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Tapping into the Anointing: Pentecostal Pedagogy, Connectivity, and Power in Contemporary Ghana

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Tapping into the Anointing: Pentecostal Pedagogy, Connectivity, and Power in Contemporary  
Ghana

By

Bruno Mafra Ney Reinhardt

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Charles Hirschkind, Chair

Professor Mariane Ferme

Professor Saba Mahmood

Professor Tabitha Kanogo

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## Abstract

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Bruno Mafra Ney Reinhardt

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

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Professor Charles Hirschkind, Chair

Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity has grown vigorously in sub-Saharan Africa especially since the 1980s. Ghana is no exception. Pentecostal churches' ecclesiastical, mediatic, and welfare networks have secured a strategic public role to these organizations in the country by filling part of the material and moral gaps left by the Ghanaian state in its post-structural adjustment moment. A new generation of influential charismatic leaders has emerged as the local faces of this global movement. Those are women, but mostly men who embody a Christian ethos that coordinates intense piety with self-achievement, inviting the youth to follow their ways. But this history is not only one of successful expansion, as observed in widespread public anxieties about the authenticity of "men of god" in the country. Concerned with the methods of authoritative reproduction of charismatic leadership, my research is based on 14 months of ethnographic fieldwork centered on the transmission of Pentecostalism in Ghana through both formal and informal methods of "discipleship", the process of ushering new converts into the Christian life. Chapter one situates the problem of Christian conversion in history, whereas chapter two builds an ethnographic model based on how converts move from "spiritual rebirth" to "spiritual maturation" and how their faith grows. Chapters three to five explore the discipleship structures of Lighthouse Chapel International, focusing especially on the Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center, where the denomination's future full-time ministers are nurtured to recognize and attend to the call of God. Some of my guiding questions are: What is the role of human relations in Pentecostal piety? How is charisma transferred or transmitted? How learning unfolds in charismatic spirituality without jeopardizing the givenness of grace and the sovereign agency of the Holy Spirit? What is the role of pedagogy in the social reproduction of pastoral norms? How charisma finds different strategies of distribution, according to specific ecclesiastical forms? I mobilize conceptual tools provided by the anthropology of Christianity, linguistic anthropology, and the anthropology of ethics in order to develop a theoretical framework that allows me to think the pedagogical dissemination of charismatic discourse in Ghana, focusing especially on how religious empowerment becomes predicated on specific forms of willing obedience.



## Acknowledgements

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A CAPES/Fulbright multi-year fellowship allowed me to apply to UC Berkeley and move from Brazil to California with my family. The fieldwork and writing stages were funded by the Andrew and Mary Thompson Rocca fellowship (Center for African Studies, UC Berkeley), the A. Richard Diebold Jr. Fellowship in Linguistic Anthropology, the John L. Simpson Memorial Research Fellowship (Institute of International Studies, UC Berkeley), the Dean's Normative Time Fellowship (UC Berkeley), and the Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship.

A key work condition for any student parent is to be assured that his child is cared for properly in his absence. I therefore would like to thank the state (thus the people) of California for subsidizing my son's childcare and education, and extend this to his teachers Carmen, Pam, Tim, Cathy (Haste Center), Bill, Becky, and Elizabeth (Thousand Oaks Elementary).

UC Berkeley is an exciting academic community supported by extremely competent staff. I would like to thank especially Ned Garrett, Kathleen J. Van Sickle, Thomas Bottomley, and Bettina Lewis.

Aristotle argued that friendship (*philia*) may assume many forms, the highest of them being friendship based on goodness, where friends admire the goodness of others and help one another strive for personal growth. This includes reciprocity, inspiration, criticism, and difference. Friendship is a special type of relation, as it allows one to receive from others without depriving them from what they have. During my research project, I was blessed to find this mysterious bond in diverse contexts, ranging from Brazil to California and Ghana.

I would like to thank Charles Hirschkind for being an incredible adviser, encouraging and inspiring my work during all its stages as it flourished into written form. I found similar support in other members of my committee: Mariane Ferme, Saba Mahmood and Tabitha Kanogo. I must add a note of thanks to Mariane Ferme, for guiding me through a language that I was never able to make my own. Other professors had a major formative impact on me during my time in Berkeley: Stefania Pandolfo, Cori Hayden, Lawrence Cohen, Alexei Yurchak, Helene Miallet, and William Hanks. I found similar support and inspiration outside of Berkeley in Joel Robbins and Jon Bialecki.

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Ghanaians are widely known for their hospitality, an attribute I could only corroborate after spending over one year in their company. Their kindness, concern with the minutia of social

interactions, and openness to talk lends much-needed lightness to the hustle of the everyday in Accra. These qualities often soothed the anxieties caused by a long separation from my family, and allowed me to retain the best possible memories of Ghana, where I spent a period of incredible learning and personal transformation. It is hard to put a few faces on my gratitude, but I have to do so. Among the Pentecostal community, I would like to thank prophet Patrick Sam, apostle Atiemo, evangelist Agyeman, bishop Nterful, reverend Hamish Oddoye, reverend Kindsley Tetteh, Seth Mensah, reverend Kwasi Sampong, pastor Priscilla Nketia, pastor Mensah Otabil, pastor Simon Peter, Prophetess Priscilla, and pastor Yaw Tech. Among the academic community, I found great support and learning from professors Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu and Elom Dovlo. I send my love to the Darkuman community through the Quaynor family and my brothers Nana Sarfo and Billeycion Ballam.

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## Introduction - Uncertainty, pedagogy, and the dissemination of Pentecostalism in Ghana

### 1. Signs of the charismatic revival

Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity has expanded in sub-Saharan Africa vigorously especially since the 1980s (Meyer 2004a). Its influence has been recognized by scholars on fields as diverse as attitudes towards local cultures and traditional religions (Meyer 1999), public spheres, public cultures, and politics (Ranger 2008, Englund 2012), gender (Soothill 2007) and health (Prince, Denis and Van Dijk 2009) ideologies, and the development apparatus (Freeman 2012). Ghana is no exception (Gifford 2004), and almost 30% of the population declared themselves Pentecostal Christians in the 2010 census. These numbers can rise to almost 50% in Southern Ghana, where Christianity has had a longer and deeper historical presence.

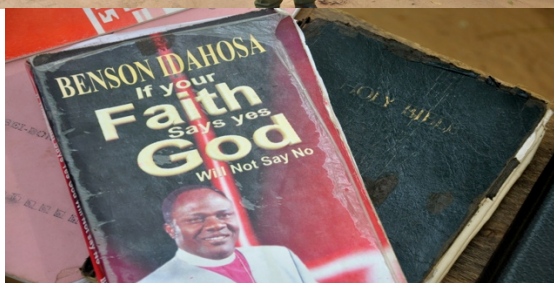
Following this charismatic dissemination during my fieldwork, mostly in Accra, I was led to conventional religious settings such as church buildings, but also to locations that only from afar reminded me of the circumscribed sacredness I intuitively attributed to the notion of a “temple”: private compound houses, primary and secondary school classrooms, construction sites, and even places defined explicitly as “enemy” territories, such as bars and nightclubs, in their off hours. Here religious gatherings of different shapes and sizes were hosted. Generally, participants embraced the promises of an immanent expression of the Holy Spirit in their lives in terms of empowerment through spiritual gifts (speaking in tongues, healing, deliverances from demons, prophecy) and miraculous interventions. Small churches and informal Christian associations are supported by a flexible and informal ecclesiology, in consonance with Jesus’ widely quoted claim in Matthew 18:20, that “For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them” (NIV). Some become exclusively centered on the patriarchal or matriarchal figure of the charismatic leader, similar to Old Testament model of prophetic leadership that can bestow intercessory powers on followers, whereas others assume a form similar to the church-houses (*kat’ oikon ekklesia*) the apostle Paul established among the Ephesians (see Moxnes 1997)--a Christian family balancing the centrality of the charismatic leader with a democratized distribution of functions among disciples. In the latter case, everyone has some degree of access to the Spirit, and enjoys a peripheral place in church life. Members might help in the logistics, perform mutual counseling and prayer, or lead Bible reading groups and evangelistic outreaches. It is hard to pin down a single orienting model for doctrine and liturgy, but most converts can easily legitimize their rules of engagement by referring to a web of citations from the Bible.

One of the most remarkable and unconventional charismatic sites I visited while in Accra was Achimota forest. The forest lies in a park right next to the famous Achimota School, once the jewel of late British colonialism, where several of Ghana’s leaders and public figures were educated, including a number of presidents. Since the 1980s, Achimota forest has become a “prayer ground”, where born-again Christians “wait for the Lord” through fasting and lengthy prayers in tongues. In its relative seclusion, converts can perform their activities at dawn without disturbing neighbors, and some have built huts in the area, where they might dwell for weeks or months. One of its long habitués, pastor Moses, was particularly concerned to clarify that Achimota forest was just a place of retreat:

Jesus, John the Baptist, Elijah, Elisha, they never mingled themselves too much with the people. They only went to the cities with clear assignments. Go there and do that, then they came back and continued in their spiritual ways. We here, and me personally for almost eighteen years, have been praying spiritually, or doing spiritual exercises, not only in the city, but also in other prayer places. I have a hut like this elsewhere. I have a house in Atwia [another prayer retreat, in the Ashanti region]. Last time I spent 8 months there. This change of environment is vital for a Christian. It makes you

revive. You come here and I tell you: Bruno, let's pray. This brings revival. It's also another way of renewing my mind and my experiences, you understand? These things brought us to this settlement. It's not because we don't have houses or homes. We have good places to sleep.

Pastor Moses complemented his comments by reminding me that the forest was an informal breeding ground of Pentecostalism in Ghana, where famous ministers like Mensah Otabil and Steve Mensah cultivated their spirituality and learned how to be led by the Holy Spirit as they built their popular and well-established churches. His description was accurate although highly official, and I could not avoid noticing that Achimota had also become the site of an ambiguous form of holy squatting from more humble pastors, since housing in Accra is scarce and expensive. Once thick, the vegetation has now receded, and dwellers started farming the land with cassava, corn and yams. A number of clearings appeared, and a Christian settlement has been established. During my visits, I met among its inhabitants converts, neophytes, and experienced pastors coming from diverse regions of Ghana and even Nigeria. I found out that frictions with other land users were common, especially thieves, marijuana users, and the school administration, which periodically sent the police to harass the forest dwellers, demolish their huts, and evict them. But they resisted, persisted, and returned. "It's our place now", told me one of the pastor-squatters. They cook, clean, read the Bible and share devotional literature, pray together, talk about the revelations they received from the Holy Spirit, and learn from each other. Achimota forest has become a mystical *polis*, a place of piety and hope within a city suffused by the revival.



Many of the born-again Christians I met in Achimota were evangelists, meaning that one of the tasks they perform in the deterritorialized body of Christ that today stretches across Ghana is to interpellate others about the Christian truth. Evangelists further erode any attempt to encapsulate Pentecostalism spatially or temporally. Energetic soul-winners, they take over cities and towns early in the morning, announcing through "dawn broadcasting" the imminence of Christ's return, exhorting all to repent and accept salvation. They might approach you face-to-face and ask if you



“have a minute to hear about Jesus” or knock at your door. Thriving on the widespread acceptance of these practices, evangelists are welcomed into buses and vans (*tro-tros*), and even in public schools. Their livelihood relies on gifts and “offerings”, which usually amount to a few coins, enough to allow the continuous spread of the “fire of God”.



*Evangelist at work in the neighborhood of Nima, Accra*

Small churches, wandering saints, and individual entrepreneurs are joined by more solid institutions like national and international non-denominational fellowships, medium-sized churches, and mega-churches, major network nodes connecting the local scene to the global Pentecostal ecclesia (Robins 2004b). Some have congregations of five to ten thousand members and multiple branches across Ghana, Africa and the world. Their majestic church buildings are landmarks that attract great masses of believers and visitors. Mega-churches have coupled this territorialized influence with the intense mediatization of their leaders’ sermons, which have filled the air and sound waves with words of salvation, piety, spiritual empowerment, and prosperity, the pillars of the so-called “third wave” of the Pentecostal revival in Ghana (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005).



*Church service at Lighthouse Chapel International's headquarters*



*International Central Gospel Church member watching Mensah Otabil's digitalized preaching at the church's reception room*

Accra’s landscape has been punctuated here and there by signs of the revival, from popular food joints called “Jesus is the answer” to Christian bumper stickers, from large billboards inviting to church conferences, to more humble church posters vying for space on the city walls and light

poles. Gospel music has spawned a lively cultural industry, and devotional literature dominates the print business. The revival enters the everyday in more subtle ways, as was conveyed by the note of caution I encountered any time I visited a photocopier close to where I lived in Accra, in the neighborhood of Darkuman: “If you are too big to repent, then you will be too big to be saved”.



The religion-saturated environment I depicted above evidences the success of Pentecostalism in Ghana. But the dispersal of this spirituality has also given shape to a wide spectrum of social phenomena that embody in a highly visible manner the heterogeneity compressed in the idea of a “charismatic movement”. The boundless expansion of Christian zeal and the miraculous in the country, added to the lack of a centralized authority able to distinguish orthodoxy from heresy, inspiration from transpiration, has enveloped Ghanaian society, pushing it into a real “incitement to speak” (Foucault 1990: 18) for and about Pentecostalism. Since Pentecostal leaders, churches, and inter-denominational organizations have been unable to establish more general authoritative standards, everyone seems to have something to say on the subject, producing a cacophony in the public sphere.

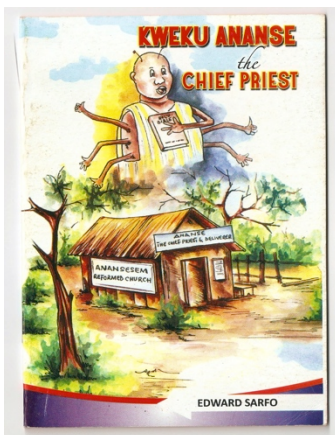
## 2. Ungovernable religion: the erratic publicity of the revival



“Be careful with magicians in priestly robes”, “Weed out dubious Christian leaders”, “Christians must not be deceived by charlatans”, “New Vision leader in another fraud”, “Kumasi Queen offers prophet \$860GH¢ bribe”, “Minister strips woman naked in public”, “Lover defrauds pastor”, “Be wary of prophecies”. Those are examples of headlines from both mainstream and sensationalist newspapers that have flooded Ghana’s public sphere in recent years, almost always having charismatic churches at their forefront. The scope of these anxieties has also become global. The major American evangelical periodical *Christianity Today* published in May 2011 a report entitled “Magic Words: Ghanaian Churches Confront Fake Pastors”. Recently, on BBC News’s website, the Ghanaian journalist Elizabeth Ohene wrote that “Certainly in Ghana the growth of churches far outpaces growth in any other sector”<sup>1</sup>. This seems an exaggeration, considering the country’s impressive GDP growth of 14.4 percent in 2012, boosted by recent oil production and the construction sector. Nevertheless, especially during the decades of 1980 and 1990, when the economy was in dire straits, the multiplication of churches visibly contrasted with the withdrawal of the state from the employment sector:

The Ghana Evangelism Committee, the conduit of church growth thinking into Ghana, notices that 3,262 churches were planted in Ghana between 1986 and 1992. That means 3,262 pastors, or the creation of 3,262 new jobs over the five-year period, in a country where according to some estimates 300,000 jobs had been cut through government retrenchment (Gifford 1998: 91).

But even today, after economic recovery, it is valid to claim that Pentecostal networks of prayer and miraculous intercession in Ghana suffer tremendous pressure from what AbdouMaliq Simone calls the “survivalist orientation” (2004: 9) of large sections of contemporary African societies. Similar to Achimota forest dwellers, this is not merely a mechanical reduction of religious motivations to the urges of the stomach. However, vulnerability and material deprivation cannot be simply taken out of the picture either, and they might generate instability. Analogously to Ruth Marshall’s (2009) observations about the revival in Nigeria, Pentecostalism in Ghana has been inevitably drawn into strategies of survival, orbiting around erratic figures like “the ruse, the con, the informal, the criminal, and above all, the occult or supernatural” (9). These insidious moral topologies have at their center categories that are neither traditional nor really new, boiling within a post-colonial soup of past and present. Common to all of them are techniques of navigating between the known and the unknown, the visible and the invisible, through operations of hiding and showing, which reinstate in their own way older idioms of secrecy in which “everything may have a double reference or use that is not immediately knowable or visible” (Ferre 2001: 211).



Another classic West African figure that evokes post-colonial politics of concealment is the trickster (Pelton 1989). Bayart (2000) compares the picaresque wisdom of the West African trickster to the ancient notion of *mētis*: “the quality that allows a person to manipulate hostile forces that are too powerful to be confronted directly, but which can be turned to good account in spite of their hostile nature, in such a way as to be useful for one’s own purposes” (259). The trickster is a master of the arts of non-confrontational resistance, but he might also

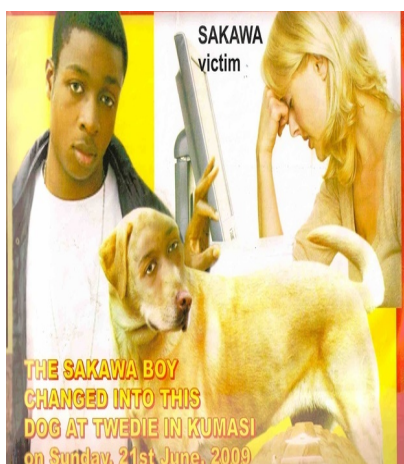
<sup>1</sup> “African view point: False prophets?”, June 22, 2011. In <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13816050>

become simply a rogue cleverly mobilizing symbolic and material resource for personal profit. The similarities with the fake minister have been explicitly recognized and elaborated upon by Ghana's popular imaginary, as exemplified by the booklet above, in which the Ashanti trickster Ananse, the Spider, is transfigured into "the chief priest and deliverer", holding the Bible in one of his many hands while luring his flock and clients into his verbal webs with the sole purpose of getting his belly full.

The currency of these practices has given to the figure of the fake pastor, the *azaa* pastor, an almost proverbial place in the popular culture (Shipley 2009). The *azaa* pastor is always a pastor-trickster, but he also operates at the threshold of another popular figure of power in contemporary Africa: the occult (Geschiere 1997, Commaroff and Comaroff 1999, Kiernan 2006). Commenting on the popularity of ideas and practices related to the occult among urban African youths, Simone argues that:

Without structured responsibilities and certainties, the places that young people inhabit and the movements they undertake become instances of disjuncting geographies – that is, subsuming places into mystical, subterranean, sorcerous orders, prophetic or eschatological universes, highly localized myths that capture allegiances in large social bodies, or daily reinvented routines that have little link to anything (2004: 7).

The occult adds to the truth-game of imitation, based on the ironic interplay between



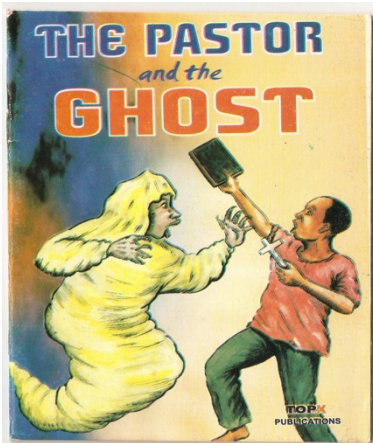
content and appearance, a deep-rooted spiritual component. The occult is not a "religion", although it does have its experts, as *mallams* and fetish priests, who master ritual recipes, manipulate invisible force, and provide their clients with power and wealth. Similarly to modern witchcraft (Geschiere 1997), discourses about the occult have an affinity with the unbounded pragmatics of rumors, and can either legitimize or delegitimize strategies of accumulation by mapping them out to invisible economies. The occult is "good to think" the contemporary, and has become an inherent part of popular imaginaries. Its ritual procedures are highly innovative, and can easily absorb almost any resource at hand, as exemplified by the recent wave of *Sakawa* crimes (Oduro-Frimpong 2012) in

Ghana, a mix of cyber-fraud and sorcery feeding the news and the popular culture, as observed in the image above, taken from a section of a poster on a newspaper kiosk in Accra.

