.

The concept undergirding this form of reading is that the most important meanings are not immediately apprehensible and hence it holds that, meanings are veiled or invisible (Best & Marcus, 2009).

Having explored the reading of John 9:1-41 by the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church has shown that their understanding of the story lacks analyzing the text by taking into consideration words and their meaning, as well as the positions of words in the genre. For instance, the introduction of "but" by Jesus in his answer opposes the concept of sin being the cause of suffering as shown in the work.

The literal role of "but" as a connective conjunction and the common function, proposes a counter argument or opposing viewpoint to the opinion it is connected to, therefore, in this context, Jesus' point collapses the old age belief and practices that undergird human suffering. But the Church's reading

blames the sins of victims of various deformities or ailments who are being brought for healing. This understanding opposes the literary context of the blind man's story. Their interpretation finds a possible cause for every human-related issue in the Church, as against Jesus' response that contradicts this belief system.

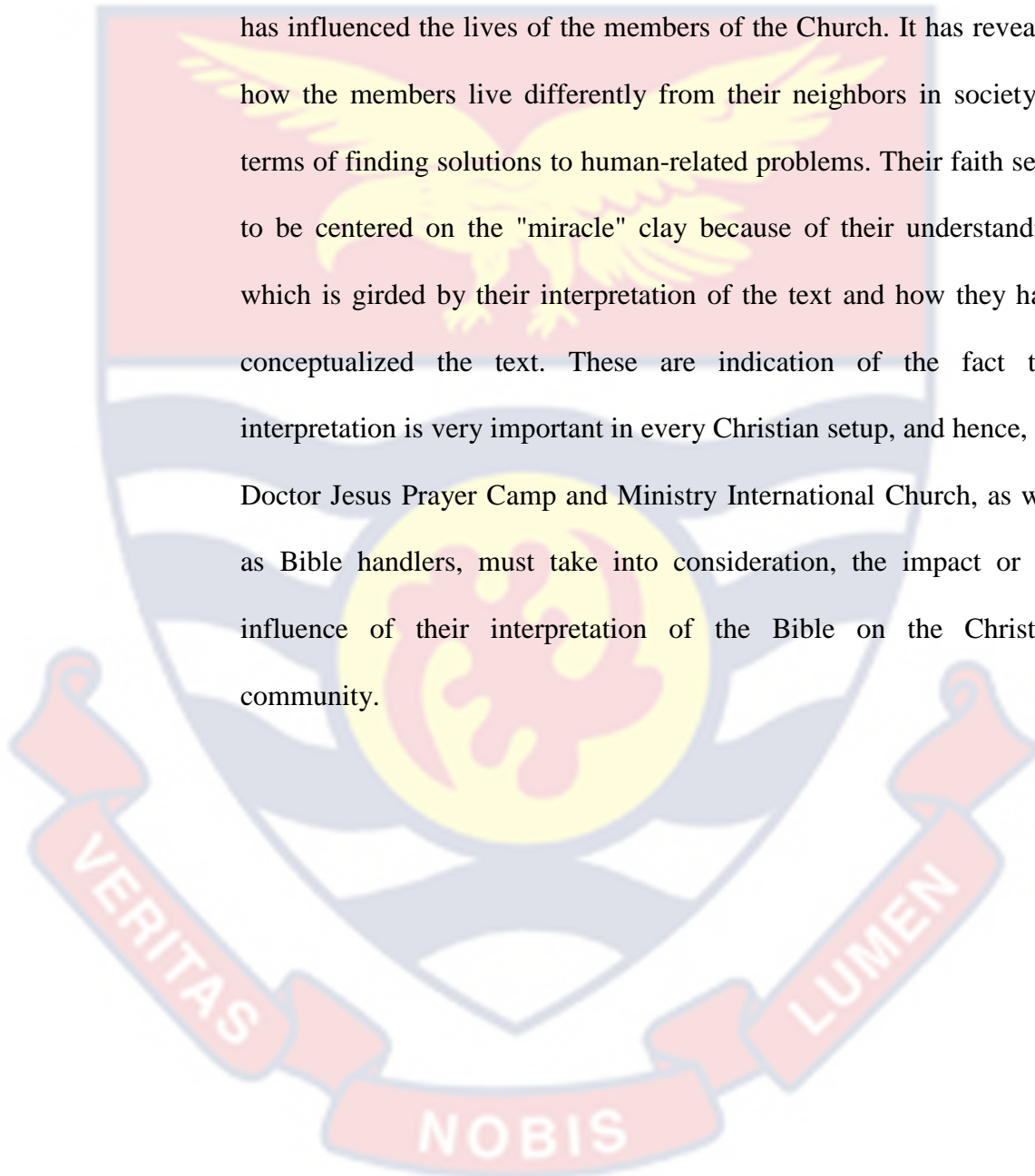
Recommendations

In light of the debate just had, I have the following few suggestions: based on the conclusion drawn above:

1. The claim by the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church of being a charismatic Christian Church seems to be inconsistent with the general characteristics of charismatic Churches. From the second chapter and the summary, it was noted that the charismatic Churches are characterized with placing a lot of focus on the dynamics and activities of the Holy Spirit as against the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church. Therefore, future work can be launched to look into whether the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church is truly a charismatic Christian outfit or not.
2. Akin to the reading of John 9:1- 41 by Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church against the exegetical analysis of the same pericope revealed that, whereas the blind man was compelled to wash the clay from the external part of his body, the users of the "miracle" clay in the Church are opposite. They apply the clay substance both externally and internally. I, therefore, would recommend that future detailed research must be engaged to ascertain

the possible effect or health-related issues the "miracle" clay may pose on both young and adult who frequently use the clay.

3. And finally, the influence of their interpretation, especially (vv. 6-7) is very enormous. The work has shown the degree to which the passage has influenced the lives of the members of the Church. It has revealed how the members live differently from their neighbors in society in terms of finding solutions to human-related problems. Their faith seem to be centered on the "miracle" clay because of their understanding which is girded by their interpretation of the text and how they have conceptualized the text. These are indication of the fact that interpretation is very important in every Christian setup, and hence, the Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Church, as well as Bible handlers, must take into consideration, the impact or the influence of their interpretation of the Bible on the Christian community.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1a

Data Collection Instruments

Interview Guide for the Leader of Doctor Jesus prayer Camp and Ministry International

I am a MPhil student of the department of Religion and Human Value, UCC, and I am researching on the topic, Reading John 9:1-41 in Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Ghana. I would very much appreciate it if you could kindly respond to this survey question for me. All information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality as well as using it solely for academic intent and purposes.

Position in the church.....

The number of years in the church.....

Name of the church.....

1. When did you start the church?

.....

2. What informed the formation of the church?

.....

3. Which church did DJPCMI emerge from?

.....

4. Where did the church start from?

.....

5. Who is the founder of the church?

.....

6. What is the background of the founder?

.....

7. What informed the name of the church?

.....

8. How did you discover the "miracle" clay?

.....

9. What role do you play in the church?

.....

10. Since when did you start using the "miracle" clay?

.....

11. What is the average size of the church membership?

.....

12. How do you classify the church?

.....

13. Generally, how do you interpret the Bible?

.....

14. What is the relevance of the miracle clay in your church?

.....

15. How has the "miracle" clay influenced the congregants of the church?

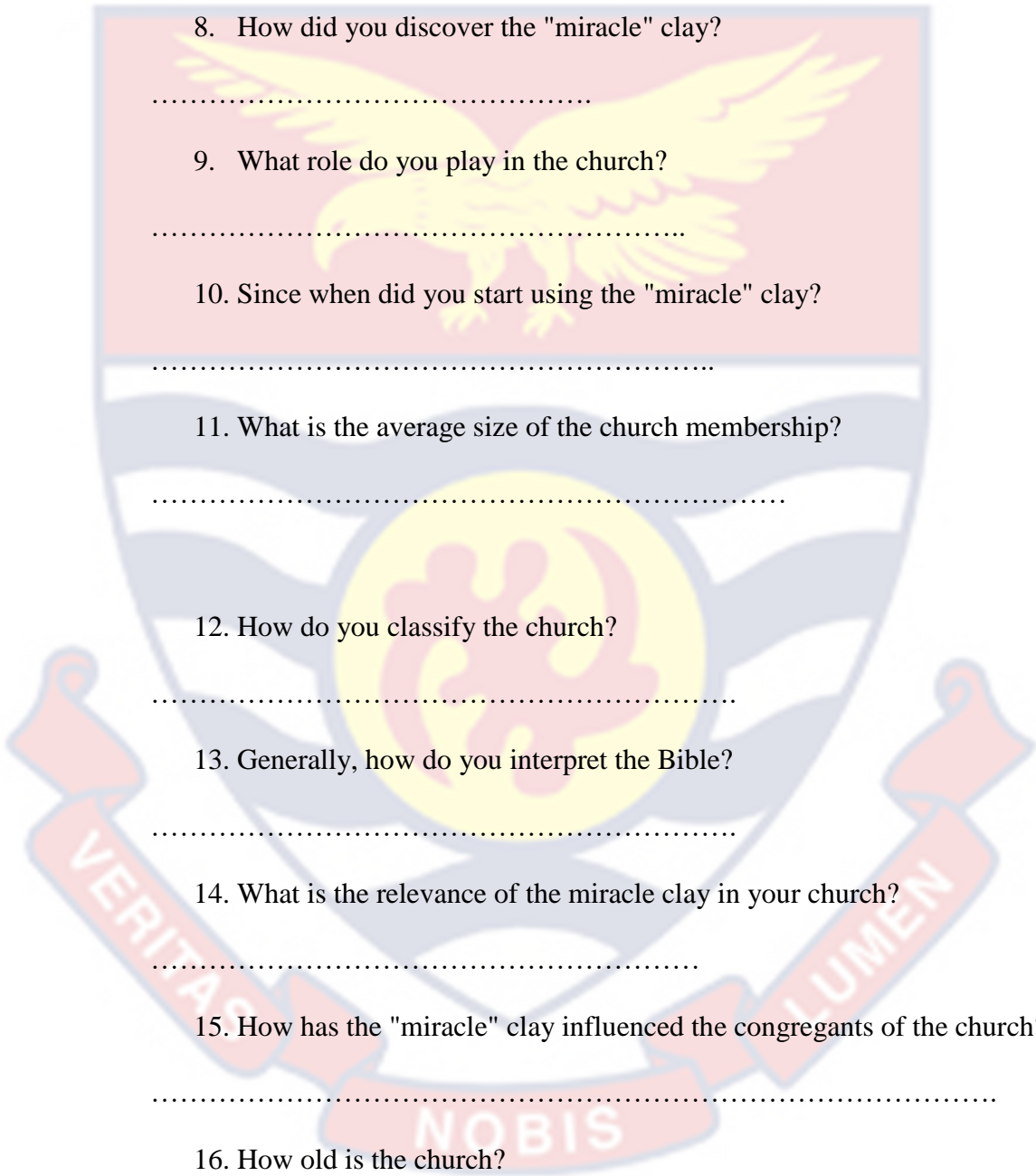
.....