The capacity to look into the occult and engage with spiritual agents always implies some degree of risk, self-exposure, and the possibility of being drawn into its logic by contagion, which has also afflicted Pentecostalism. Most Pentecostal churches in Ghana embrace in one way or another the cosmological frame of the "spiritual battle theology", meaning that, instead of symbolizing the occult as ineffective and "superstitious", pastors rather affirm its efficacy as demonic, thus predatory towards everyone, at least on the long run. By doing so, men of God ascertain their legitimate role as soldiers of Christ fighting "principalities and powers" imbued with the Holy Ghost fire. Birgit Meyer's landmark work (1998, 1999, 2006a, 2006b, 2012) has explored the genesis of the spiritual battle theology in Ghana and how its agonistic and highly enchanted ethics has rendered the insertion of Pentecostalism in the local culture problematic. She has traced the effects of this imaginary in ritual practices of "deliverance" or exorcism, conflicts with traditional priests and neo-traditional movements, and explored how this Manichean theology lends itself to spectacularization, being openly aestheticized by Ghana's grassroots movie industry. Meyer is interested in accounting for the specific form of publicity embedded in Pentecostalism, marked by a desire to "make public" the demonic vices and forces that underpin traditional religion and modern

forms of occultism: “Thus, for Pentecostals the very act of making public is enshrined in a longstanding Christian mode of revelation that seeks to unmask what lies behind the surface of appearances. Making public is thus not a neutral act but inscribed in a Christian logic of outreach and revelation” (Meyer 2012: 154).

And yet, this confrontational proximity with the enemy might lead Pentecostalism into the traps of the occult, thus shifting positions from agent to object of unmasking. This is exemplified by the booklet *The Pastor and the Ghost*, just one of many popular fiction stories about family feuds sold in Accra. It narrates how inheritance disputes shatter a polygamous family, leading one of the



children to kill the patriarch. The elder becomes a ghost who permanently haunts one of the rooms of their compound house. In order to solve the matter, a pastor is hired. The man of God is supposed to spend the night in the haunted room and deliver it from this spiritual agent. Before going to bed, the pastor holds a cross and a Bible and, according to the author, “prays in fake tongues”. But as night falls, he is attacked by the ghost and flees helplessly, but only after having collected his dues. While harassing his victim, the ghost exercises the capacity to unveil secrets that characterizes all occult agents, and does not miss the chance to question the pastor’s Christianity: “Do you know Jesus?” a strange voice asked. ‘A sinful pastor like you, do you know Jesus? If you know Him, why is it you continue to fornicate, lie, deceive, and

even cause divisions among the members of your church? Take this slap and go and tell the world about Jesus...!’”. To see, enter, to try to counter and unmask the occult are ways of being exposed to its own arts of unmaking, which might include the uncanny possibility of receiving lessons about true Christianity from a ghost.

It is telling that Pentecostal ministers themselves rarely deny the existence of *azaa* pastors, and the most flashy popular pastors have even the propensity to embrace as their own the game of making public the occult backstage of other churches. The Spectator of January 16, 2010 brought a report called “Juju scare: prophet exposes pastors” telling a story of a charismatic prophet whose church was attacked by his peers-competitors through the weapons of sorcery. Exposing the affinities between the spectral and the spectacle (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999), even when nested within Christianity, the newspaper states:

The prophet did not hesitate to dig and to neutralize the spiritual object right in front of the congregation soon after the all-night service he held on Saturday. The black object, in the form of a charm contained many needles and was located three feet below the ground in the premises of the church. The juju in the form a spiritual bomb could detonate during church service, kill three or more people thus cause confusion in the church.

The *azaa* pastor is likely to appear in the popular culture consulting *mallams* and fetish priests in order to acquire his spiritual powers, thus making of the Holy Spirit a mere façade to the secretive agency of “small gods”. Consequently, the agonism of the spiritual battle theology has progressively lost focus, and the Pentecostal ecclesia has become permeated by an enemy within. This unruly situation is captured and somehow normalized by another orienting figure of Pentecostal publicity: the notion that we are living in the end-times.

The end-times are an outcome of the particular breed of “dispensationalism” that underpins the eschatology of global Pentecostalism (Boyer 1992). This perspective divides the linear history of salvation from Genesis to the prophecies of Revelations into a variety of “dispensations”, or time periods, whose ontology is determined by specific types of “covenants” binding God to the





creation. The end-times is one of the last of these “dispensations”, marked by the arrival of the Anti-Christ, which pre-figures Christ’s second-coming, when the final battle between good and evil and the Day of Judgment will unfold. The end-times will see “great tribulations”, as natural disasters, wars, famine, and social and economic crisis. This includes the “end-times church”, which will be marked as much by the multiplication of miraculous signs and wonders and evangelistic growth as by the pervasive influence of false and self-proclaimed prophets and preachers. An eerie temporal horizon, the end-times secures the veracity of Biblical narratives by embracing the surrounding lack of discernment as corroborating Christian truth, and not the opposite. It allows trickstery and the occult to be affirmed within eschatological terms, thus making of crisis a Christian way of life. According to the

popular treatise *Verses for the End-Times*, written by Gabriel Ansah, founder of the Pentecostal fellowship Nasem University, even “date setting with regard to Christ’s return” (as exemplified by the newspaper above) is a practice that index the activity of false Christians, thus confirming the end-times. This recursive and tautological frame means that uncertainty must not be dissipated, but dwelled upon by authentic Christians, equipped with both intense zeal and a Biblically informed skepticism. But how and where these forms of immanent critique (Ahmad 2011) and ethical-religious discernment are supposed to be cultivated?

### 3. What pedagogy has to offer: thinking the labor of discernment in uncertain conditions

I arrived in Accra for a short prospective fieldwork period of three months in 2009. I was interested in exploring a question that, for the reasons above, appeared as the most unlikely to be asked: How does one become a Pentecostal convert, lay leader or pastor in Ghana? And what is the role of religious pedagogy in this process? I noticed that, although extremely extensive, the literature on Pentecostalism in Africa tends to be limited when it comes to embedding this religious discourse in concrete life stories and communities of practices, thus conveying a sense that Pentecostalism itself it disembedded and over-ritualized, a position that tells only half of the story. By reviewing the literature on this subject, I realized that three main aspects have attracted the most academic interest. First, the exuberance of Pentecostal church services, which in small or large scale tend to be highly spectacularized. This aspect has invited scholarly attention to lively spiritual songs and dances, Pentecostal preachers’ rhetorical techniques, promises of prosperity, and the widespread reliance of this spirituality on intercession and miraculous “signs and wonders”. Those elements often overlap with a particularistic interest on the “Africanization” of the ritual repertoire and how Pentecostal aesthetics and concerns with healing, prosperity, prophecy, and deliverance from evil spirits would be a refashioning of African religion’s primary focus on this-worldly blessings instead of salvation, sin, and eternal life (Larbi 2001, Gifford 2004). Second, works concerned with the religious public sphere have stressed how charismatic media production objectifies spiritual agencies, formats sensations, and deterritorialize religious affects, representing a more technologically inclined instance of the basic work of “mediation” supposed to be performed by religions at large (Meyer 2010). This is followed by a productive critique of the Eurocentric and secularist bias that underpins the Habermasian notion of the public sphere as an impersonal and disenchanted space of deliberation. Third, as I showed above, any attempt to embrace the Pentecostal movement as it appears in the public sphere implies absorbing a dazzling sense of ungovernability. As a result, scholars often use Pentecostal notions like the end-times as a religious reflex of the predicaments of African societies in

a moment in which “the future horizon is apparently closed, while the horizon of the past has apparently receded” (Mbembe 2001: 17). As vast sections of the population are drawn into the shadows of globalization (Ferguson 2006), the African continent has experienced a general crisis of teleologies of progress, first “civilization” now “development”, finding in the end-times a more likely alternative to make sense of the nonprogressive temporality of uncertainty and disconnection that characterizes the everyday.

(...) another sort of nonprogressive temporalization of economic distress may be detected in what we might call ‘apocalyptic temporalizations’. At a time that more and more people (...) reckon world-historical time by referring not to the calendar of the Five-Year plan but to the Book of Revelations, the question of ‘development’ threatens to be displaced by the question of the End-Times (Ferguson 2006: 191).

Due to the concrete heterogeneity of Pentecostalism as an object of research, all perspectives above carry some degree of accuracy. But an important blank space is still visible, and academic approaches to the Pentecostal-charismatic wave in Africa have paid significantly less attention to the regimes of practice and disciplines that constitute this spirituality (but see Marshall 2009), including their different forms of ecclesiological embeddedness. I am not rejecting the importance of Sunday services, audio-visual media, or eschatology, but simply arguing that believers might also bring to the church setting, as well as to the TV set, ethical and spiritual competencies that are cultivated along the entirety of their “walk with Christ”, which spreads out into everyday activities and modes of relatedness that might fill the gap between the now time of survival and the radical messianic individualism of the end-times. Instead of simply assuming that Pentecostalism has been fully subsumed by the predicaments of the contemporary, my interest on religious pedagogy was concerned with recognizing some of the weapons whereby this religious tradition struggles to retain its specificity and reshape its surrounding environment. Having this in mind, I realized that one could still address most academic representations of Pentecostalism in Africa with the questions raised by Talal Asad (1993) in his pathbreaking *Genealogies of Religion*, which raises the problem of truth and power - “What are the conditions in which religious symbols can actually produce religious dispositions? Or, as a nonbeliever would put it: How does (religious) power create (religious) truth?” (33) - and arrives at a general plea for more ethnographically grounded studies of religious pedagogy: “Is the concept of religious training entirely vacuous?” (53).

Asad (1993, 2003) has attempted to renew the anthropology of religion by shifting the understanding of religious truth regimes from the mentalist notion of “belief” in invisible agents of a “symbolic” nature toward a closer investigation of the authoritative processes whereby religious subjects are formed, or in Foucault’s (1997a) terms, how individuals become subjects. His work coordinates a genealogical interest on how secular power has reshaped religion in modernity with an historical and ethnographic interest on how religious traditions might endure in modernity as ways of life, that is, ethical regimes advanced in practice through the teleological cultivation of embodied religious capacities and sensibilities, primarily a willing obedience. Inspired by authors like Foucault (1997, 2000), Arendt (1977), Mauss (1978), MacIntyre (1984), and Voloshinov (1986), Asad’s understanding of religion as an “authoritative discourse” avoids the primacy of meaning and mediation that characterizes most of the anthropology of religion, and recasts religious language “as rooted in a somatic complex (hearing-feeling-seeing-remembering) and as involved in people’s making/remaking themselves or others over time” (Asad 2006: 212). Authority here transcends the Liberal opposition between coercion and persuasion, being reframed as “the internal structure of a relationship that brings into play a multiplicity of material components” (*idem*). Neither an imposing externality nor simply an ineffective object of “choice” (Mahmood 2005), authority operates as a condition of possibility for religious agency.

We might consider this an unlikely framework to apply to a charismatic tradition like Pentecostalism, marked by a strong reliance on self-authorizing personal experiences of God through the Holy Spirit. Spreading globally with strong reformist zeal, Pentecostalism remains highly context-sensitive, assuming a kaleidoscopic form that has become a teaser to the scholarly mind, avid for definitions. As a result, this protean entity has presented serious challenges to the theoretical project of establishing its historical, sociological, or theological identity, which are best grasped as a plethora of “family resemblances” (Anderson 2010). In his history of early Pentecostal theology in the USA, Jacobsen (2003) argues that to be a Pentecostal generally means that “one is committed to a Spirit-centered, miracle-affirming, praise-oriented version of the Christian faith”, concluding that “there is no meta-model of Pentecostalism - no essence or normative archetype” (11-12). Jacobson’s point is valid, and yet the lack of a single normative archetype should not be confused with the absolute absence of standards and processes of normalization, something that would ultimately render Pentecostal practices unintelligible to both believers and analysts<sup>2</sup>. Jacobsen is not simply claiming that Pentecostalism is allergic to authoritative forms, but that norms and models have become legion and ultimately irreducible to a single trans-denominational essence. In fact, his book traces richly how the revival around Charles Parham and William Seymour rapidly gave room to a variety of Pentecostal breeds condensed around the folk-theological treatises authored by specific pioneers.

The problem of normativity is also not an academic imposition to Pentecostalism in Ghana, and indeed uncertainty has endowed it with a strong emic appeal. Secular and religious newspapers, radio, and TV shows carry in an almost daily basis debates on the scriptural basis of “prosperity theology”, the correct way of tithing, how Christians should relate to witchcraft, how the Spirit of God operates, the legitimacy or not of using objects as miraculous “points of contact”, how Christmas should be celebrated, what are the proper and improper bodily behaviors during praise and worship sessions, if Christian women are required to wear headscarves, to cite only a few. The section “Ears on wheels” of the February, 14, 2009 edition of the *Ghanaian Times* posed to six different citizens from Ghana, two Christian ministers, three believers, and one Muslim, the question “Are pastors saving souls or doing business?”, receiving a variety of answers and explanations. A pastor of the Seven Day Adventist church claimed that:

Soul winning is not the sole responsibility of man but also of the Holy Spirit and as such people who are into it should be careful not to divert their call for personal gains. I would like to plead with the government to consider a body to oversee churches as it is with other organization like the GJA who oversees the activities of journalists as the constitution is being reviewed.

Public claims supporting a tighter secular regulation of religion life as those exemplified above have become common. In fact, attempts to increase state control over churches have been implemented before. In 1989, on the rise of the charismatic wave, president Jerry Rawlings passed a law demanding that all churches register with the Ministry of Interior. The idea was to hold them accountable, and requirements like a minimal number of members and inscription fees were applied (Gifford 1998: 69). The law rapidly sparked controversy, especially because of the president’s authoritarian past. It was interpreted as an attack on freedom of religion, and opposed publicly even by the so-called mainline churches, such as the Roman Catholic, which had indeed been one of the most vocal critics of Rawlings’ impingement on human rights during his previous dictatorial rules. Another common proposition aired by opinion makers is that the state should simply admit that

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<sup>2</sup> According to Foucault, norms are a “grid of intelligibility of the social order” (1990: 93). Asad (1993: 34-35) sees in St. Agustín a Christian predecessor on this perspective on power and truth.

charismatic churches are a business as any other and submit them to taxation, thus discouraging the mushrooming of small churches.

Positions like those above show how in Ghana today the ethical and religious problem of discernment - “How do we know that Christian words and Christian acts really express a Christian spirit?” (Keane 2007:127) - has become explicitly entwined with the political and ecclesiastical problem of authority and legitimacy, that is, it has become a problem of government. Pentecostals are the first to admit the importance of coupling discernment and authority with the future of their spirituality. Organizations like the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council and the National Association of Charismatic and Christian Churches already drafted codes of ethics for pastors, lay leaders, and members. However, these attempts were frustrated by the limited representativeness of inter-denominational bodies and the lack of more solid means of sanctioning these norms. It has become clear that the most effective source of normativity to an inherently decentralized spirituality like Pentecostalism is religious training, as transpired by the tendency to define the *azaa* pastor as a “self-professed” and “self-ordained” pastor, that is, someone whose enthusiasm and divine inspiration remain unaccountable in terms of institutions and relations, thus untamed.

My initial fieldwork experience hence made me realize that my original concern with pedagogy was not only a valid theoretical angle, applicable to Pentecostalism as to any other religious tradition, but also that teaching and learning religion were increasingly acknowledged by Pentecostal leaders and converts as the most vital instrument of legitimation of their religion. Instead of a rigid opposition between the “dead letter” of learning and the spontaneous and empowering “life” of the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:4-6)<sup>3</sup>, Pentecostals in Ghana have been increasingly pushed to temper the impetuosity of “being led” by the Holy Spirit with the warning of Hosea 4: 6 (KJV): “My people perish from a lack of knowledge”, quotations that were evoked with the same frequency by my interlocutors. They imply that discernment is not simply “discernment of spirits”, one of the spiritual gifts listed by Paul, the Apostle, in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. As a gift, or grace, discernment would be a once and for all pattern of judgment, which one might have or have not. Discernment has also been increasingly recognized by Ghanaian Pentecostals as a resource or a capacity that must be conquered in practice, within relations and institutions. In sum, discernment is a grace and a labor oriented to two basic pedagogical problems: How to “be led” and still remain within authoritative conditions? And how and where to acquire the equipment that allows converts to convey God’s sovereign will authentically in their behavior?

There are various ways in which Pentecostals in Ghana engage with processes of “learning religion” (Berliner and Sarró 2007). One of them is devotional literature. Those are books written mostly in a manual form, published by mainstream local and international minister and by popular pastors. These texts tackle either sections or the entirety of Pentecostalism’s apparatus of devotion, as prayer, worship, preaching, diverse spiritual gifts, hearing God, dreams and vision, etc. In his study of early modern Christian mysticism, DeCerteau (1995) shows how popular devotional texts provided new templates for the mystical quest for a methodic cultivation of religious experience in a context in which Christian language had been de-ontologized by the scientific secularization of nature. No longer evidenced in the signature of things, Biblical historicity had to be dwelled upon individually through a “propaedeutics of rupture” (129). The text-worlds produced by Christian virtuosi therefore provided ways of inhabiting a mechanical nature governed by natural laws while recurring to a set of rules for action: “(...) in principle it [this textual method] constituted a scenario

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<sup>3</sup> “And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life”.

that sectioned off from the natural order a series of human operations and placed it within a problematic of decision-making of the type: if you want Z than do A, then B, then C, and so forth” (128). Working in a similar fashion, Pentecostal piety manuals have been vital to the global transposability of this spirituality and might be legitimately approached as binding artifacts enabling the normalization of Pentecostal experience (Droogers 1994) and the replication (Urban 1996) of this discursive tradition across contexts. And yet, the solution they provide to the problem of discernment is most often provisional, especially because this literature has itself mimicked the erratic proliferation of the revival in Ghana, and publications might contradict each other, requiring the supplementary work of more interactive forms of ethico-religious guidance, first and foremost from the pulpit itself.

Going to a Pentecostal church is an opportunity to receive one’s blessings, but it is also always a space for teaching and learning. Messages addressing the theme of proper/improper Christian leadership are extremely common in Ghana, and they unfold both within denominations and during thematic inter-denominational conferences. The content of the preaching in these circumstances is non-rarely conveyed through an ambivalent rhetoric, which simultaneously heartens religious enthusiasm while trying to condition it to forms of accountability. This was exemplified by one of Ghana’s major charismatic pastors, Eastwood Anaba, in one of his *Love Conferences* in August of 2009. On the one hand, in a classic Pentecostal style, Anaba opened the event by addressing an audience of around five hundred born-again Christians, most of them ministers, with a testimony about how church decorum may hinder the power of the Holy Spirit:

The first time I tried to give a prophecy, I was stopped by an usher. I used to wear a short sleeves shirt. I had a bushy hair. My English was bad. I was a Bible student at that time. I should have spoken tongues like an American... [Laughter. He imitates the “softer” way Americans pray in tongues]. Seriously, the prophecy was strong in me! But they shushed me. “No, we brought a man from America to prophecy!” I put my prophecy between my legs and left the place. I tell you, if they stop you here, prophecy there! Stand in the road and shout your prophecy. Every joint in the body of Christ is effectively working. We don’t need to amputate anything. Today, there are many gifts in the church that are amputated.

On the other hand, twenty minutes later, he tempered this equalitarian and, for some, anarchical urge to “be led” by the Spirit whenever one is prompted to with a word of warning:

Those of us here who are pastors: please, please, you represent Jesus! He's our boss. Are we properly representing him? Do people point at you and say: “He has been with Jesus!” [as people did with Peter and John in Acts 4: 13]. No, they say: “They have been with the money! With the girls!” I don’t care how powerful we get. Power is nothing. So many people have power these days! I don’t care how influential we get. If our lives do not portray Christ, we're nothing. I'm not saying live a life of “don't do this or that”, just be free, but in freedom there must be righteousness. That's the calling God has given to us.

Anaba’s modulated voice, which exhorts and warns, imparts well the main challenged faced by Pentecostalism in Ghana today: Where to locate the intersection between the spontaneous expression of the “fire of god”, the basic tenets of Christian morality and ethics, and forms of public accountability? This problem has also reinforced the importance of relations and institutions explicitly concerned with religious training, as informal mentorship and Bible schools, where neophyte pastors are honed to recognize and respond to their callings.

Surprised by the popularity of charismatic Bible schools in Ghana in the early 1990s, Paul Gifford claimed that:



Given their very friendly relations, their networks, and even their similar theology, it is remarkable how much effort each church expends to establish its own Bible school. All these churches tithe; the resources thus generated are invariably devoted to establishing a Bible school even before building a church. Establishing the Bible school is a focus of unity, a spur to effort. A functioning Bible school is the badge of success (1994: 258).

More than a “badge of success”, I understand that Bible schools have become vital tools for the transmission of Pentecostal norms in Ghana, and thus a condition for the success of any charismatic church interested in expanding its influence in an orderly manner. In this sense, the phenomenon of the multiplication of Pentecostal Bible schools in Ghana can be read as a response to the surrounding crisis of discernment, giving access to a more socially productive politics of the end-times church: the importance of using pedagogy to secure allegiances and reproduce particular church ideologies through what Pentecostals call discipleship, the art of ushering others into the Christian life and ministry. Far from theology seminaries, often deemed cold and unspiritual by Pentecostals, Bible schools are institutions that condense methods and relations of discipleship and where particular models of Pentecostalism are transmitted at the level of leadership. In this sense, Bible schools heighten zeal and enthusiasm while predicating these on forms of willing obedience.

I realized that Bible schools would be ideal sites to advance my project of understanding how religious pedagogy might counter the disconnection between façade and backstage assumed by the dominant regimes of the simulacrum, the trickster, and the occult in the public sphere. During my longer staying in Accra, from June 2010 to August 2011, I decided to focus my fieldwork research on these sites. It is the declared purpose of Bible schools to situate Pentecostalism along authoritative lines and provide born-again Christians with the tools required to transform the theatrical expression of Christianity as one more “social role” (Goffman 1971) into an integrative engagement with Christianity as an ethico-religious project (MacIntyre 1984). In this sense, pedagogy is a way of converting Pentecostal performance, or “the individual role-playing striving to effect his will within a role-structured situation” (MacIntyre 1984: 115), into Pentecostal performativity (Butler 1993), a Self-generative engagement with prescribed practices and discursive scripts with the aim of reshaping volition and desires. Bible schools are also places where neophyte pastors go on a quest for a better life and a lifelong vocation, and pedagogy here tends to become entangled with forms of network- and institution-building.

In order to have an adequate sense of the variety assumed by Pentecostal Bible schools in Accra, I spent time in two schools run by mega-churches, International Central Gospel Church’s Central Bible College and Lighthouse Chapel International’s Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center, but also in a small non-denominational school, the Center for Leadership Development, and in one popular school centered exclusively on the prophetic office, the School of Prophetic Excellence. In these places, I was kindly allowed to attend lectures, photocopy textbooks and other pedagogical materials, and have informal conversations as well as more systematic interviews with instructors and students. Bible schools give great importance to spiritual exercises, and I was able to observe, take pictures, and video record some of these practices. Although I gathered new and productive information in all of the four schools above, in order to make this dissertation more focused, I opted for exploring only one of these sites, Anagkazo, although the other venues helped shape my overall perspective on the subject.

As my ethnographic research matured, my project also shifted in perspective. My plans had moved toward writing solely an ethnography of Bible schools or of a single Bible school. But after realizing that becoming a pastor was a later stage of a longer process of spiritual development, beginning especially with a deeper and more active involvement with church life, I broadened my focus again, and extended my inquiry into the problem of conversion (Robbins 2007) and

“conversion careers” (Gooren 2010) and contexts of discipleship concerned in fostering lay leaders. Among small churches, those are basically informal networks of apprenticeship, whereas larger and more institutionally stable churches add to these more formalized discipleship structures giving access to participation in thematic intra-church bodies. I noticed that Bible schools were not extraordinary centers of Pentecostal pedagogy, but the territorialized peaks of more deterritorialized pedagogical networks. As such, they simply coordinated in a highly systematic and closely monitored manner a variety of pedagogical methods and relations happening elsewhere in Ghana in more capillary forms. In this sense, I define this dissertation as primarily focused on religious pedagogy per se, taking Anagkazo as a case-limit giving access to a dimension of Pentecostal power that is more enabling than merely ritualized, mediatized, and messianic, although it also includes those three aspects.

#### 4. Three levels of contingency: or situating religious pedagogy in the “city of man”

Before presenting a short summary of the chapters, I would like to tackle some potential objections to this project, especially the possibility of countering my interest in Pentecostal pedagogy and normativity by evoking the fact that I am supposing a marked opposition between contingency and religious norms, or that I am ignoring the inevitable influence of contingency in religious life. This is especially relevant considering the general blurring of discernment that persistently undermines Ghana’s religious field. Having this context in mind, I would be in better theoretical company if I had adopted more contingency-oriented models crafted by the anthropology of ethics and religion, like “ordinary ethics” (Lambek 2010, Das 2012), which instead of focusing on methodic ethical projects, privileges the notion of ethical practices as “relatively tacit, grounded in agreement rather than rule (...) and happening without calling undue attention to itself” (Lambek 2010: 2). I could have also made of this dissertation an ethnographic study of crisis and “moral breakdown” (Zigon 2009), since this social environment lends itself to this perspective. These scholars often oppose more or less explicitly habit-oriented approaches to ethics and religion like Asad’s by claiming that they reproduce as a generalized type the highly particular token of the devout religious subject. In reality, religious traditions are populated both by the zealous and the distracted, a few “ethical subjects” and a plethora of pragmatist subjects seeking for social capital, material rewards or entertainment.

Here, it is first important to remind that normativity is not synonym to certainty. Indeed, nothing could be farther from it. Augustine himself, the soldier of Christ who fought fiercely the Manichean, Pelagianist, and Donatist heresies during his lifetime with the weapons of theology and church authority (Brown 1969), was the first to admit that:

(...) while the City of God is on pilgrimage in this world, she has in her midst some who are united with her in participation in the sacraments, but who will not join with her in the eternal destiny of the saints. Some of these are hidden; some are well known, for they do not hesitate to murmur against God, whose sacramental sign they bear, even in the company of his acknowledged enemies. At one time they join the enemies in filling the theatres, at another they join with us in filling the churches (...) In truth, those two cities are interwoven and intermixed in this era, and await separation at last judgment (Augustine 2003:45-46)

Apparently, confusion reigned as much in Late Antiquity’s city of man as it does in contemporary Accra or elsewhere. The sons of the church are hidden among the ungodly, whereas false Christians dwell within the church, a dangerous although not necessarily alarming fact, since lost sheep can still be pastored and led toward truth. In sum, Augustine simply reckons with the fact that the boundaries of Christianity in the city of man are never fixed, thus being constantly asserted

and trespassed. Absolute discernment belongs to God only, and to the end of times, when we will finally see the loving and terrible face of the creator as he “makes public” the community of the saints. The irreducible presence of contingency in religious life addressed by Augustine above inheres in monotheistic traditions or axial religions (Robbins 2009) like Christianity, Judaism and Islam, which reserve certainty to God’s transcendental and sovereign judgment. I will call this theological point Christianity’s first level of contingency.

To this foundational level I would like to add another one, which belongs to the murky terrain usually summoned by the notion of “practice”. It is important to acknowledge that to pay attention to religion as a variety of processes of habituation whereby ethical and spiritual capacities are acquired as skills does not necessarily mean setting aside the everyday ambiguities that constitute “lived religion” (Osri 1985). Confirming this hypothesis, although still using the more conventional notion of belief, Charles S. Pierce argues that “the essence of belief is the establishment of a habit” (1955: 29), defining the latter as the “establishment in our nature of a rule of action” (28). This equation implies that “different beliefs are distinguished by the different modes of action to which they give rise” (29). Pierce also understands what he calls belief as a moment of “rest” in an ongoing movement in which certainty is eroded by the “irritation” of doubt, thus acquiring different levels of “fixation”. In these terms, the cultivated disposition to act in a certain way Marcel Mauss (1978) calls a *habitus* indicates a higher level of fixation of belief. Nonetheless, Pierce’s pragmatist theory of truth still retains in an interesting way the oscillation between certainty and doubt that characterizes the everyday, which might generate different levels of habit-sedimentation, and I consider this a good definition of what Pentecostalism as a lived religion might look like. Indeed, the fallen nature of humanity presupposed by axial religions makes room to accept this motif of piety-as-struggle as equally emic, since it implies that some dose of skepticism about one’s own Christian status is a pedagogical tool on the path to virtue. Moreover, without moments of fluctuation and hesitation, practices would never be felt as normative, since authority would be fully absorbed by habit’s power of precipitating itself as a second nature.

My point here is that tensions, conflicts, and doubts do emerge all the time within individual and communitarian projects of living the Christian life, and I do not see why a theory of religion-as-practice would be necessarily unable to include all shades of piety, from intense and virtuous devotion, passing through distraction and boredom, and arriving at heretic or sinful slippages. In fact, heresy can be thought of as equally situated and practice-oriented as piety is, both making sense only according to the horizon of norms<sup>4</sup>. A good ethnographic example is what my born-again interlocutors call “backsliding”, that is, stumbling in one’s Christian program of self-cultivation. The lack of shame with which my born-again acquaintances described moments of backsliding testifies to their expected nature. Testimonies about backsliding are often received by the communities, fellowships, and churches I visited with normality, thus being answered more with advice and care than condemnation. Indeed, if one backslides, it means that one is still within a Christian project, having not yet “fallen” or become an “unbeliever”. Moreover, codifying and experiencing error publicly and privately as backsliding is already inscribing the unchristian piece or pattern of behavior into the normative repertoire of a tradition that provides mechanisms of sliding back into proper place, starting with confession and repentance. In this sense, if repetitive practice is the means to the embodiment of a *habitus*, backsliding is a way of calibrating practice to error without falsifying the normativity of the *habitus* at stake. In sum, norms are projects sought teleologically, thus not

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<sup>4</sup> In this sense, I avoid reducing or maybe elevating heresy by theological abstraction to a disembodied “heretic imperative” propelling Christian history in time: “Hence the heretical is constantly reoccurring and being reinvented in new forms. Such recurring inventions may take place in the heartlands of Europe and America, or they may develop in fascinating and variable ways in quite different cultural contexts” (Cannell 2006: 7).

achievements.

Teleology is central to Mauss's (1978) pioneer albeit underdeveloped project of an "anthropology of practical reason" (Asad 1997: 45), which resonates with more recent scholarly trends, as Hadot's (1995) approach to spiritual exercises among the Philosophy schools, Foucault's (1997b) notion of "technologies of the self", and MacIntyre's (1984) argument about man as a "functional concept" (58) whose nature and essential purpose are closely entwined: "That is to say, 'man' stands to 'good man' as 'watch' stands for 'good watch' of 'farmer' to 'good farmer' within the classical tradition. Aristotle's takes it as a starting-point for ethical enquiry that the relationship of 'man' to 'living well' is analogous to that of 'harpist' to 'playing the harp well' (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 109a 16)" (MacIntyre 1984: 58). Despite their disagreements, all these authors dissociate ethics from the juridical model of judgment, usually mapped out to the secular modern divide between facts and values, approaching it instead as a set of desirable goods deemed internal to specific practices. Anthropologists of religion inspired by this scholarship have explored ethnographically the pedagogical entwinement between religious narrativity, habituation, and subject formation in devotional practices, tracing their somatic fixation as ethical percepts and affects (Hirschkind 2006) and ethically saturated notions of agency (Mahmood 2005).

From this point of view, a *habitus* is always a work in progress. This is especially the case when we apply this notion to a religion of salvation like Christianity, in which certainty about the embodiment of virtues and spiritual capacities would mean to incur in a vice and a indeed a sin, self-righteousness, also referred in Ghana as displaying a "holier than thou" attitude of contempt toward others. Teaching about self-righteousness, Prophet Patrick, the leader of the School of Prophetic Excellence, referred us to Luke 18: 9-14:

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 13 But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Self-righteousness is a sin because it indexes ignorance about the true nature of the Christian life: that it is not about heroic self-resilience, but about the ability to lay down the weight of the world and the flesh onto Christ. In sum, Christian knowledge and care of the Self are ultimately a work of grace and a conscious quest for an unreachable model, Christ, a man-God. The vice and sin of self-righteousness is exactly a way of addressing how virtue and holiness may also catalyze their opposites, signaling to the fundamental theological fact that perfection is an effect of grace, not of free will. Most born-again Christians do not consider themselves "better" ethically than non-converts. They simply believe that they have found the right *telos*, which is also the only truth *telos* when it comes to salvation. It is within this gray zone between a high fixation of belief and the irritation of doubt that theodicies concerning evil as seduction or possession, indirect ethical challenge or direct predation, find room to flourish, along with the problem of responsibility.

At this particular level of contingency, theology is not necessarily dissolved. It assumes the more concrete face of what my interlocutors call "doctrine", scripts for proper practice, which is indeed the way that Biblical narratives and concepts will appear in the pages that follow. Different from a highly systematic set of religious concepts relatively disconnected from their implementation, doctrine is debated and experienced by Pentecostals in Ghana as an ongoing quest for practical suitability to norms: Is this the way Christ would have behaved under these circumstances? Is this

the Christian way of performing this practice? Is this experience the Holy Spirit, my own mind, or the devil? In this sense, to acknowledge the persistence of contingency in religious truth regimes means that, when anthropologists go to the field having in mind both a general notion of Christianity and the desire to take their natives seriously and “in their own terms”, they must be ready to acknowledge moments in which our subjects of research also ask emically a question that has been popularized in the anthropology of Christianity: What is a Christian? (Robbins 2003).

The problem of definitions leads me into a third level of contingency, which has to do again with authority, since the ideal qualities of a good definition, distinctiveness or clarity, are also foundational qualities of any norm. Most of the times, social scientists deal with objects of research to which definitional struggles are immanent. One common example: a “bureaucracy” is an assemblage of people and technical attachments (written rules, material structures, paper trails) whose aim is to provide services with efficiency, meritocratic impersonality (difference between person and office), and an ends-oriented rationality. But in order to achieve this state of affairs, bureaucratic institutions must instill their aims in those responsible for running them through education and sanction. The bureaucratic actor must acquire the capacity to “think” and “act” bureaucratically through a concrete engagement with norms, and whenever these norms fail endemically, bureaucracy becomes the façade for something else, “patrimonialism” or “prebendalism”, forms of domination that subvert bureaucratic legality in the name of personal loyalties. This is to claim that the definition of “bureaucracy” relies on processes of normalization that are internal to its *modus operandi*, thus hosting the continuous threat of nominalism as agents establish and patrol its borders.

I believe definitional instabilities like those above inhere human institutions, but they tend to be catalyzed in post-colonial settings like Ghana, which have absorbed from the hegemonic West not so long ago, and through colonialism, imitation, creative appropriation, and extraversion (Bayart 2000), a great share of their modern organizational apparatuses, going from bureaucracy to democracy, nation to state, civilization to development. Talal Asad has explored the work of hegemony and contingency in another major global export of secular modernity: the definition of religion. In a recent synthetic statement of his approach to the subject, Asad argues:

The reason there cannot be a universal conception of religion is not because religious phenomena are infinitely varied – although there is in fact great variety in the way people live in the world with their religious beliefs. Nor is the case that there is no such thing, really, as religion. It is that defining is a historical act and when the definition is deployed, it does different thing at different times and in different circumstance, and responds to different questions, needs, and pressures. The concept “religion” is not merely a word: it belongs to vocabularies that bring persons and things, desires and practices together in particular traditions in distinctive way. This applies also to religion’s twin, “secularity,” which brings different sensibilities into play in different historical contexts. Thus the institutional practices and psychological responses that define *laïcité* in contemporary France are largely foreign to those that define “the separation of church and state” in today’s United States (Asad 2012: 38-39).

Asad’s point is almost obvious, although often ignored. Again, definitions of religion unfold within the world, even when they stem from academic or technical circles, institutions whose monastic separateness and positivistic ethos may transmit the false impression of detachment. Moreover, definitions are aborted or flourish, among other things, as a matter of authority of the individuals and institutions who offer them. Anthropologist of religion and religious studies scholars have acquired an important authoritative role in secular modernity, to the extent that they may even be seen influencing juridical decisions concerning the limits of lived religion (Sullivan 2007). In these cases, supposedly disengaged secular forms of objectification of religion may surpass by far more intuitively emic definitional agents, such as theologians, priests, and believers themselves. Asad is not



reclaiming an ostensive definition, which would amount to say that religion is what religious people do, especially because an important part of what these agents do is to define religion by recurring to laws, institutions, hierarchies, treatises, doctrinal texts, formal and informal pedagogy<sup>5</sup>.

Joel Robbins defines Asad's overall intervention as an "object-dissolving critique" (Robbins 2003: 193). I disagree, and understand it more as an object-making critique, which opens new possibilities of inquiry by rendering the problem of definitions historical and empirical, having both a genealogical and an ethnographic potential. More acutely than other scholars concerned with the mutual relation between religion and the secular (Smith 1991, Gauchet 1997, Taylor 2007), Asad has stressed how, different from a naïve epistemological project, the objectification of religion in modernity has been coetaneous to its taming and regulation in Europe, a macro historical process crystallized as much by liberal juridical notions of "religious tolerance" and "religious freedom", as by the scholarly encompassment of religious truth in terms of belief, symbolic systems, and rituals. The expropriation of Christianity from its definitional forces was one of the spoils of the 17th century European wars of religion, and it was coeval with the early modern liberal transfiguration of robust (and at that time also deadly) religious "difference" into secular "diversity" (McClure 1990).

DeCerteau (1988) depicts this process as one in which heresy, a key juridical instrument of pre-secular normativity, "becomes alterity, which is insinuated into the margins next to common law" (151). One realizes how this secular over-codification of religious difference is a condition of possibility for the late anthropological celebration of religious pluralism in terms of a variety of equally valid symbolic systems and worldviews. Mazuzawa (2005) investigated in detail what she considers one of the key outcomes of the shift from heresy to alterity evoked by DeCerteau: the ideological reconfiguration of the place of Christianity in the idea of Europe from a regulatory agent to the abstract moral cradle of modern rationality and civilization. Much of the intellectual history of anthropology and the sociology of religion can be read as responding to a 19<sup>th</sup> century shift from an evolutionist to a pluralist and culturalist mode of understanding Europe's specificity vis-à-vis its others. This process gives birth to the ethically or cosmologically justified distinction between "world" and "local" religions, a conceptual apparatus that "spiritualizes what are material practices and turns them into expressions of something timeless and suprahistorical, which is to say, it depoliticizes them" (2005: 20). Once lived religion had been pacified in its "irrational" drives, a non-institutionalized and Apollonian definition of the Christian inheritance was allowed to emerge, thus justifying Western hegemony in terms of moral and cultural superiority, and not military and economic might.

In sum, the emergence of the modern concept of religion as a functionally autonomous sphere of social life concerning private affairs or a disembedded civilizational frame was the outcome of a series of regulatory processes in which secular normativity and power played and still play a definitional role. However, it is important to highlight that, although carrying the imprint of Europe's imperial dissemination, the secular, understood as a regime of knowledge and sensibility, is also understood by Asad as grounded in modern techniques of government (secularism) whose scope vary according to particular histories of state-formation (secularizations) (Asad 2003: 1-17)<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> As argues Wittgenstein (1997): "an ostensive definition can be variously interpreted in every case" (12).

<sup>6</sup> Asad's approach to secularization differs from Max Weber's in many ways. First, he is more interested on the regulatory, thus political dimension of this process, whereas Weber has focused on the affinities between Protestantism and the economic ethos of capitalism. Second, as an anthropologist, Asad is more aware of the geopolitical dimension of secularism, which is approached not through abstract "types" of rationality, but as the concrete dissemination of a particular model of society, state, and the good life in history through colonialism and imperialism. Third, as I will stress below, Asad's concern with the relation between authority and religious truth provides analytical tools to consider the vicissitudes of religious projects within secular modernity, whereas Weber was mostly interested again on how a particular breed of Christianity made room to the secular.

The perspective that secularism can be otherwise (Mahmood 2010) and that its has an active input in how religion is defined is relevant to my current interests, since the more methodic entrance of Africa into hegemonic Western modernity happened not at the expenses of lived Christianity, but in close confluence with a new missionary impetus toward this continent (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). In the case of West Africa, this holistic secular-religious intervention happened more methodically during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The missionary and colonial epoch introduced Christianity as well as religion itself (Shaw 1990, Chidester 1996, Landau 1999) as a category to African populations, but they did so by articulating these to secular modern teleologies in various ways. By overlapping salvation and the Christian way of life with civilization and progress, missionaries brought about a series of questions that, in Ghana, can be seen reverberating throughout its modern history, and where other versions of Christianity had to engage with in order to thrive.