16. How old is the church?

.....

17. Further related information?

.....



Appendix 1b

Interview Guide for the church board (Lead Pastor, Pastors, Deacons (nesses), Elders, and others)

I am a Mphil student of the Department of Religion and Human Value, UCC, and I am researching on the topic, Reading John 9:1-41 in Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Ghana. I would very much appreciate it if you could kindly respond to this survey question for me. All information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality as well as using it solely for academic intent and purposes.

Position.....

Roles

The number of years in ministry.....

1. Generally, how do you interpret the Bible in your church?

.....

2. Which version of the Bible do you normally use in interpreting the Bible?

.....

3. Do you have a particular theory or approach for your interpretation of the Bible?

.....

4. How unique is your interpretation of the Bible?

.....

5. In which language do you read the Bible?

.....

6. What is your interpretation of the blindness of the man in John 9:1-41?

.....

7. How do you interpret the cause of the blindness of the man in the pericope?

.....

8. What understanding do you get from your interpretation of the application of the clay in John 9:1-41?

.....

9. What is your interpretation of the Pharisees' investigation of the healing of the blind man?

.....

10. How will you interpret Jesus' answer to his disciples, "neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the glory of God will be manifested" in John 9:3?

.....

11. How will you interpret John 9:1-41?

.....

12. What is your doctrine or teachings on the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

.....

13. What is your doctrine on speaking in Tongues?

.....

14. What is your teaching on the Holy Communion?

.....

15. What other teachings do you have?

.....

16. What are the major practices of the church?

.....

17. How do you, DJPCMI apply the Bible in your lives?

.....

18. How has the interpretation of John 9: 1-41 influenced the members?

.....

19. What program mostly promotes the church?

.....

20. Any other relevant information?

.....

Appendix 1c

**Interview Guide for Randomly Selected Members of Doctor Jesus Prayer
Camp and Ministry International**

I am a Mphil student of the Department of Religion and Human Value, UCC and I am researching on the topic, Reading John 9:1-41 in Doctor Jesus Prayer Camp and Ministry International Ghana. I would very much appreciate it if you could kindly respond to this survey question for me. All information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality as well as using it solely for academic intent and purposes.

The number of years spent in the church.....

Who or what brought you into the church.....

1. Have you met your objectives in the church?

.....

2. Why did you choose the focused church against other churches?

.....

3. What anchors your membership in the church?

.....

4. How do you understand the bible?

.....

5. How do you understand the application of the clay in John 9?

.....

6. Do you believe in the "miracle" clay as a result of how the passage has been interpreted?

.....

7. How often do you apply the "miracle" clay?

.....

8. How do you use the "miracle" clay?

.....

9. On the verge of choice, which one will you choose, the hospital or the "miracle" clay?

.....

10. How has the text or the miracle clay influenced your life?

.....

11. Have you been disappointed by the "miracle" clay?

.....

12. Any further relevant information?

.....

Appendix 2a

Photo 1: The Lead Minister Discussing the Interpretation of John 9:1-41



Appendix 2b

Photo 2: The Lead Minister and Some Members of the Board for Bible Discussion



Appendix 3c

Photo 3: A Cross-Section of Church Members at Church Service