I believe Asad's attention to the socially embedded nature of definitions gestures to a level of religious contingency that, because historical, can be juxtaposed to the theological and the practical dimensions I highlighted before. Since authority operates in this framework as a definitional hinge, it provides a valuable template to explore both the external boundaries between religion and non-religion and the internal boundaries between orthodoxy and heresy in a more historically situated manner. Moreover, this perspective allows me to consider the locality of Pentecostalism in Ghana without necessarily incurring into what Robbins (2007) calls the "continuity thinking" that dominates anthropology, or the tendency to dismiss emic claims about Christian discontinuity with the local traditions by reducing religious change to deeper cultural continuities, in this case, the "Africanization of Christianity". A globalized religion like Pentecostalism as it happens in Ghana is local not necessarily because it responds to the cultural urges of converts, but because in order to reshape contexts, expectations, and sensibilities, it must be situated in a particular environment, an environment in which Christianity is part of a longer history of discourse. In order to introduce new norms, redefine what is a Christian, and attempt to make these definitions flourish and resonate, newcomers must first inhabit the ruins of this history. Finally, the very globality of Pentecostalism, just like discernment in my argument above, must be thought as a concrete labor of boundary and institution-making, a process whereby Christian tokens try to be recognized and authenticated as instances of universal types.

## 5. Summary of the chapters

Having established the perspective and the main problems that oriented my research, I now summarize my argument in each of the chapters that follow. Chapters one and two focus on the question of Pentecostal pedagogy in Ghana. They introduce some of the tools that will be mobilized during the more focused analysis in chapters three to five, which are centered on ideologies and practices of discipleship in a single Pentecostal-charismatic denomination, Lighthouse Chapel International, and its Bible school, Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center.

Instead of assuming that the blurring of discernment concerning who is a Christian in Ghana today is an effect of the post-colonial African subject in/of crisis (Mbembe and Roitman 1995), in chapter one I contemplate the hypothesis that the contemporary might be a later eruption of much longer tensions. In this chapter, I introduce the reader to a history of Christianity in the Gold Coast-Ghana organized around three main periods: the missionary and colonial epoch, the nationalist epoch, and the neoliberal epoch. This is also a history of a state that in its colonial and post-colonial moments has always been secular in one way or another, and in which Christianity has always played a key role as a public religion (Casanova 1994). In this sense, Christian agents had to establish and protect the boundaries of their religion while engaging with a variety of non-religious forces in time, and the path of Christianity, from a utopian project of a handful of European missionaries to the

hegemonic religion of Ghana, was traced through moments of alliance and dissociation with the spirits and rulers of different ages. Christian conversion became attractive to more people when it enabled them to explore the middle area between the teleology of piety, and ever changing secular modern *teli*, such as civilization (colonial epoch), autochthony (nationalist epoch), innovation and entrepreneurship (neoliberal epoch). These in turn can be mapped on specific forms assumed by the Christian church in time, as the mission-originated churches, the African Independent Churches, and the Pentecostal-charismatic churches. Not only attractive, conversion often became infested by double binds as it embraced the zealous and the pragmatic.

In chapter two, I address the same problem from an ethnographic perspective, since conversion trajectories reproduce in a biographical scale the main challenge that Christianity has faced in history on a larger scale: how to disconnect subjects and contexts from their pasts and the futurities they host and lead these to a new life and future that is singularly Christian? I present in this chapter an ethnographic theory of Pentecostal conversion, based on the emic notion of spiritual maturation. I realized that instead of classifying the Pentecostal ecclesia only through a sharp divide, segregating it from what it is not - unbeliever, fake, occultic - my interlocutors often recurred to the language of spiritual maturation in order to stress how Pentecostal communities are composed of individuals with highly diverse levels of commitment to the Christian life. Pentecostal conversion or spiritual rebirth is therefore recast as both a radical temporal discontinuity (Meyer 1998, Robbins 2007) producing born-again subjects, and as the beginning of a process whereby “spiritual babies” start maturing in their faith. In this sense, I argue that the act of conversion is best understood as a potentiality, a “pregnant moment” (Connolly 2011: 69), or a promise, a performative event that includes among its conditions of felicity a process of self-transformation in which religious pedagogy is central. I will address this dialectics of event and process, grace and growth through Engelke’s (2010) notion of “realignment of Pentecostal rupture”. I survey formal and informal methods of spiritual maturation mobilized in Ghana and discern three main forms of realignment undertaken by maturing Christians: realignment with a narrative tradition, with new regimes of habituation, and with relations of mentorship, often encoded as spiritual kinship. The latter aspect introduces a relational ingredient to conversion, which I will address through MacIntyre’s (1999) notion of nurturance and ethical flourishing. The importance of spiritual kinship to conversion careers (Gooren 2010) invite us to contemplate the fact that relations can be as generative as ethico-religious practices, and that the successful adoption of Christianity by “choice” includes the process of being adopted by communities of practice in which one must enter as a docile and immature subject, and where new religious capacities are transmitted and acquired.

In chapter three I start exploring how the organic lexicon of spiritual maturation is embraced by Pentecostal projects of institution-building, thus providing alternative perspectives on understanding Pentecostal power and authority at the level of denominations. I start taking a more situated look at the discipleship strategies advanced by the Ghanaian denomination Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI) and its Bible school, Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center. LCI has been able to grow exponentially since its foundation in the late 1980s, today reaching 61 countries and having more than 1,2000 branches worldwide. I will argue that LCI is a well-organized zeal machine that combines bureaucracy, religious enthusiasm, and the personal ties of spiritual kinship in a non-contradictory manner, having religious pedagogy at the heart of its success. The chapter offers an abridged version of LCI’s history, vision, mission, and organizational networks, including an introduction to its Bible school, the background of some of its students, and how they conceive of their calling to fulltime ministry. I argue that LCI’s institutional-project is advanced through a modality of power that I will call apostolic. Apostolic power is headed and headless, being exercised through a synthesis of Weberian charismatic authority, centered on a strong leader and his



revealed mission, and Foucault's pastoral power, based on the pedagogical diffusion of individualized technologies of the Self throughout church networks.

In chapters four and five, I look into the pedagogy of Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center and identify some of the mechanisms whereby apostolic power makes individuals subjects. Being a total institution, Anagkazo provides a highly condensed and closely monitored access to the strategies of discipleship used to expand this denomination orderly in time. Anagkazo is a church within the church, fostering LCI's future leaders by ushering them into the ministerial way of life. I approach Anagkazo's pedagogy as a disciplinary complex made of four main blocks: institutional disciplines, academic disciplines, the disciplines of apprenticeship, and spiritual disciplines or spiritual exercises. In chapter four I explore how institutional disciplines inculcate docility among the students by associating compliance to rules with the values and virtues of excellence, loyalty, and humbleness. Those are pre-conditions to learning in Anagkazo, and academic disciplines start filling the subjects that are "emptied" by obedience with the basic doctrines that characterize the denomination. Complementarily, the disciplines of apprenticeship provide students with the opportunity of shifting from "as if actors" to "skilled practitioners" (Ingold 2000) while engaging with an apprenticeship of manners, whereby they acquire the social skills required by "international ministers", student services, where they learn the art of preaching, and third year rotations, which provide them with an encompassing exposition to the pastoral work through temporary "peripheral participation" (Lave and Wenger 1991) in a church branch and in one of the founder's massive healing crusades.

In chapter five I address the centrality of spiritual exercises to the ministerial way of life and approach is as a charismatic *askesis*. I organize these practices as forms of "yielding" or submitting to specific modes of revelation assumed by the Spirit of God: meditation and Bible memorization as yielding to the *Spirit within*, corporate prayer as yielding to the *Spirit upon*, and the curious practice of "soaking in tapes", where the students pray in tongues while listening to LCI's founder preaching on MP3 players, as yielding to the *Spirit across*. The charismatic *askesis* of Anagkazo lead us to a summary of the portable ethical and spiritual equipment acquired by LCI's disciples, or the practices responsible for converting a series of doctrinal *logoi* into an embodied *ethos* with a clear denominational marker, enabling these apprentice pastors to "confront, or anyway to be ready to confront, all the events of life if they occur" (Foucault 2005: 416), especially the contingencies that undermine the end-times church. This equipment therefore summarizes LCI's and Anagkazo's notion of proper Christianity, based on the cultivation of a personal and intimate relation with the Holy Spirit through Bible reading, memorization, and inner witness, the cultivation of an ecstatic sociality based on co-performance, exemplified by corporate prayer, and the cultivation of an enduring bond with those who "lead" you to Christ, the bond of spiritual kinship.

In the conclusion, I summarize my argument and reintegrate what I found in LCI and Anagkazo into the general problem of pedagogy, authority, and discernment that orients my narrative. The Pentecostal ecclesia has expanded worldwide by assuming a twofold design. On the one hand, it is a highly deterritorialized, transposable and globalized spirituality, best understood as a "movement". On the other, it is a leader-centered and institution-making religion condensed around recognizable personal poles of charismatic authority. This duality facilitates the spreadability of Pentecostalism, but also makes it hard to navigate for both believers and scholars. In this sense, this dissertation can be read as an attempt to trace ethnographically some strategies of reterritorialization of global Pentecostalism.

In Ghana's case, new challenges are added when the evangelistic implementation of Pentecostalism inevitably encounters a series of instabilities already in place, which in many ways inhere the history of Christianity in this region. I will argue that Christianity in Ghana is best understood as dwelling in what David Scott calls a post-colonial "problem space" or an "ensemble

of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs” (Scott 2004: 3). As a problem-space, the past haunts the present of Pentecostal churches and influences their capacity of conveying a sense of Christian futurity to their congregations by imposing a series of riddles. I highlight four of them: the relation between African identity and Christianity, the position of the Christian person vis-à-vis the realm of spiritual agencies, how to coordinate Christianity as “another life” (salvation), a “life other” (ethics) (Foucault 2009), and a better life (material progress), and finally how to normalize relations among congregants and between these, Christian leaders, and institutions. By providing different answers to each of these enduring problems Pentecostal churches have acquired a variety of shapes, becoming oriented by norms that can be complementary but also mutually excluding. I argue that, as a movement, Pentecostalism in Ghana has suffered tremendous pressures, indeed leaning toward ungovernability.

But things look different when Pentecostalism is observed from a denominational perspective. Indeed, they demand for a rethinking of the politics of the end-times church through a re-examination of what I learned from my closer engagement with Lighthouse Chapel and its Bible school. I argue that apostolic power in LCI governs and expands a deterritorialized network of churches through four main avenues: a systematic production of “power relations” (Foucault 1997), a specific pedagogy of desire, the cultivation of loyalty as a strategy of power, and the establishment of the man of God as a network node scaling the local into the global through imitation and refraction of charisma. Through these operations of power, LCI is able to globalize and normalize Pentecostal experience and desire for God without routinizing it. It rather converts untutored into tutored enthusiasm and in many ways intensifies religious zeal by using discipleship as a way of both straightening denominational allegiances and producing a more situated and socially productive sense of belonging in the global movement.

I close my argument by calling for more research on the internal differences of end-times churches in Africa, and contrast two models of the Pentecostal subject: the prophet and the disciple. The prophet is a generalization of the figure of the popular and highly individualized religious entrepreneur, and the disciple is the subject of apostolic power. The prophet and the disciple embody related, but also very different forms of Pentecostal agency, related to specific ways of imagining the future. The increasing gap between those two figures in Ghana today requires a closer attention to the ethics and politics of “being led” by the Holy Spirit and “following” ethical, religious, and spiritual guides.

## Chapter 1 - The problem in history: discontinuity and the changing countenances of Christianity in Ghana

In the introduction, we have seen how contemporary Christianity in Ghana has been characterized by two qualities rendered problematic when joined together: ubiquity and porosity. On the one hand, Christian discourse overflows the spatial confines and reaches out to the streets, schools, hospitals, stadiums, and state rituals, a process that is radicalized by its double status of producer and object of mediatized discourse in the public sphere. On the other hand, and closely related, the boundaries segregating Christianity from its others - be that “the world” or “the occult” - have been constantly questioned by anxieties concerning the authentic and the inauthentic. In contemporary Ghana, Christianity is simultaneously recognized as a necessary component of the moral fiber of society and a tradition under threat and suspicion. It is both essential and problematically protean. How to dwell analytically in such uncertain terrains?

Before addressing the place of pedagogical methods and institutions in this social landscape, I would like to put this Christian dissemination in a historical perspective and reduce its novelty. In this sense, as a conventional historical chapter would have, I provide some background to the ethnographic chapters that follow. However, my intention is not to lay down exhaustive data about a history of more than 400 years, a herculean task that would require an entire dissertation, but to situate the Christian project analytically by investigating how its normative outlines have varied as they went through three different epochs: colonialism, nationalism, and neoliberal globalization. Christianity is an inherent part of the long-termed dialogue between the global *durées* of modernity and Ghana’s indigenous *durées* (Mbembe 2001), which left formative marks in the post-colony not only on the fields of economy, politics, and culture, but also on how religion has been lived, defined, and destabilized

By paying closer attention to the articulation of religious and non-religious forces in time, this project begs the question of how these forces have influenced each other, especially if I am not interested in simply reducing the first to the latter. Joel Robbins (2007) has argued that one of the defining traits of Christianity is the promise it conveys of a radical temporal discontinuity, materialized by the event of conversion, understood as “a rupture in the time line of a person’s life that cleaves it into a before and after between which there is a moment of disconnection” (11). This celebration of newness is epitomized by the Apostle Paul’s famous exhortations that “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3: 28). Robbins notices that Christian discontinuity has been persistently misrecognized by anthropology’s own inherited temporality. As a result, where agents on the ground claim rupture, anthropologists have persistently seen either indigenization or syncretism as forms of subterranean cultural continuity, or a “conversion to modernity” (Van der Veer 1996) that reduces the specificity of Christianity’s ethical project and soteriology to a tool of Western hegemony.

But despite the relevance of Robbins’ focus on Christianity’s “cultural content” in its own sake (2005b: 30-31), which has been one of the axioms of the Anthropology of Christianity, it is undeniable that this future-oriented temporality has been a major point of at least cohabitation between religious and secular power in post-colonial colonial settings like Ghana. Having this in mind, instead of simply assuming Christianity’s specificity at a cultural, theological, or cosmological level, I rather trace in history this religion’s own changing relations with the “good news” of modernity. A set of additional questions elicited here are: How Christian agents have circumscribed and defended their religion’s specificity in practice? How has this specificity been granted and robbed by or simply lent to secular power? And what types of moral subject are produced along these shifting relations? Moreover, considering the various forms taken by these two forces, it is always valid to step back and ask: which modernity? And which Christianity?

### 1.1. Missionary pioneers

The history of missionary Christianity in Ghana up to colonialism is conventionally narrated according to a three-staged model, corresponding to broader geopolitical shifts affecting the region (Debrunner 1967, Mobley 1970, Sanneh 1983). The first stage started with the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century Portuguese hegemony over the transatlantic trade, which found in the Gold Coast a doorway to its expanding presence in West Africa. It started gradually in 1471, when a ship led by Joao de Santarem and Pedro Escobar arrived in Shama, today a fishing village belonging to the country's Western Region. Following the protocol, a large wooden cross was erected, the sign of a newly established jurisdiction over a *terra nullius*. Barter trade of ammunition and guns for gold showed itself extremely profitable, and a second port was created on the central coast in 1482, this time in Elmina. The trans-Atlantic slave trade rapidly took root in the region, capitalizing on tribal wars and debt exploitation. It expanded greatly in the beginnings of the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the acceleration of plantation economies in the Americas, and surpassed gold as the major economic factor influencing the region.

Missionary activity was dominantly Roman Catholic, a result of this church's close diplomatic alliance with the Portuguese empire, which included the emission of papal bulls authorizing the possession of pagan lands and the legitimizing slavery as an accepted right of nations (*jus gentium*) not directly condemned by the Scriptures. At this initial stage, conversion was often reduced to a diplomatic asset used by a handful of local leaders to establish political and economic alliances with the king of Portugal. This model was pluralized after other nations brought not only ships to the region but also attempted to establish their own trade routes. Dutch, Swedes, Danish, English, and Brandenburgers built coastal settlements between 1590 and 1682 that contained, at different intensities, missionary presence.

A second stage of missionary intervention marked the origin of the Protestant hegemony that reached the colonial era and the contemporary. It happened circa 1737 and 1828 (Mobley 1970: 18-20, Debrunner 1967: 60-83), and was led specially by Moravians based in Danish Christiansborg, and the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, based in Cape Coast. Their plans of making Christianity flourish beyond the confines of forts and castle schools were eroded especially by the impact of diseases like diphtheria, malaria, yellow fever, and dysentery, which lent to the Gulf of Guinea the epithet of "white man's grave". Nevertheless, a new missiology was proven successful at this period, based on the adoption of local youth to be trained and Christianized in Europe before serving in their homeland. The practice pioneered the formation of a local Christian elite of church chaplains, schoolmasters, and missionaries, as Rev. Jacobus Capitein (1717-1747, Dutch Reformed Church), Christian Protten (1715-1769, Moravian Church), and Philip Quaque (1741-1816, Church of England). Since the British military displacement of the Portuguese brokers in mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the Royal African Company had been sending the native youth more periodically to be trained in England with the purpose of using them as interpreters in West Africa, which included conversion. Interracial marriage and concubinage were additional and spontaneous tools of local Christianization and literate elite formation in the costal areas<sup>7</sup>.

Overall, during the two incipient waves of Christianization addressed above, the provincial characterization of the Christian faith as the "white man fashion" prevailed, and its reach was hindered by the persistent proximity between whiteness and the destabilizing effects of slavery in the

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<sup>7</sup> Debrunner mentions the existence of a "mulatto fund" in the Danish enclaves: "(...) all Europeans had to contribute four per cent of their salary towards this fund out of which came the expenses for school board and clothing for those Mulattoes whose fathers had left for Denmark" (Debrunner 1967: 70).

region. This situation not only changed, but was directly addressed in its structural limitations by the third stage of missionary intervention, which starts circa 1828, and stemmed from the anti-slavery movements in Europe and the African diaspora<sup>8</sup>. It left enduring marks in the local religious scene and society at large, giving origin to the autonomous “mainline churches” of contemporary Ghana.

In most of Sub-Saharan Africa, the missionary prefigured the explorer, the soldier, and the colonial administrator, providing a strategic discursive bridge that, by circulating in 19<sup>th</sup> century European public spheres the Victorian myth of the “Dark Continent”, connected the “altruism of antislavery movements to the cynicism of empire building” (Brantlinger 1985: 166). This link assumed the form of a philanthropic call that legitimized the colonial “enlightenment” and “opening” of Africa through trade, law and Christianity as the actual fulfillment of earlier abolitionist struggles. The rhetorical consubstantiation of “civilization”, “honest trade”, and Christianity is voiced exemplarily by the Quaker abolitionist Thomas Buxton in England, the founder of the African Civilization Society, and leader of the Niger expedition of 1841:

Let missionaries and schoolmasters, the plough and the spade, go together, and agriculture will flourish; the avenues to legitimate trade will be opened; confidence between man and man will be inspired; whilst civilization will advance as the natural effect, and Christianity operate as the proximate cause of this happy change (Buxton 1967: 511)

Buxton’s project set great weight on the training of local evangelistic agents, methodic gathering of knowledge about African traditions, formalization of local languages, and translation of Christian literature, having in mind the creation en masse of Christian commercial entrepreneurs and peasant farmers. This utopia was timely to the post-industrial revolution moment in England, flooded by commodities produced in the factories of Birmingham, Sheffield, and Manchester in need of new markets. Buxton’s humanitarian model had been first envisioned by early abolitionist as Granville Sharp (Lascelles 1928) and the Church Missionary Society (CMS), an evangelical wing of the Church of England, created in 1799 to serve among the Christian settlements of Sierra Leone<sup>9</sup>. It was later embraced by David Livingstone and the London Missionary Society, operating in Southern and Central Africa and, after the late 19<sup>th</sup> century “scramble” for colonies, its tenets were absorbed by the agenda of British colonialism and indirect rule.

But the civilizatory rhetoric was also echoed on the ground, among like-minded imperial administrators in West Africa, men concerned in expanding urban settlements, housing, schools, churches, as well as Western jurisdiction in the region, as Charles McCarthy in Senegal, Gore, and Sierra Leone (which became Crown Colony in 1807), and George McLean, a vital player in the process of creation and absorption of the Gold Coast as a British protectorate, initially submitted to the government of Sierra Leone (1821), and eventually raised to the status of an autonomous jurisdiction (1850), with the executive seat in Cape Coast (Metcalf 1962). Local Gold Coast politics in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century orbited around two pressing issues: Who controls the inland country, which had gained precedence on gold extraction? And who monopolizes the trade routes

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<sup>8</sup> Abolitionist struggles gained momentum in Europe already in the 1780s, and involved men directly involved with what came to be known as the Gold Coast colony. The German doctor Paul Isert came to Christiansborg to serve as a surgeon in 1783. He envisioned a short-lived mission station in Akropong (Ester Region), and had direct influence on the abolition of slavery in Danish possessions in 1803. Autobiographies of freed slaves became a popular genre in Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, one of the most influential authors being the Fanti Christian Ottobah Coguano, who wrote *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* in 1787, where he advocates for a more sincere and intense missionary influence in Africa.

<sup>9</sup> The CMS had an important role in the issuance of the British Slave Trade Acts of 1807 and 1833, which respectively abolished the slave trade and slavery in the empire.

connecting to different European merchants? McLean made great efforts to slowly integrate and expand British jurisdiction over the coastal peoples through treaties and bonds that capitalized on the insecurity produced by growing local enmities, especially the one between the coastal Gas and Fantis and the hinterland Ashanti empire, which had flourished and achieved political centralization throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, expanding southwards as a provider of slaves for the transatlantic trade (Webster & Boahen 1970: 116-130; Boahen 2004: 181-200). The Dutch encouraged the Ashanti plans of absorbing coastal territories and displace the Fanti and Ga as commercial brokers.

The 1830s saw the rapid rise of British dominance under McLean, who settled a peace agreement with the Ashanti. During the 1850s, he purchased the Danish settlements between Accra and the Volta, stabilized the economy, and progressively stretched British authority over the traditional jurisdictions of the Southern peoples through bilateral bonds. A period of instability followed his death in 1847. The Ashanti and Dutch prevailed again, but the British returned with full military might in 1872, forcing the Ashanti into retreat, and taking over the rest of the Dutch coastal possessions. This process was followed by the introduction of taxation and a tighter juridical control over previous locals allies irrespective of their resistance, a process that led to a full-fledge shift from a “merchant government” to exogenous sovereignty, and the complete annexation of the Gold Coast as a colony in 1874 (Kimble 1963: 301-329).

McLean displayed equal zeal in promoting Christianity and attracting missionaries from Europe through a close collaboration with the Church Missionary Society. The main protagonists invited and held accountable by the CMS were the Basel Mission (1828), the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Society (1835), and the Bremen Mission (1847). They all shared, despite different stresses and intensities, the main aspects of the civilizatory mission: a more integrated and long-term approach to conversion, delegation of responsibilities to African agents, formalization of and translation to local languages, an understanding that administrative order was a precondition to progress in both Christianity and civilization, and especially a strong equation between the Christian faith and Western education (Sanneh 1983: 127-167). Their heroic beginnings are embodied by leaders still widely recognized in Ghana, as Andree Riis, who established Basel’s influence among the Akwapin, T B Freeman, who advanced Methodism in the Western region, and Lorenz Wolf, who started Bremen settlements among the Ewe in the Volta. Both Riis and Freeman traveled to Kumasi already in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, attempting to dissuade the Ashanti from their resistance to Christianization, a project that only came to fruition after the region’s belated pacification and absorption into the empire in 1902.

These missionary bodies differed in areas of influence, strategies of proselytism, and methods of intervention in African polities. The Methodists took advantage of their national affinity with the British authorities and were warmly welcomed on the cosmopolitan coastal settlements, where the demand for learning English was greater and preceded colonial annexation. The church was originally self-propagating. It ordained and deployed capable local ministers since the beginning, and set great importance on the training of lay leadership, thus taking advantage of the longer presence in Cape Coast, Anomabu, Accra, Dixcove, and Winneba of baptized, literate, and English-speaking Africans. Sermons on the coast were performed in English and translated simultaneously to the local languages. Freeman himself was the British son of an African freed slave, and his adaptable personality allowed him to rapidly gain prestige among the natives. Cape Coast was his bridgehead to persuade the chiefs of the surrounding areas about the benefits of Christianization. With Freeman, Methodism found the adequate conditions to take root in Ghana, latter expanding its institutional apparatus with churches, schools, hospitals, model farms, and trade companies.

Basel and Bremen missionaries adopted strategies of interpellation more openly hierarchical and paternalistic (Meyer 1999, Miller 2003). Initial segregation from local collaboration was supplemented, in the case of the Basellers, by the strategic support of personnel coming from the

West Indies, deemed more suited to the tropical environment. According to Miller (2003: 45-60), Basalers recruited mainly among the rural victims of the industrial revolution in Southern Germany, individuals imbued with the agrarian ethics of traditional Lutheranism, and who consequently nurtured a deep mistrust about the moral standards of the coastal towns. Evangelist efforts were channeled heavily into the villages, and gave precedence to the practical teaching of labor discipline and material self-sufficiency, trying to resuscitate in the Gold Coast an idealized version of the fading Northern European rural life. Model farms and mission workshops (focused mostly on training joiners, carpenters, blacksmiths, and masons) became established instruments of Christian pedagogy for the Basalers, as much as schools and catechism<sup>10</sup>. West Indians were responsible for introducing new cash crops that flourished in African soil, as coffee, cocoa, tobacco, cocoyam, mango, avocado, breadfruit and coffee (Smith 1966: 60). The shareholder Basel Mission Trading Company was created in 1859 with the aim of financing missionary work.

These three highly organized missionary bodies were later joined by the Roman Catholic orders of Lyon Fathers (1880, among the Ewe) and White Fathers (1906, based in Navrongo, Northern Territories), the African-American African Methodist Episcopal Zion (1898), and the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (2<sup>nd</sup> attempt, in 1904). Their presence in the Gold Coast hinterlands was facilitated by the identification of the malaria parasite and development of effective prophylaxis in the 1890s. However, the most fundamental factor underpinning the growth of Christianity in the region at that period were, admittedly, the non-religious forces summoned by the “civilizational mission”, which articulated Christianity’s capacity to interpellate converts with broader changes introduced by colonialism.

### 1.2. The missionary and colonial epoch: the “civilizational mission” and its double binds

The missionary represented the earnest face of the Western project of saving the “dark continent” from itself. “With equal enthusiasm, he served as an agent of a political empire, a representative of a civilization, and an envoy of God. There is not essential contradiction between these roles” (Mudimbe 1988: 47). And yet, despite the self-declared stability stressed by Mudimbe, contradictions never stopped emerging in practice, a trait shared by the colonial enterprise at large, ever inflicted by “tensions of empire” (Cooper & Stoller 1997). In fact, it is valid to argue that the same factors producing frictions, contradictions, and ambiguities in the “civilizational mission” were those that, paradoxically, determined its success.

At their heart was the European tendency to articulate in Africa two definitions of Christianity that had grown apart in post-Reformation Europe. On the one hand, the non-denominational and Apollonian definition of “Christian civilization”, which legitimized Western hegemony in terms of moral superiority, and not military and economic might (Masuzawa 2005)<sup>11</sup>. On the other, the individualized and interiorized version of Christian devotion expressed in the Wesleyan and Pietistic doctrines espoused by Methodist, Basel and Bremen missionaries who sailed

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<sup>10</sup> As a reflex of the coadunation of economy and Christian pedagogy, until 1909 European employees of the Trading Factory and workshops in Christiansborg were addressed as “lay brothers”, their activity being embraced as integral to the evangelistic agenda “For fifty years (...) the mission and the Trading Company were part of one enterprise, the vast majority of the lay brothers setting a fine example of industriousness, moral life and honest trade” (Smith 1966: 59).

<sup>11</sup> Commenting on the unprecedented legitimacy conferred by the “civilizational mission” to Bremen and Basel missionaries in Germany’s anticlerical public opinion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Debrunner argues that: Before the establishment of the German colonies in 1884, the German public regarded the missionary societies as the crazy hobby of a few pietists. Suddenly, the wind of public opinion changed. German missionary societies were hailed as ‘civilizing agents’ and it was said that their main duty was ‘to educate the lazy native to become a hard-working citizen’ (1967: 208).



to the Gold Coast, an immaterial “religion of the heart” practiced by sincere subjects and dissociable from authority structures and ritual paraphernalia (Keane 2007). Theologically seeking sincere conversions while simultaneously multiplying the connections between Christian salvation and the material gifts of European modernity, such as writing, biomedicine, architecture, agricultural techniques, and bureaucratic forms of organization, missionaries were likely to escort Christianity into uncertain terrains, where it acquired a local identity by embracing elements that in an European context had long been receded into the realm of the adiaphorous, or the non-essentials of faith.

Once an introverted “religion of the heart”, Christianity became an extroverted religion in the colonies, explicitly entangled with material questions, including the body. In his historical ethnography of the mission encounter in Nigeria, Peels argues that the central paradox of missionary agency was that they “were idealists who were deeply and unavoidably involved in the material transformation of the societies where they worked” (2000: 153). Exploring the everyday of mission stations in Southern African as an “epic of the ordinary”, the Comaroffs underline that the struggle for African souls was waged especially at the bodily territory: “To a nineteenth century religious sensibility (...) the treatment of the domesticated physique was an everyday sacrament. In cleaning it, housing it, curing it, and clothing it lay the very essence of civility” (Comaroff & Comaroff 1997: 20). By means of these embodied technologies, missions were to produce a specific type of moral subject (Foucault 1997b, 2000c, Bayart 2005), adding to the religious pedagogy of prayer, Bible reading, and holiness a series of secular disciplines concerned with the formation of a self-possessed subjectivity and the rationalization of time, space, and labor, practices that in Europe had already made their way “from the conventicle to the state” (Weber 2001: 124).

Meyer’s (1999) historical ethnography of the Basel mission among the Ewe in the Volta Region of Ghana illustrates in detail the effects on the ground of a discourse suffused by double binds. On the one hand, Christianity was conveyed explicitly as a source of worldly benefits: the nuclear family was initially empowering for woman, converts had access to Western medicine and literacy, and became free to transgress taboos and ignore the socio-economic pressures and regulations of tradition. On the other, missionaries had to constantly remind converts that material and social gains should not be the final causes of conversion. As a result, suspicions about superficial or halfway conversions thrived: “Missionaries narratives abound with complains about the inner state of the Ewe Christians who had eagerly taken up the material aspects of the mission but failed to supplement this with the Pietist worldview” (Meyer 1999: 12).

Missionary suspicion was responded on the same coin by moments of “border fetishism” (Spyer 1997), as the early proliferation of ideas about Christianity as the “white man magic”, or one of the secrets underpinning the exuberant prosperity displayed by Europeans (Comaroff & Comaroff 1993: 188-197). Isichei comments about rumors circulating in early colonial West Africa about Europeans having kept in secret “those parts of the Bible that provided the key to their wealth and technology” (Isichei 1995: 295). In the 1870s, the chief of Akropong addressed the deep complementarity between the spiritual and material in missionary discourse when he declared to Andre Riis that: “When god created the world He made books for the white man and fetishes for the black man. But if you can show us a black man who can read white men’s books, then we will surely follow you” (in Addo 1997: 125). The observation is telling in how it refrains from reducing neither Christianity nor “fetish worship” to the status of a mere set of “beliefs”, engaging in an apparent misrecognition that unveils a deeper truth while reading the encounter beyond the missionary lenses. Regardless of the source attributed to the power condensed in the book-form (its material existence as an object, or the knowledge it stored?), it was clear to most converts that the worldly benefits of Christianity inhered the state of being a Christian.

Most of the disputes surrounding proper/improper Christianity unfolded within specific institutional settings, since conversion was not simply a means to individual empowerment through



an ambiguous engagement with the “externals of faith”, but equally a shift toward new centers of authority and community making introduced by missionaries. This leads me to a second major double bind of the civilizatory mission: the relation between religion and the political. It is ironic that European missionaries carried to Africa a deep aversion to “politics”, which they considered a sphere of life completely unrelated to spiritual matters. Their initial reaction to African traditional authority was nevertheless antagonistic, and based on the discursive opposition between a free-willing individual membership to the body of Christ through baptism and the mandatory “ritualistic” submission to chiefs and elders, deemed the representative of tyrannical and superstitious forms of government. This narrative of Christian liberation resonated with the Enlightened motif of modernization as a “break with the past” (Scott 1999: 26) and was theologically complemented by a normative notion of Christian piety understood as having a personal relationship with Christ, ultimately irreducible to institutional attachments. The function of the church apparatus was to unleash individuals from tyranny and facilitate piety, not to mediate grace or monopolize the convert’s allegiances, which should be channeled directly to god.

However, as in the case of materiality, in practice conversion often escaped the missionaries’ own ideological frameworks. This is reflected, for instance, in uncertainties surrounding baptism, considered the decisive act of rupture with an idolatrous past. According to Basel’s “Regulations, Practice, and Procedure, Part II”, at baptism the convert should be asked to renounce “the devil and all his works”, ceremonies related to fetish and ancestral worship, wearing amulets, having and attending non-Christian funerals, dancing and drumming, oath swearing, following taboos, and submitting oneself to initiations and their bodily markers, such as scarifications and age-group haircuts (Smith 1966: 100). Following the evangelical model, conversion was regarded as the outer sign of an inner transformation: achieving consciousness of one’s sins and repentance, followed by an intimate feeling of joy and inner peace. Commenting on the limited applicability of this definition of conversion to his congregation in Odumase, Johannes Zimmerman wrote in 1860 that “Most of them are so quiet and composed, before, at the time of, and after their baptism; there is little expression of powerful emotion, of a penitential struggle, of confession of sin, or religious awakenings, of overwhelming gladness and fervor” (in Smith 1966: 101). Nevertheless, Zimmerman trusted that these individuals had been “born again”, and that “God’s Word and Spirit was at work within them” (*ibid*), although still in silent ways.

A much more accessible marker of the act of becoming a Christian was recognized by African converts in the outward and legalistic sign of having one’s name written down next to the phrase “I want to serve God” (Smith 1966: 102), which implies not only a shift in values and worldview, but also a desire to disentangle oneself from inherited socio-spiritual allegiances while submitting to a newly found center of authority. Indeed, as late as in the 1940s, Kofi Busia (1961) shows how individuals who had converted to the Methodist church in the Ashanti villages equated closely the state of being a Christian and the fact of being submitted to the authority of an institution and their spokespersons, ignoring the dissociation of inner piety from ecclesiastical attachments that catheterized Wesleyan and Pietistic spirituality in an European context:

When Christians in the [Ashanti] villages are asked why they refuse these services [“fetish observances”] they usually reply: ‘I now go to church, I am not under the chief’, or ‘The Priest (Father or *Sofɔ*) says me must not do them’ or ‘It is against the law of the Church’. They see the question in terms of regulations issued by the priest or minister. By becoming Christians they have put themselves under a new authority. Their disputes are settled by the catechist, the leaders of the congregation, or the priest or minister (...) They regard themselves as a separate community, under the authority of the European missionary, who is the head of the church. This is how most Ashanti think of their new status. This is how the chiefs see it too (Busia 1961: 133).

It is telling that, at a pre-colonial stage, missionaries used highly territorialized strategies of interpellation, as mission-stations, model farms, and especially Christian towns, known as Jerusalem, Emmaus, Bethel, and especially Salem. In this sense, conversion would be followed by the relocation of subjects into a Christian polis, where traditional criminal and civil jurisdictions (including marriage customs, systems of inheritance and taboos) did not abide. Dealing with the Salem system among the Akwapen, Middleton (1983) highlights that the Christian town worked as a true counter-mirror of the traditional polities, in which spiritual agencies like ancestors and divinities were embedded at different levels in political and kinship corporations with regulatory entitlements, as the matrilineal clan (*abusua*), the household (*ofi*) and state (*oman*). Similarly, the Salem presented converts to a version of Christian spirituality intimately connected to a mode of socio-political belonging, including endogamy and the display of bodily markers, as wearing European clothes. Due to their still shallow immersion into the socio-spiritual network of Akwapen corporations, children were offered to the missionaries and raised as “house boys”, giving an autochthonous switch to 18th century model of assimilation through adoption and exemplifying how the missionaries’ opposition between freedom and constraint, inner faith and social allegiances, as well as religion and politics never made much sense on the ground<sup>12</sup>.

By embracing the adiaphorous realms of materiality and institutional authority, missions not only flourished, but also produced particular openings in their normative notion of Christianity that were fundamental to the alliance between the missionary and the colonial projects, enabling a series of juxtapositions between Christian and secular modern “breaks with the past”. I address some of these below.

At the level of materiality, it was clear that, by advancing the colonial economies and the state bureaucracy, colonialism provided new contexts in which the “externals” of missionary pedagogy could be used as weapons to succeed. Colonialism hence increased the appeal of conversion. This logic of seduction often carried unintended effects, as observed in the Basel mission’s pioneer role in the promotion of cocoa as a cash crop in the region (Hill 1997). At first, the practice was complementary to their evangelistic belief on the edifying moral effects of material self-sufficiency. However, the cocoa boom in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century generated intense migration, urbanization, and rapid modernization of the country’s Southern coast and hinterlands, thus disseminating the same values the mission’s economic pedagogy intended to oppose. The case exemplifies how, by inciting the material transformation of souls, conversion became attractive to local populations as it simultaneously lost its religious specificity.

But this relation was not restricted to the economic field. The missionary apparatus and the colonial state and rule of law also overlapped in various ways, and indeed extended their capillary influence together. One of the major signs of this subterranean complementarity was that the necessity of the Christian settlement as a religious *regnum* within African *regna* receded as the shadow of colonial sovereignty became the common authoritative horizon for both natives and Europeans. By extending imperial jurisdiction, the British administration produced a leeway of individual freedom that facilitated disaffiliation from traditional authority, rendering it ultimately optional and relative. The historiography of the Gold Coast abounds with controversies involving Christian converts who considered themselves entitled to disregard spiritually sanctioned taboos and regulation of traditional life, thus inviting the colonial authority to legitimize their indocility. Commenting on conflicts between Christian converts and the Laakpa shrine in the Ga settlement of Labadi, DeBrunner shows that: “The governor himself enforced the ‘right’ of the Christians to fish

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<sup>12</sup> “Children were provided with clothing and given some money with which they could buy their food. Parents considered the children as slaves of the missionaries, and the missionaries strictly prohibited their participation in funerals and ‘fetish dances’” (Debrunner 1967: 147).

on Tuesdays [a taboo], saying in public: ‘do not let yourselves be cheated by the fetish priests’” (Debrunner 1967: 187).

This process was vital to the expansion of Christianity in the hinterland villages, as shown by Kimble (1963: 155-156) and Danquah’s (1928) analysis of the frictions between chiefs and local Christians in Akim Abuakwa, with its height in 1887, and the colonial displacement of the Fanti Nananom Mpow shrine reconstituted by McCaskie (1990). It also unfolded in the urban settlements like Accra, as illustrated in detail by Parker (2000). Within the juridical pluralism of the pre-colonial Accra of the 1820s, foreign courts dealt mainly with cases involving British citizens, as well the “morally objectionable” practices, such as slavery, debt-peonage, and “human sacrifice”<sup>13</sup>. Their scope and authority grew with the Bond of 1844, and the Queen’s judicial officers became final arbiters on crimes against life. More than impositions, these courts were at first viable alternatives spontaneously sought by litigants displeased with the decisions of the Ga tribunals, ruled by traditional leaders (*mantsemei*). As conflicts multiplied, foreign jurisdiction expanded and absorbed civil cases like marriage and adultery. Moreover, “(...) a variety of conflicts concerning the religious and supernatural realm tended to arrive at the British court following initial attempts at adjudication by various Ga tribunals” (Parker 2000: 85). The colonial government of “fetish practices” and “customs” was also mediated through notions of hygiene and public order, as observed in the colonial reforms of funerary practices (such as the obligation of burying the dead in public cemeteries and no longer within compound houses) and regulations concerned in “moralizing” the *Homowo* festival.

Another fundamental juridical space fashioned by the colonial power that assisted Christian expansion beyond the mission station was the Marriage Ordinance of 1884, celebrated by the missionaries as a major attack on one of the key deterrents of “civilization”: polygamous marriage (Hastings 1996: 317-325). Contractual rules that underpinned the nuclear family became protected and sanctioned by the colonial state through the legal category of “Christian marriage”, whereas the marriage systems of the Akan, Ga, Ewe, and other groups, characterized by polygamy and the acceptability of divorce, most of them having matrilineal inheritance as normative, were reduced to another subtype of marriage in general: “country” or “native marriage”. Missions rapidly made unions under these provisions a condition for full membership in their churches, defining proper Christians, among other things, as those who engaged in Christian marriage. Polygamous Christians were excommunicated or prevented from receiving the Eucharist.

But the most strategic area of collaboration between secular and Christian projects of reforming African subjects was at the level of education. As Christian settlements slowly faded and colonial power became fully established, the mission school became the main institutional tool for Christian proselytism and institution building. The colonial control of missionary education started with the 1883 First Ordinance on Education, which included a renewed emphasis on English proficiency. Financial ties were straightened through a grants-in-aid system rendered operational especially after World War I, followed by a greater colonial effort from governor Gordon Guggisberg to support the missionary dissemination of education, according to his “Ten-years

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<sup>13</sup> Pre-colonial Accra was an extremely cosmopolitan environment, comparable to other port cities in West Africa, such as Lagos, Saint-Louis, and Freetown. Political power was pulverized among traditional and Christian African, mulatto, and foreign elites, who operated economically as middlemen and brokers first to the slave trade, and later to the trade in palm oil, spices, and other commodities. As a whole, the town was the seat of Ga traditional power, but it also embraced a series of autonomous European settlements and self-contained communities of migrants with juridical entitlements. Among these groups, the Christian elites, foreign and autochthonous, were the most vocal actors demanding a more extensive British protection of trade against political instability caused by the Ashanti expansion. Accra eventually became the headquarters of the Gold Coast colony in 1877, and henceforth an urban space supposed to transpire “civilization” homogeneously.

development plan". The period between 1919 and 1930 saw increasing prosperity, spearheaded by the mining industry and the cocoa boom in the international market, followed by greater investment in roads, highways, and ports.

By embracing the school as its main evangelistic tool, Christianity spread. The Basel Mission's full membership was 2,619 in 1875, and 25,000 in 1913, when they had established 64 schools receiving government grant and 92 non-assisted schools (Smith 1966). In 1914, the Methodists had a membership of over 2,800, but with 7,000 "on trial" and 10,000 under instruction for baptism (Bartels 1965: 173). This was an influential albeit small minority, if contrasted to the overall population of 1,486,433 living in the Gold Coast in 1901. Categories like "on trial" are representative, as they show how increasing anxieties concerning the sincerity of African piety followed the quantitative growth of Christianity through the educational system, which was authoritatively balanced by conditioning factors as "Christian marriage", which increased the social cost of conversion. This situation receded slowly, and in 1934, the ratio of full-members and applicants is inverted. In a Methodist community of 125,225 individuals, 53,903 were considered "members", and 21,623 were "on trial".

Missionary suspicions about the quality of African piety nevertheless persisted, as observed by the proverbial image in missionary discourses of the Ghanaian Christian who goes to church during daylight and to the shrine during nighttime. Moreover, "it was not unusual to find an active and practicing Christian who had a concubine or paramour who for all practical purposes is a second wife" (Pobee 1988: 97). The same process of double-membership unfolded at the schools. Boateng's (1975) testimony about his educational career in the 1930s provides a vivid portrait of school life in Basel primary (Sekodumase, Ashanti region) and secondary (Abefiti, Eastern region) institutions. Basic education was centered on "the four R's – reading, 'riting,'rithmetic, and religion" (81), and included daily prayer, and mandatory attendance to church service and Sunday school. However, the harsh discipline, and the intensive schedule of mandatory prayers, sermons, and recitation of church catechism did not prevent Boateng from doubting "very much if many children remained in campus because they were truly religious" (87).

We see that the question of religious affiliation and institutional allegiance tackled above was never erased, although it became fundamentally complex and pulverized. No longer the citizens of an alternative *polis*, Christians were popularly known as "school people" (*sukutowo* in Ewe, *sukutoo* in Twi). Additionally, the entanglement of colonial and Christian pedagogy in the mission school also made it a likely site to the emergence of tensions between the assimilationist project of civilization and the segregationist technologies of colonial power, as indirect rule and racism. Besides his great zeal at the educational front, Guggisberg was a major implementer of indirect rule in the Gold Coast. He was responsible for the creation of Provincial Councils in which traditional chiefs would "meet together to defend and preserve their native constitutions, institutions, and customs" thus taking part in "Britain's recently self-imposed task of tutelage and development" (Guggisberg 1924: 14-17). As the model of "development" within indirect rule surpassed the 19<sup>th</sup> century paradigm of "civilization", the relation between colonialism and Christianity became inflicted by fresh contradictions.

Once a sign of opposition to despotism and individual freedom, Christian indocility in the villages toward the customary proxies of the colonial state, the "native authority", became the target of increasing criticism by the colonial government<sup>14</sup>. Indeed, the whole continuity between the colonial project and the missions as a civilizational force appears in much more clearly instrumental tones. Guggisberg adopts in the Gold Coast the same isolationist agenda toward the Muslim

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<sup>14</sup> In the opus of indirect rule, written in 1922, Lord Lugard complains that "the lack of discipline among Mission converts had indeed occasionally led to political disturbances, both in Nigeria and Ashanti" (Lugard 1965: 429).

Northern Territories set by Lord Lugard in the case of the Nigerian Emirates, understanding Islam as more suited to the region, and a source of civilization and morality in its own terms. A few Catholic missions were allowed in the region, but as long as their proselytism and school teachings did not advance social conflict by distracting natives from their immediate economic and political obligations. By as late as 1948, there was not a single government secondary school in the Northern territories.

The racialization of colonial subjects also produced new pressing questions pertaining the school curriculum (Berman 1975). Since their early 19<sup>th</sup> century beginnings, missions had been prone to teach literary and humanist contents. In fact, much of the local Christian support for the colonial annexation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century was predicated on the prospect of disseminating high literary education in the region. However, as colonialism became fully established, the ideal of “classical education” was officially set aside. Educational methods and contents adopted by the colonial state in the Gold Coast imitated those designed to the British working classes, groups deemed to share African’s supposed moral dispositions to laziness and superstition (Foster 1965: 45-53). Vocational training was privileged, and the school came to be seen as a source not of a Christian intelligentsia, but of minor clerks, policemen, interpreters, and semi-skilled workers. These changes testify to the growing influence of scientific racism in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe:

So widespread were these beliefs [eugenics] that in 1914 the Chairman of the Continuation Committee of the World Missionary Conference, a very influential gentleman indeed, argued that ‘industrial education seems to have a special application to the education of the Child Race, whose ‘mental digestion’ is weak and who are more successful in getting knowledge than in using it. This intellectual infirmity so characteristic of the African, according to the Chairman, grew out of the ‘low state of his civilization and the effects on his mind of centuries of barbarous lawlessness and cruelty (Berman 1975: 10).

As part of these new macro conditions, assimilation became increasingly interrupted by racialized discrimination, even within the church. Early missionary strategies once based on the delegation of power to a local priesthood, as those of the Methodists, suffered a setback, and “Africanness” started figuring as a hindrance that not even Christian conversion could fully deliver natives from. As the civilizatory model of assimilation gave way to indirect rule in the 1920s, the normative idea of an African colonial subject fractured by “race” and “custom” (Mamdani 1997) rendered Christian notions of universal brotherhood a dangerous nuisance. Racialization complemented indirect rule: as the first helped displacing the political and economic brokerage initially performed by coastal Christian elites and their firms (Doortmont 2005), the latter allowed the administrative encompassment and social engineering of “traditional” leadership through legal and anthropological expertise.

However, it was as part of the “left arm” of the colonial state that the mission churches established deep roots in Ghanaian soil. In 1948, a year before Kwame Nkrumah founded the Convention People’s Party and rose to political prominence, Christianity represented 30% of the population, whereas adherents of African Traditional Religions had been reduced to 66% (Pobee 1991: 12). Christians were a growing and prestigious minority who comprised most of the elites, and the missionary apparatus was second only to the colonial state in terms of reach, organization, and affluence. Among the major corporations, only the Basel and Bremen missions had given rise to autonomous churches, called the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast (1918) and Evangelical Presbyterian Church (1922). They were the fruit not of a willful transference of power, but a response to the British discomfort with the Germanic presence in the colonies after the World War

I<sup>15</sup>. Despite locally governed, these churches still had only Europeans in the highest posts.

Autonomy was an original component of the missionary project, whose self-declared vision was to nurture Christian leaders who would eventually take control of local churches. In this sense, its long delay points to a vital aspect of missionary approaches to Christianization in Africa at large: the fact that suspicion was never simply a sign of infelicity or an accidental effect and that the entitlement to question the sincerity of African converts was also a tool of missionary government. In this sense, accusations of insincerity helped the European sectors of missions and churches to manage the various double-binds tackled above by populating the mid-way position between tradition and full Christian/modern membership. On the one hand, conversion offered to local Christians a temporal journey from a “primitive” state of confusion toward salvation and reason. This transformation was advanced pedagogically as a mimetic process whereby African subjects were to be refashioned according to newly introduced models: Christ, the urban bourgeois citizen, the Romantic self-sufficient peasant, as well as their European mentors and the institutional apparatus they controlled. On the other, and more emphatically during the colonial epoch, once the “past” had been abandoned, missionaries often held coevalness at bay, and relegated converts to an ongoing state of (appropriating the evocative Methodist terminology) “Christians on trial”. Suspicion was therefore an authoritative prerogative allowing the missionary to temper Christianity’s radical celebration of newness - “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” (1 Cor 5: 17) - with a strategic “not yet”. This administration of coevalness, which both encouraged mimetism and controlled the authentication of its outcomes, also characterized the rhetoric of colonial power at large, which publicized the benefits of modernization while tempering these with racialization and indirect rule.

In this sense, more than a deep sedimentation of Western power as an unquestioned horizon for African self-recognition, the effects of Christianization and colonial modernity in Ghana are better accessed through what pioneers as DuBois and Fanon characterized as the “double consciousness” of the colonized, fractured between a newly found *telos* and a haunting past, a state that render hegemony, understood as a “saturation of the whole process of living” (Williams 1977: 110) an unlikely achievement<sup>16</sup>. As fundamentally non-saturating and contingent, missionary and colonial subjectification in Ghana produced not a specific type of moral subject, but a vast array of levels of interiorization, introducing both new models of Selfhood and controlling the legitimacy of their mimetic proliferation by managing the temporal gap between the copy and the original. In a recent work, Mbembe characterizes quite straightforwardly the logic of promises and deferrals whereby colonialism worked in Africa as “the power of the fake” (2010: 15). It was from the congested zone of the “not yet ripe” that the Africanization of the church and state begun, by

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<sup>15</sup> The World War I led to the annexation of the western part of the German colony of Togoland to the Gold Coast, which eventually became what is today known as the Volta Region of Ghana. German missionaries were deported and the United Free Church of Scotland, led by Rev. A. W. Wilkie, joined the Swiss elements of the Basel mission, retaining veto power. They took over Bremen stations among the Ewe. As a result, in 1922 The Ewe Church became independent, and the Scottish assumed their mission schools, ironically fulfilling the German policy of founding national churches (*Volkskirchen*) abroad. Bremen missionaries are readmitted in 1923.

<sup>16</sup> Even authors who apply the Gramscian instrumental of hegemony to the study of African colonialism, as the Comaroffs, admit that “(...) neither processes of commodification nor technologies of rationalization ever advanced in so totalizing, mechanical a fashion, as to make human consciousness a mere cipher of ‘power’ or ‘profit’”, concluding that “the mundane became an area of complex exchanges rarely reducible to the sum-zero of domination or resistance” (1997: 34). More recently, they argue that colonialism thrived in practice not on its own ocular imaginary of absolute enlightenment and control, but instead on “places of partial visibility, where working misunderstandings bred reciprocal fetishisms, unwritten agreements, unruly populations, and protean social arrangements” (Comaroff & Comaroff 2011: 5).



suggesting alternative models of futurity based on new moral-political geographies that transcended the empire, but also by working through inherited categories as “race”, “nation” and “culture”.

### 1.3. The nationalist epoch and the varieties of “Africanization”

As elsewhere in the Africa (Ranger 1997, Comaroff & Comaroff 1997, Peel 2000), Christian missions were the breeding grounds of nationalism in Ghana. Literary education introduced not only new criteria for social stratification and mobility, it also helped crystalizing the African past, primarily by “reducing” the linguistic pluralism missionaries found on the ground into formal languages used to translate and publish the Bible, as well as other church and school materials<sup>17</sup>. The Basel mission dedicated itself intensely to these efforts. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it published vernacular school readers, catechisms, arithmetic books, Bible stories, translations of biblical books, various tracts and an English-Twi-Ga dictionary. By 1874, there were already at least twenty-four Twi publications. The Ghanaian pastor David Asante translated the complete Twi Bible in 1871. Johannes Zimmermann, who spoke and wrote good idiomatic Ga, had by then published seventeen pieces, including the complete Bible. The Bremen missionary Schlegel had translated parts of the Old Testament and large parts of the New to Ewe. Rev. D. Westermann’s publications on the Ewe language led him to a professorship at Humboldt University, Berlin, where he founded the department of African languages. Albeit less intensely, Methodists also contributed to this process at its origins by producing a Fanti Twi Primer (1863), a Fanti Twi grammar (1868), and a formalized alphabet (1871). “With the help of these publications, Twi, Ga and Ewe were firmly established as school – and church languages” (Debrunner 1967: 143).

This drive to objectify African languages was not only pragmatically driven. It was equally the result of the philological ideology imported by Germanic missionaries from European Romanticism, according to which particular national characters are grounded on essential cultural traits, whose main expressions are language and history. Rev. J. G. Christaller (1827-1895) was one of the main local advocates of this perspective. Christaller’s ideas about language were developed through a close correspondence between Africa and Northern Europe (Beath 1998). He considered the use of English by the Akan as “unnatural” as the imposition of Latin by Germany’s early modern French-oriented courtly elites (Elias 2000: 5-44). As happened in Germany, Christaller believed that this artificiality would eventually become unsustainable, giving room to a vernacular national language in the colonies<sup>18</sup>.

From the originally formalist notion of the “Akan linguistic branch”, modes of political and historical belonging as the “Twi nation” (*Twifo oman*) emerged. These categories implied a common ancestry that contrasted with the history of conflicts between Fanti, Akwapen, and Ashanti polities, which were now encompassed as branches stemming from a single trunk<sup>19</sup>. They served as the historical actors of the proto-nationalist historiography epitomized by the Ga pastor and Christaller’s pupil and collaborator Christian Reindorf, who published the majestic *The History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti* in 1856. The book combined oral history, the anthropological tools of the time, as the notions of “patriarchal” and “despotic” governments (used to represent Ga and Ashanti political

<sup>17</sup> On missionary language objectification elsewhere in Africa see Fabian (1986) and Landau (1995), among others.

<sup>18</sup> “The tribes of the Gold Coast may become united by one common book language which must at the same time be cultivated, developed and refined so that it can take its place as a means of communication among educated people of the Gold Coast” (in Agyemang 1978: 35).

<sup>19</sup> Similar processes unfolded less emphatically at this stage among the Ewe and much less among the peoples and languages of the Northern territories.

systems respectively) and a fundamentally Biblical historicity, which acknowledged the virtues of the pagan past as been fulfilled and not necessarily countered by Christianization.

The Romantic association between language, history, and nationness in the Gold Coast acquired broader social productivity through periodicals like the *Christian Message*, published in Twi by Christaller in 1881-1888, and revitalized in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and newspapers in English published by mission-educated Fantis, as the *Gold Coast Methodist Times*. These media provided the infrastructure not only to the dissemination of Christian piety, but also to the shaping of an “imagined community” (Anderson 1991) in which true “civilization” came to require a reckoning with the Gold Coast’s authentic roots (Newell 2002). As argues Coe (2005), by becoming formalized and reproduced through the educational system and public sphere, these mission-bred categories had an enduring effect on recasting Ghana’s identity economy:

(...) local histories, customs, and languages expanded to represent “the nation”, in which there was slippage between a language-based nation (...) and British colonial boundaries (the Gold Coast) and two kinds of nationalism. This tension between two levels – does the nation refer to a traditional kingdom, a language-based ethnicity, or the country of Ghana? – continues to reverberate in contemporary Ghana (Coe 2005: 46).

The decentralized nature of Wesleyan authority and common recourse to lay leadership resulted in an early exposition to nationalist discourse, which included a critique of the political instrumentalization of Christianity by European colonialists. At the heart of the pioneer group christened by Mobley “the Wesleyan vanguard” (1970: 31-46) was the desire to fulfill the missionary promises of autonomy at a faster pace. The group was composed by a Fanti urban elite of writers, lawyers, ministers, and educators based in Cape Coast, in their majority educated in England and Sierra Leone, which fostered a modernized form of Fanti identity, replicating it through the pulpit, civil associations, and print. Men like Attoh Ahuman, Mensah Sarbah, Casely-Hayford, and Rev. J.A. Solomon stood on the shoulders of a longer history of collaboration and conflict between the Fanti and the British, which refers back to the short-lived Fanti Confederacy of 1868, the fruit of an alliance between Christian chiefs and lawyers that attempted to reverse the Bond of 1844 and reestablish an autonomous constitutional rule (Kimble 1963: 222-263). Ideas of political autochthony remained strong, and Methodism became the nurturing grounds of Gold Coast’s nationalism as early as in the 1890s, with the foundation of the Gold Coast branch of the Aboriginal Rights Protection Society (ARPS)<sup>20</sup>.

The Wesleyan vanguard drew inspiration from pioneer Pan-African intellectuals educated in Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone, as Africanus Horton and Edward Blyden, who fostered an affirmative version of racial consciousness and envisioned the autochthonous dissemination of “civilization” in Africa through schools, roads, and hospitals that would not jeopardize native identity. Education should be reclaimed from the missionary indoctrination of European culture, and redeployed as tool for the cultivation of African dignity and pride<sup>21</sup>. In consonance, Christianity

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<sup>20</sup> The party was founded as a result of land disputes between chiefs and colonial administration in the Fantiland, having the literary elites as mediators. The expansion of timber trade, mechanized mining, and the cocoa industry straightened the links between traditional authorities and Fanti lawyers, who helped standardizing customary law through publications like Sarbah’s *Fanti Customary Laws* (1897), and *Fanti National Constitution* (1906). The identification of the educated elite with local customs enhanced their reputation on the ground as a new breed of guardians of Fanti tradition, eventually disputing the support of traditional chiefs with indirect rule (Kimble 1963: 389-396).

<sup>21</sup> The first secondary school of Ghana, the Wesleyan Mfantshipim School (Boahen 1996) was founded in the region in 1876, as a result of direct pressures from Sarbah and Brown. Literary associations were formed with the intention of collecting, discussing and compiling proverbs, oral histories, customs, traditional laws and institutions of the Fanti, and were published as book and newspapers articles.

should be disseminated through African-led missions, and projects developed in Sierra Leone and championed by Blyden especially in Nigeria, as the West African Church and the African Church Movement (Sanneh 1983: 176-178) created institutional spaces for an autonomous African clergy. This project was echoed by African-American missions recently established in Ghana at that time, as the Zion Methodist Church.

The Wesleyan vanguard's criticisms of the missionary presence varied from mild to radical. Sarbah's assessment of the "demoralizing" effects of European missions into Fanti custom often contemporized by recognizing their vital contribution on education. A more militant articulation is found in cultural manifestos as Casely-Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911) and Kobina Secky's comedy of manners *The Blinkards* (1918). Both narratives present an acid critique of the missionary pedagogy and Africans' mimicry of Europeans habits. Missionary Christianity is presented as a colonial corruption, manipulated by colonialists to instill passivity in the colonized. *Ethiopia Unbound* represents the Christian community in the Fantiland as fundamentally split across race, having its message of universal love corroded by segregated liturgies (whites sitting apart, receiving communion first, or even having their own church services) and even cemeteries. The missionary's patronizing view of African converts is contrasted with overloaded African ministers, consigned to junior positions for their lifetime despite performing the essential part of the real pastoral work. Casely-Hayford's missionary archetype, "Rev. Whitely", is often seen in the book smoking and drinking in European-only colonial clubs and using his religious profession as a blindfold against his deep immersion in the structures of colonial power. Complementarily, the average Christian bred by the European missions is portrayed as someone fascinated with appearances:

At the head of the choir was the schoolmaster whose attire certainly invited attention. In his elegantly cut-away black morning coat and beautiful glazes cuffs and collar, not to speak of patent leather shoes, which he kept spotlessly bright by occasionally dusting them with his pocket handkerchief, tucked away in his shirt sleeves, he certainly looked a veritable swell, but he also did look a veritable fool – and this was the sum total of half a century of missionary zeal and effort (1911: 71).

As a European tool of distraction and inculturation, this religion of "externals" is opposed to real Christianity, associated to a deep sense of justice, including a disposition to rightful indocility. It is deemed to resonate with a pre-colonial African ethos, reflected on a pastoral picture of the villager. In sum, suspicion and accusations of insincerity had shifted sides. Moreover, concerns with sincerity - understood as the isomorphism between individual inner/outer states – start to be conditioned by a broader debate on the authenticity of Christianity itself as a European gift to Africa. A new ideology of conversion is established: once meaning exclusively the derision and refutation of so-called primitive religions and imposition of rules of orthodoxy, conversion comes to be understood as a "critical integration into Christianity; that is, on the one hand, asserting cultural autonomy and, on the other, defining Christianization as a way of accomplishing in Christ a spiritual heritage authentically African" (Mudimbe 1988 60). Different from an adamant temporal rupture, Christianization required a synchronization with past, to the point that, in 1931, the Nzema intellectual Nana Adjaye could openly asked: "(...) can the African become a Christian and yet remain an African?" (1931:59).

In consonance, the Presbyterian nationalist Ako Adjei reflects on the European provincialization of the Christian faith in Africa as follows:

Nobody was baptized into the Christian church until he declared himself not only to believe in the Lord Jesus as the son of God but also until he had agreed to abandon the African and follow the European way of life. For example, the missionaries changed even the traditional names of individual Africans (...) The idea was that biblical or European names were part of the necessary passport into

the Kingdom of God" (1944: 194).

Another major figure of Gold Coast nationalism, J. B. Danquah addressed similar criticism to the model of Christian settlements: "The effect of the separateness of the two towns [Christian and "pagan"] was to make the people look upon becoming a Christian as a physical act" (90). These debates slowly spread across the mission churches especially after the World War I, and produced reformist theological manifestos and acts of civil disobedience that characterized the beginnings of the process of *Africanization of the mission churches "from above"*. The pioneer Ephraim Amu was dismissed from the Presbyterian Teacher's Training Center in 1926 for wearing traditional attires and writing motets for singing bands in Ewe and Twi (Agyemang 1988). The Presbyterian musicologist Joseph Nketia, who was trained by a pupil of Amu, wrote extensively about the importance of introducing drumming and traditional aesthetics into what he considered the irresponsible liturgies of the mainline churches. The Presbyterian minister J. F. Ofori publishes in 1911 a defense of Christian polygamy, after the Old Testament. The book found a receptive audience, but Ofori had to submit to church discipline. Resistance slowly receded, and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century saw a theological turn toward "inculturation" in both Protestant and Roman Catholic circles, reflected on the development of more culturally sensitive liturgies and worship practices, which included greater space to local rhythms, instruments, and dances. However, this pluralist theology never had enough space in Ghana to accommodate practices as libation, polygamy, and ancestors worship, which remained heretic.

The reforms mentioned above were triggered within the missionary project. They were juxtaposed in time to initiatives often defined as pursuing the *Africanization of Christianity "from below"* (Mbembe 1988, Meyer 1999). That is the case of the Christian bodies usually called African Independent, Prophetic, or Spiritual Churches, the epithet most commonly used in Ghana (Baeta 1962), that is, African churches that evaded missionary control. The same Casely-Hayford who criticized the materialism of European ministers and their African pupils described the Liberian Prophet Wade Harris as a beacon of sincerity: "He has nothing. He has everything. He is neither a mendicant friar nor an aggressive toll collector. So urgent is the King's command that he has no time to think of silver and gold. He is the oasis in the desert of an age of greed" (1915: 18). Harris's evangelistic crusade had passed as a comet in the Western region of Ghana in 1914, leaving a multitude of converts. He also won the admiration of Casely-Hayford, who wrote his biography in 1915 (see also Shank 1994).

Born circa 1860 in a Krobo village in Liberia, Harris was adopted at the age of twelve by his maternal uncle, a Methodist Reverend who gave him his Christian name, mentored him in piety and discipline, and taught him how to read and write in Glebo and English. He became a Methodist catechist and the headmaster of a Sunday school in a rural station. Personal involvement in the Krobo insurrections against the African-American elites of Liberia led to his arrest in 1910. In prison, Harris went through a "second conversion" when he received three mystical visitations from the angel Gabriel was anointed as a Prophet of the last times. After his revelation, Harris abandoned the norm of "civilization" by identifying himself not with any archetypal figure of African traditions or nationalism, but with the Jewish prophet Elijah. He wore a white robe and a turban, and held on to nothing but a bamboo cross, a Bible, and a gourd rattle used for worship.

Harris left Liberia in 1913 and headed east, to Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast, accompanied by two female disciples, visiting village after village while calling the coastal people to destroy their "fetishes", turn to the one true God, be baptized and have their sins forgiven. He taught them to follow the commandments and live a life of peace, prayer, and worship. Before moving on to another site, Harris left a curious prescription: they should wait for a "white man with the Book", who would further their knowledge of the Bible. Colonial representations of Prophet Harris

produced by African and European sources were ever ambiguous, ranging from madman to militant nationalist, *feticheur* to most devout Christian. The colonial government of Ivory Coast considered him persona non-grata and some missionaries saw him as dangerously heretic. Nevertheless, the prophet had a major impact on the growth of Methodism during colonial times. Many others joined the Catholic Church, but a good number founded autonomous churches in the likeness of his ministry. Harris died in 1929, after having led more than 100,000 Africans to Christianity, doing in a little more than ten years what took to many foreign missionaries more than a century.

Most of the West African popular charismatic leaders emerging in the wake of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as Prophet Garrick Braide in Nigeria (Ludwig 1993), Prophet Sampson Opong in the Ashanti region of Ghana (Haliburton 1965), Prophet Joseph Appiah in the Fantiland and many other, including the disciples Harris left in Ghana, as John Swatson, Grace Tani, and John Nackaba, operating in the Western region, shared a series of characteristics displayed by the Liberian holy wonderer. First, they emerged from small towns and villages, the bottom of a colonial society that had been progressively bifurcated into urban and rural, citizens and subjects, ruled by universal and customary laws. Moreover, at the forefront of these enthusiastic movements were another breed of “ever-unripe” African Christians. Not the literate elites, prevented from taking the mission church’s lead, but the rural catechist. As European church leaders became entangled in administrative concerns, especially with education, the everyday care of souls had been progressively delegated to African catechists, who, despite their peripheral positions in the missionary apparatus, had achieved great influence and authority over congregations<sup>22</sup>. Finally, these religious entrepreneurs undermined the “civilizing mission” not by questioning it at the level of “culture”, but especially by reinforcing its Christian dimensions, as observed in the centrality they attributed to worship, prayer, fasting, and a miraculous experience of god.

The position of the Spiritual Churches vis-à-vis both missionaries and nationalists was therefore ambiguous. Some of the African leaders mentioned above, as Harris himself, Opong, and Swatson, remained in the mission churches, whereas others founded autonomous bodies, as Tani and Nackaba, who created the Church of Twelve Apostles in 1914<sup>23</sup>, and Prophet Appiah, who founded Musama Disco Christo Church (The Army of the Cross of Christ) in 1923. Although constantly accused of “Ethiopianism” in the early days, and eventually repressed by the colonial state for causing public disorder, most of the Spiritual Churches showed great respect for the European missions and considered themselves part of a single project of Christianization<sup>24</sup>. In many cases, it was the mission churches’ initial unwillingness to recognize the enthusiasm and evangelistic entrepreneurship of these lay leaders that led them to pursue autonomy (see also Ranger 1987). That is the case of prophet Appiah. After receiving a divine visitation in 1919 that empowered him with the Holy Spirit, evidenced by the gift of healing, Appiah remained a Methodist and started a successful prayer and spiritual healing group within the institution. However, changes in the church direction led to his excommunication for “occultism” and the foundation of Musama, which eventually became the largest and best organized Spiritual Church of Ghana.

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<sup>22</sup> According to Hastings (1982), as Christianity expanded in the African continent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, “the catechist became the great new figure of rural Africa, while white missionaries spent more and more of their time supervising and continually extending a complex network of schools ranging from the crudest village huts to elite boarding establishments” (43).

<sup>23</sup> The name refers to prophet Harris’ method of leaving in the villages he passed twelve disciples to care for the souls he had gathered

<sup>24</sup> Ghana’s Spiritual Churches therefore differed from more openly nationalist African initiatives on Christianity, as the Christianized Ba-Kongo secret societies and the Afrocentric messianic movement around Prophet Kimbangu emerging in the Belgian Congo and French Equatorial Guinea, or the so-called “Zionist” churches of Southern Africa, expanding since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Balandier 1966: 203-24, Sundkler 1961).

These autonomous bodies never articulated cultural authenticity as self-consciously as did the nationalist and mainline church elites. Nevertheless, their primarily “African” nature was granted quite straightforwardly by early scholarly discourses on them, including C. G. Baeta’s (1962) classic work, inspired by Bengt Sundkler’s research about similar phenomena in Southern Africa, the bedrock of the scholarship on what became known as African Independent Churches (AICs). As Sundkler, who was a missionary and then bishop of the Church of Sweden in Tanganika, Baeta was deeply entwined in the lives and politics of the so-called mainline churches of Ghana, being a Reverend Doctor of the Presbyterian Church and a professor of Religious Studies at the University of Ghana. Not by chance, he justified his interest in the topic by evoking in the preface of his book the need to assist these “sects” to “enter fully into the church Universal” (Baeta 1962: xi). Sundkler had gone as far as to characterize African-led churches as “nativistic-syncretistic”, a mixture in which the local component was determinant enough to authorize the interpretation of their practices as a repackaging of traditional spirituality, or “old wine in new wineskins” (Kiernan 1975): “(...) the syncretistic sect becomes the bridge over which Africans are brought back to heathenism” (Sundkler 1961: 297).

The essentialist views of both Christian and African identities espoused by Sundkler and Baeta have been problematized by recent scholar as Kiernan (1975) and Ranger (1987), and Engelke (2004), especially by calling attention to the fact that many of the practices often recognized as inherently “African” by the AIC scholarship can be read as widespread components of Pentecostal Christianity. Terrance Ranger, for instance, notices that:

Churches which emphasize ecstatic possession by the spirit, which foster prophecy and spiritual healing and exorcism have been seen as continuations of African belief and practice. Yet these very features, which are taken as being most African, are in reality the most Christian aspect of such churches (1987: 31).

The same tendency has been followed in Ghana by theologians working on Pentecostalism, as Larbi (2001) and Asamoah-Gyadu (2005), who attribute to the Spiritual Churches a pioneer role in their historical narratives.

Much of the definitional confusion leading to the diagnostic of “syncretism” refers to these churches’ tendency to embrace practices that resonated with African traditions without recurring systematically to culture-oriented justifications. Most Spiritual Churches accepted polygamy, prescribed food “taboos” and dressing codes, deployed a profusion of material mediators used to channel spiritual power (holy water, stones, candles, ritual uses of the Bible, etc.), and a complex angelology and demonology, which included the acceptance of the efficacy of witchcraft. Their liturgies appropriated freely from the mission churches. Musama celebrated the Holy Communion and performed “high masses” in Anglican style and gave great importance to the use of the Rosary for prayer, although the church founder and main leaders all came from the Methodist church. Innovations were also introduced and authorized as prophetic directions received by their leaders. The Church of Twelve Apostles gave to the gourd rattle first used by Harris a doctrinal status, and the instrument was not only mandatory in their worship practices, but condensed spiritual power during healing ceremonies. Musama gave great importance to “The Ark”, a box containing a copy of the Ten Commandments and documents that recorded the calling of Prophet Appiah, along with the promises god revealed to him, the vows he uttered in behalf of the church, and some of his major prophecies. In Musama’s hierarchy, the highest offices are called *Akaboba* and *Akatibibi*, names revealed by the Holy Spirit to prophet Appiah and his wife Hannah Barnes. These prophetic titles are used side-by-side with the conventional Biblical offices of pastor, evangelist, and prophet (Opoku 1980). Baeta shows that Musama’s ecclesiology merged Methodist notions of pastoral



“circuits” with the logic of Akan chieftaincy and kinship<sup>25</sup>. All these traits would testify to the locality of African-led churches and their relationship of continuity or syncretism with local traditions.

But although some of these zones of cultural continuity might testify to the enduring and eventually unconscious persistence of a traditional habitus, it is important to acknowledge that the Spiritual Churches framed their own practices as authoritatively Christian, thus fundamentally Biblical, which includes the acceptance of revelational knowledge via prophecy and the Holy Spirit<sup>26</sup>. As argues Lamin Sanneh’s (1989), missionary translations of the Bible in Africa had a delegating effect, and became a relatively independent reference used to test what Western missionaries taught and practiced. As much as nationalists and theologians of inculturation, popular men of god were part of this emerging readership, and produced their own hermeneutical strategies, most importantly a marked reliance on the Old Testament (Mbiti 2004), which allowed them to use the Jewish practices described in these texts as a hinge connecting the Biblical narrative to local realities in various ways. Consider the supposedly syncretic practices enlisted above: food taboos were legitimized with reference to the book of Leviticus, the Africanization of worship practices was grounded on Psalms, polygamy was authorized as a common practice among the Jewish patriarch, dressing codes were referred to the Apostolic lifestyles, and angels and witches are common players in diverse Old and New Testament passages. This hermeneutics cannot be reduced to an attempt to use the Bible to “justify” cultural continuity, as these practices were accompanied by alternative authoritative framings, thus being no longer accountable in terms of ethnic based identities and their traditional custodians, but orbited instead around new structures of legitimacy and belonging, centered on the scriptures, the church community and its inspired leaders.

Baeta claims multiple times that Spiritual Churches practiced “controlled polygamy”, referring to the fact that, through preaching, catechism, and marriage counseling, these groups reproduced among their congregations a normative notion of fatherhood that included financial and affective care for the biological children until their marriage, a role originally attributed to the mother’s brother within the traditional matrilineal system of the Akan and Ewe. In this sense, Christian polygamy still performed a “modernizing” function akin to that of “Christian marriage” in the mission churches, showing how African “translations” of Christianity often also evaded Sanneh’s unilateral sense of “adaptation” to a given local culture<sup>27</sup>. Different from a return to the

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<sup>25</sup> Musama’s official document that establish the church’s authority structures is entitled “Chieftaincy in the Kingdom of the MDC Church”. In it we learn that, during synods, church leaders were supposed to “sit like a state”, and Baeta comments that church councils were held in Akan fashion. “The *Akaboaba* II explained to me that their Abura circuit, being the ‘first-born’, held the title of *Abatan*; other circuits held the positions of Akan martial dispositions (...)” (Baeta 1962: 61). Finally, this ecclesiology had its geographical center, not without irony, on a Christian settlement similar to the missionary Salem: the holy city of New *Mazano* (my own town), where lie the Ark, the tomb of Prophet Appiah, and Musama’s national headquarters.

<sup>26</sup> Stewart and Shaw (1994) alert to the importance of approaching syncretic processes not as a category (a “ism”), paying attention instead to the simultaneous enactment in practice of “processes of religious synthesis” and “discourses of syncretism” (7). As argues Ferme, in the same volume, “we might begin by particularizing and historicizing our studies of syncretic processes, contextualizing them within specific configurations of power, where religious discourse articulates with different kinds and levels of authority” (1994: 42). In these terms, religious syntheses are not the spontaneous work of third world *bricoleurs*, nor necessarily a strategy of subaltern resistance against imperial domination, at least not essentially.

<sup>27</sup> Sanneh (1989) characterizes Christianity through an inner drive to translatability: “Christianity, from its origins, identified itself with the need to translate out of Aramaic and Hebrew, and from that position came to exert a dual force in its historical development”: to “relativize its Judaic roots” and destigmatize and adopt Gentile cultures as part of a new religion (1). According to Sanneh, the journey of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a “world religion” is propelled by an inherent pluralistic ethos, a position that carries its own essentialism, and has been problematized for ignoring questions of power.

authentic sources of traditional culture, Christian polygamy was Biblical, “modern”, and African in mutually confirming ways.

Moreover, these new religious syntheses emerging in the Gold Coast were openly anti-syncretic (Stewart & Shaw 1994). All churches described by Baeta’s compilation embodied a deep disregard for “ancestor” and “fetish worship”, deeming it demonic, and not accepting any kind of compromise or dual-membership. On the one hand, this strong dualism affirmed a self-declared distinction in relation to popular sources of spiritual protection more suitable to be considered “syncretic” because of their adoption of Christian traits without ultimately claiming a Christian identity, as the Tigare cult and other anti-witchcraft associations that became extremely popular in the Gold Coast after the colonial and missionary discredit of old shrines (Busia 1950: 79-81, Debrunner 1961, McCaskie 1981, 2000: 178-200)<sup>28</sup>. The shrine included the drinking of secretive infusions and the swearing of an oath to fulfill Tigare’s “commandments”, often an adaptation of the Ten Commandments (see Little 1965: 39-41). Breach of the rules entailed spiritual sanctions that included death, and the shrine had the power to track down the culprits of conscious and unconscious witchcraft and lead them to confession.

On the other, by accepting the demonic efficacy of witchcraft and combating it with Holy Ghost power, Spiritual Churches flourished by addressing a demand for spiritual protection that had been both heightened and repressed by the missionary demonization of the spirits of traditions (Meyer 1999). In this sense, by becoming more Christian, these churches also paradoxically became more African. As they responded to the same urges that led the common man and woman from the villages to the traditional shrines - the quest for protection and a prosperous life in terms of health, wealth, and fertility - the Spiritual Churches challenged the qualitative difference between Christianity and “paganism” that underpinned missionary discourse. This strategy produced evangelistic growth, but also the reinforcement of a popular trend of African Christian piety with and enduring valence, in which prayer and the quest for divine responses to material deprivation play a key role (see Mbembe 1988: 95-125).

In sum, the Spiritual Churches resonated with the nationalist epoch especially because they evaded missionary control and proved to Europeans through enthusiasm, grassroots hermeneutics, as well as ritual and ecclesiastical creativity the capacity of Africans of all walks of life to produce their own models and norms for the Christian life. Nevertheless, the doctrinal gap separating them from the mainline churches remained even after the deracialization and Africanization of the latter, showing that dissent around Christianity was a force of its own. The emergence of these autonomous African churches in the 20<sup>th</sup> century helped pushing the mission churches beyond their denominational particularities and toward a more self-conscious, ecumenical, and “orthodox” Christian identity, centered especially on their combined effort in the educational and welfare field. This fellowship was celebrated by the foundation of the Christian Council of Ghana in 1929, an inter-denominational association that provided one public voice to Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and other Protestant bodies in their dealings with the colonial state, which found a Catholic counterpart in the Conference of Catholic Bishops<sup>29</sup>.

The nationalist epoch came to fruition with political independence and the *Africanization of*

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<sup>28</sup> Similar to other popular deities, as *Aberewa*, *Hwe-me-son*, *Kvasi Badu*, *Kune*, *Tongo*, most of them original of Northern Ghana and the Sahelian territories of Ivory Coast, Tigare worked in its original context as a tutelary deity embedded in local structures of authority and power, involved mainly with fertility and the maintenance of moral order, as the Akan *abosom*. According to Smith, “when these ‘deities’ are established in the forest region however they acquire a fresh power to deal with witchcraft and new forms of evil; they are then referred to, not as *abosom* but as *aduru* (lit. ‘medicine’), and to join a cult is to ‘drink the medicine’” (1966: 264).

<sup>29</sup> The Christian Council was a direct outcome of these churches’ successful ecumenical alliance around the creation of Achimota School in the same year.

*the state*, followed by a general rearrangement of the social contract of colonialism. The political history of Africa found a major turning point in the World War II, which had undermined the European states, unsettled the colonial and imperial economies at large, and helped breaking the spell of white superiority colonialism had relied upon. African regiments had paradoxically fought for the freedom of their imperial masters, and self-rule had become a much more tangible possibility when independence was achieved in Asia. The British Labor Party was in power and showed greater interest on the gradual emancipation of the colonial subjects, as embodied in the Gold Coast by Governor Alan Burns, who introduced constitutional reforms in 1946 that united the Gold Coast Colony, Ashanti, and the Northern Territories under a single legislature led by a majority of African representatives.

Increasing political participation was not a gift of empire, and these reforms were a late response to boycotts, riots, and manifestations against colonial exploitation that had never ceased to exist, and which found a boiling point in 1948, with the imprisonment of those who would become known as “The Big Six”, the leading faces of Ghana’s nationalism: Ebenezer Ako-Adjei, Edward Akufo-Addo, J. B. Danquah, Kwame Nkrumah, Emmanuel Obetsebi-Lampsey, and William Ofori Atta. They were chief actors of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), a party founded in 1947 by J. B. Danquah with the aim of accelerating the shift toward independence through representative elections. Similar to its ancestor, the Aboriginal Rights Protection Society, the UGCC was composed mainly by a local intelligentsia educated in mission schools and abroad. Different from the earlier group, still dominantly Akan and especially Fanti, the UGCC had been able to move toward a more encompassing Gold Coast nationalism. Kwame Nkrumah was invited by J.B. Danquah to join the party in the same year, returning home after a long exile in the USA and England. Nkrumah’s charismatic leadership represented a more popular and radical approach to liberation, resulting in his dissociation from Danquah’s groups and the foundation of the Convention People’s Party (CPP) in 1949 around the agenda of Positive Action, based on civil disobedience and ongoing pressure for immediate independence<sup>30</sup>. Massive popular support allowed the movement to thrive despite colonial repression, and Nkrumah won the elections of 1951, 1954, and 1956, becoming the first president of the independent state of Ghana in March 6<sup>th</sup> 1957.

Nkrumah’s position vis-à-vis the missionary inheritance was ambiguous. In April 1958, during the first Conference of Independent African States, he was adamant in claiming that “While the ‘missionaries’ with ‘Christianity’, implored the colonial subject to lay up his treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust soth corrupt’, the traders and concessionaries and administrators acquired his mineral and land resources, destroy his arts, crafts and home industries” (in Pobee 1991: 14). This straightforward accusation of collaborationism indicates an impressive shift of tone from only a few months earlier, when he addressed the International Missionary Council meeting held in Accra with thankfulness, commending early envoys of Christ for their heroic efforts:

If you have time to visit more widely in this country you will often find as you travel along the roads, little cemeteries lost in the bush where lie buried the brave men and women who, in bringing the Christina faith in this country, gave the last full measure of their devotion (...) They belong to the martyrs of Christianity as surely as those who faced persecution for their faith. The fortitude which

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<sup>30</sup> This rupture between the CPP and the UGCC was responsible for an enduring schism in Ghana’s political scene between what is called the Danquah-Busia and the Nkrumah traditions (see Boahen 2004: 415-434). Nkrumah was supported by labor unions, peasants, and a section of the population that became known as the “verandah boys”, averagely educated youth and professionals whose hopes of social mobility had been directly jeopardized by the crisis of the colonial economy and the lack of opportunities provided by the colonial state. According to Austin: “It was along the elementary-school-leavers that the nationalist movement gathered force with such astonishing speed. By the end of the Second World War they had begun to cohere as a distinct social group” (1964:13-14).

they showed is the sure foundation upon which your work has been based. Ghana salutes these men and women who gave their lives for the enlightenment and welfare of the land (in Pobee 1991: 15).

I consider this double-talk not the outcome of demagoguery per se, by the inevitable reckoning of the meta-narrative of African agency embodied by secular nationalists as Nkrumah with Christianity's ubiquitous influence in the country. Nkrumah himself was baptized and raised as a Catholic; his early education was sponsored by a Catholic priest and undertaken in Catholic institutions. He eventually joined a Catholic seminary, and later pursued higher education abroad in a Protestant institution, Lincoln University, even becoming a licensed itinerant preacher (Addo 1997). Despite his various personal metamorphoses, Nkrumah still defined himself as a "non-denominational Christian and a Marxist Socialist" (Nkrumah 1957: 12). He knew that, once an exogenous force entwined with European interests in trade and colonialism, Christianity had become part of the very fiber of Ghanaian society. From the "civilizational mission", these churches had inherited strong denominational identities, and a major institutional baggage in terms of schools, hospitals, media outlets, humanitarian agencies and a vast network of youth groups, music bands, credit unions, men and women fellowship, etc.

But Nkrumah faced this inheritance proactively. Through new geopolitical connections and keen leadership skills, he produced his own ideological hybrid of authenticity-oriented "African consciousness" and non-aligned Marxism. Anti-imperialist rhetoric was used to shift the centers of colonial authority to an increasingly centralized state, which included CPP's expropriation of traditional authority from indirect rule in the villages (Rathbone 2000: 100-125) and the suppression of Ashanti, Ewe, and Northerner separatist trends through diplomacy and force. Nkrumah beefed up the country's infrastructure, pursued the universalization of free education, and promoted national identity as no one else in Ghana's history. However, the plunging of the cocoa prices in the international market caused unexpected economic pressures. Inability to deal with political dissent led to growing repression of independent media, unions, and other sectors of civil society, and finally a shift to single party dictatorship around Nkrumah's personality cult.

This process necessarily affected a Christian field that had relied so much on the political and economic forces of colonialism. It started in 1951, still within the representative system of British colonialism, when Nkrumah passed the Accelerated Development Plan, which abolished the colonial Block Grants system and submitted the administration of church schools to the financial support and regulatory power of local authorities, which eventually became closely controlled by the CPP. Moreover, the eve and aftermath of independence saw a sharp increase on the number of government schools, which helped the state to displace the mainline churches as the main provider of primary education<sup>31</sup>. A parallel and equally important struggle was waged over the people's imaginary and sense of futurity. Nkrumah appropriated freely from the Christian teleology of redemption that missionaries had introduced to Africa. In this sense, he fed ideologically where secular European power had previously found its nourishment, shifting this future-oriented temporality from the Eurocentric utopia of civilization to that of African pride and autochthony.

As shown by Dickson (1991), Nkrumah's Positive Action campaign relied heavily on Christian rhetoric in order to make his political ideologies accessible to the common man as what might be called a leader-centered "civil religion". This is observed in his constant appropriation of

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<sup>31</sup> This is observed in the data from 1949 to 1966, the beginning and end of Nkrumah's political career. The number of Primary church-run schools shifted from 2,169 to 4,081 in the period, whereas government-run schools increased from 1,592 to 10,421. At the secondary education level, church schools expanded from 10 to 27, unmatched by the government schools, which raised from 19 to 84, whereas the number of church and government Teachers Training College grew respectively from 7 to 26, and from 19 to 84 (see Pobee 1988: 86-102).

biblical citations for political propaganda, as exemplified by his most famous motto, “Seek ye first the political kingdom and all other things shall be added unto you”, an adaptation of Jesus’ statement in Matthew 6: 33. Rally hymns were suffused by messianic rhetoric, and Nkrumah’s time in jail became popularly known as “the transfiguration”. As his popularity grew, epithets multiplied, among them *Osagyefo* (the Savior) and *Asomdwebene* (Prince of Peace), a reference to Isaiah 9:6. Once sovereignty had been achieved, this civil religion found a more methodic pedagogy in the Young Pioneers Movement, created in 1960 as a counter-point to the mainline churches’ Christian youth ministries. They were reproduced in Ghana’s public schools with the finality of breeding the “Apostles of the News Social Order”. Teachings inculcated nationalist pride, sense of duty and civic responsibility through military and athletic disciplines and the straightening of the youth’s allegiances to the spirit of the newborn nation<sup>32</sup>.

Projects as the Young Pioneers represented a local version of the widespread aspirations of single party regimes in Africa to perform a function that Mbembe calls “theological”: to “monopolize the modes of definition of truth, its proclamation and its implementation” (1988: 125). The mainline churches did not hesitate in criticizing Nkrumah’s encroachment over Christian institutions and ideology publicly, and grew suspicious about his socialist (thus potentially “anti-religious”) alliances and Afro-centric rhetoric<sup>33</sup>. But as late as in the 1960s, Methodists, Anglicans, and Catholics still had expatriates occupying higher offices, which facilitated the dismissal of their public criticism by the agents of the state as imperialist interference. Another major crisis between those two chief powerhouses came to fruition with the establishment of CPP’s single party rule, followed by a law that rendered mandatory the opening of party chapters in every church (Pobee 1988: 124-127).

Frontally opposed by the mainline churches, the measure was part of the CPP’s broader party-state logic of cooptation of civil society in Ghana, advanced through a vast apparatus that included, besides the Young Pioneers, organizations as the United Ghana Farmers Council, Workers and Builders Brigades, Trades Union Congress, National Council of Ghana’s Women, and others. Legitimacy was therefore sustained in good measure through the extraversion of state resources to civil associations along ideological lines, often inflected by personal, kinship and ethnic allegiances; a version of the logic of African governance Bayart has dubbed the “politics of the belly” (1993). In these contexts, the Habermasian notion of publicity that underpins the most conventional perspective on civil society is displaced by a logic of dissimulation in which “individual success and political effectiveness were seen as being predicated on the ambiguous and sometimes illicit cohabitation with different powerful agencies” (Ferme 1999: 160). Stronger in the autocratic cycles of Ghana’s political history, this logic remained active in the democratic period (Gyima-Boadi 1995).

Deprived from the same institutional stability that conferred to the mainline churches a greater degree of political autonomy, the Spiritual Churches became a much easier prey to the advances of the post-colonial state elites, often making their institutions available to external meddling and opening their pulpit to political propaganda, a tendency that persisted especially during the diverse military regimes that followed Nkrumah’s downfall (Pobee 1988: 76-103, 131-

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<sup>32</sup> A pledged was recited before every meeting, and took the form of a nationalist and populist creed that included statements as “1. I sincerely promise to live by the ideals of *Osagyefo* Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Founder of the State of Ghana and Initiator of the African Personality” and 6. “I believe that the dynamic Convention People’s party is always supreme and I promise to be worthy of its ideals” (in Pobee 1988: 132-133).

<sup>33</sup> Conflicts emerged again when Nkrumah challenged one of the most strategic achievements of the partnership between missionaries and the colonial state, the marriage legislation, by fashioning and encouraging his own “modernized” version of customary polygamous marriage through a piece of legislation known as “the White Papers” (Pobee 1988: 96-100). Polemics about the introduction of libations along prayers in state protocols showed that the debate on the limits of national “culture” and “religion” in Ghana had come to stay.

144)<sup>34</sup>. Mbembe aptly calls these strategies of complicity between churches and state “religious concubinage” (1988: 32). One of the effects of the organic coupling of church and politics was the infection of religious bodies with the same maladies that characterized the post-colonial state, most especially an ongoing instability caused by “factional fights that, in religion as in politics, exacerbated at the occasion of successions at the level of the parish or episcopate and that set in dispute access to ecclesial resources” (Bayart 1989: 13). The history of the Spiritual Churches testifies to this process through a great number of church schisms and various short-lived ecclesiastical empires that rose to and fell from grace on the backs of their political patrons. Those who survived longer in such a competitive theopolitical environment had to display a chameleonic tendency hard not to be noticed. That is the case of Eden Revival Church, founded by Rev. Brother Yeboa-Korie in 1963, and seen in Pobe (1988: 136) “anointing” regimes as disparate as Nkrumah’s socialist single party rule, Achempong’s Supreme Military Council, and Busia’s democratically elected government, in reciprocity for positive state media, a period of studies at the USSR, or taking part in official trips to the USA.

It is ironic that, although mission-originated churches were always much more resistant to engage in “religious concubinage” at a post-independence moment, they are defined by Bayart (1989) as one of its main breeding grounds in Africa, especially for having inaugurated the tendency to advance Christianity through the extraversion of resources from the colonial state:

(...) the [mission] churches have ‘eaten’ and taken from the European occupation their evangelistic revenue, profiting from the colonial economies notably at the levels of the real-state and land ownership, and benefiting from the generosity of their patrons through an ever ambiguous relation with the detectors of power, who were also the supervisors of the channels of accumulation (Bayart 1989: 15).

Bayart remind us that, although missionaries advanced a pedagogy concerned in instilling amidst African subjects the labor ethics that Weber saw at the heart of the elective affinities between Protestantism and the Spirit of Capitalism, this project was paradoxically advanced during the colonial epoch through a close coordination of religious and secular powers around an “ethics of munificence and the spirit of patronage” (*l'éthique de la munificence et l'esprit de la rente*) (Bayart 1989: 23). It is therefore hard to pinpoint in which of these scales lay the missionary “exemplum” to African converts and independent churches.

The process of political centralization initiated by Nkrumah was interrupted by the first of a series of military coups in 1966, followed by short periods of civil rule, a cycle of political instability that ended only with the successful redemocratization of the country in 1992. In spite of the dazzling political and economic changes that affected the country since independence, Christianity remained growing steadily, a proof of its resilience. In 1970, four years after Nkrumah had been ousted by a coup led by Emmanuel Kwasi Kotoka and lived his last days in exile, it had become the dominant religion of Ghana, representing 52, 65% of the population, whereas African religions had mingled to 21, 61%. Since the 1948 census, Islam had grown from 4% to 12% of the population, especially due to migration from the Sahel to Northern and Central Ghana, and the success of the Ahmadiyya current in Southern Ghana. At the upfront of the Christian majority was a belated

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<sup>34</sup> This data includes even a fake inter-denominational association called The National Union Congress of Christian Organizations, forged in 1978 by functionaries of UNIGOV, the single party system crafted by General Achempong. The organ published various letters of support signed by a Rev. Bishop Joseph Hayford, a mysterious figure who disseminated publicly statements as “In my revelations I see that it is the Divine mind of Christ that Christian organizations should come together to support the Union Government, as the words of Jehovah God confirm in Amos 3:7” (in Pobe 1991: 87).



comer, the Roman Catholic Church, whose prosperous resources and less strict approach to baptism (which included a loosen approach to polygamous families) had attracted 15,77% of the population. In the Protestant field, Presbyterians and Methodists, which had become an autonomous church in 1962, corresponded to 12% and 11,37% of the population, and Anglicans 2,2%. The ever-fussy field of “Independent African Churches” amounted to 10% of the population. Somehow exemplifying the ambiguities nested in the notion an “African church” at the aftermath of colonization, the category included autonomous missionary groups, as Seven Day Adventists (0,66%) and Watch Tower (3,43%). The Spiritual Churches were compiled within the sub-group “Pentecostals”, and dubbed “African Christian Churches”, representing 3,73%. Among the Pentecostals, a single church had grown enough to almost match the numbers of all Spiritual Churches compiled. That was Christ Apostolic Church, with a membership of 104,200 (2,21%). Although originated within the colonial epoch and having survived the nationalist epoch without much involvement, its history and theological outlines are better fit to the next section, since this church is an early fruit of an alternative moral geography being established in Ghana: global Pentecostalism.

#### 1.4. The Pentecostal explosion and the epoch of globalization and structural adjustment

The history of Pentecostalism in Ghana is one of expansion in heterogeneity. In response, Larbi (2001) works with the hypothesis of diverse “treads” of renewal, whereas Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) prefers the allegory of “waves” that becomes juxtaposed in time, producing growth through both complementarity and competition. Those two authors consider the Spiritual Churches an autochthonous center of Pentecostal renewal in the country, and add to it the influence of classic Pentecostal churches, interdenominational fellowships, the charismatic movement within the mainline churches, and the Neopentecostal churches or charismatic ministries.

All these organizations combine in different measures two basic theological tenets. First, they revive the evangelical model of personal salvation through “spiritual rebirth”, which was indeed part of the theological baggage of Wesleyans and Pietists, but whose centrality had been undermined by the double-binds of the “civilizatory mission”. According to this view, Christian conversion means becoming “born again”, a state achieved through a personal crisis followed by confession of sins, repentance, and surrender, or “giving one’s life to Christ”. Christianity here means primarily having a “personal relationship” with Christ, advanced through spiritual disciplines and holiness (ethical mimesis in Christ’s likeness) and expressed through witnessing and evangelism. To these evangelical elements, Pentecostal spirituality adds that the born-again convert is entitled to be filled by the Holy Spirit, as happened with the Apostles in the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 1-41). The so-called “Holy Ghost Baptism” is followed by the empowerment of the new Christian vessel with “gifts of the Spirit” as glossolalia, prophecy, healing, deliverance from evil spirits, and others (1 Cor. 12). Both the evangelical and Pentecostal trends share a strong conviction about the perfection of the Scriptures as the inspired Word of god.

The origins of the *classic Pentecostal churches* in Ghana remits to the life and ministry of Peter Anim and his Faith Tabernacle Church, from which the main local representatives of this Christian trend have sprung. Anim was born in 1890 in the Volta Region and was raised from primary school up to trade school within the Basel mission’s apparatus, becoming a weighting clerk and a pious church member. Different from Harris’s transfiguration, mirrored on the Old Testament and achieved through a direct engagement with Biblical historicity and divine presence, what calls attention in Anim’s religious trajectory, as presented by Wyllie (1974), is his transformative engagement with the evangelical and Pentecostal literature circulating in the Gold Coast’s public sphere of early 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of these key mediatized encounters happened in 1917, when he started reading the periodical *The Sword of the Spirit*, edited by pastor A. Clark, founder of the Faith

Tabernacle Church, Philadelphia. Personal crisis and miraculous experiences followed this initially literary interest on faith healing and the art of “travailing prayer”, which led Anim to become born-again, start a prayer group, leave the Presbyterian church, pursue evangelistic and healing crusades, and found a branch of the Faith Tabernacle Church in Asamakese, in 1922. All his exchanges with Clark happened through letters, which were also the means whereby Anim was ordained in 1923, receiving a certificate sent from the US that authorized him to hold the organizations’ name in the Gold Coast.

Faith Tabernacle practiced baptism by immersion, holiness, and believed in the imminence of the millennium, which gave them a sectarian nature (including the non-participation in national celebrations). Faith healing was a major doctrinal pillar, and the use of biomedicine was forbidden. Their liturgy was unemotional and the church despised glossolalia as satanic (Larbi 2001: 101), and believed that the Holy Spirit had ceased its works after having inspired the writers of the Bible. Healing therefore came through personal faith and directly from the godhead. The church expanded simultaneously in Nigeria and other regions of the Gold Coast.

In 1926, the Faith Tabernacle worldwide had been shaken by the expulsion of Clerk on a charge of adultery. He seceded and formed his own First Century Gospel Church. Some followed him in the Gold Coast, but not Anim. However, at that time, Anim had been exposed to another theological influence through print, this time through the Christian periodical *The Apostolic Faith*, published by a Pentecostal organization based in Portland, Oregon. He learned about the Holy Ghost and the deeper spiritual experiences converts were entitled to expect after conversion. He tried to introduce other Faith Tabernacle leaders to Pentecostal teachings, but found opposition and condemnation. In 1930 Anim seceded and rechristened the Asamakese church *The Apostolic Faith*. In 1932, leaders of his church first experienced the Holy Ghost baptism, being filled by the Spirit, speaking in tongues and prophesying. The outpouring of the Spirit had finally overflowed the testimonies of the Bible and the glosses of Christian periodicals and become a reality in the Gold Coast, attracting other church leaders to Asamakese and from there spreading rapidly throughout the Volta Region, Togoland, Ashanti, Fanti, and Eastern region. Most of these churches sought affiliation with Anim’s organization after the revival.

In 1935, Anim persuaded Pastor George Perfect, a British Apostolic Church missionary working in Nigeria to visit Asamakese on his way home to Britain on furlough. He was impressed by his Biblical knowledge and display of spiritual gifts and became affiliated to the UK Apostolic Church. James McKeown arrived in the Gold Coast in 1937 to serve as a missionary among the new affiliate and help them plant new churches. But conflict arose in 1939, when McKeown contracted malaria and was hospitalized. Anim retained from his earlier allegiances a strong disregard for biomedicine and saw in McKeown’s decision a sinful act and a sign of weak faith. In 1939, they parted company after a dispute on the doctrine of spiritual healing.

Anim renamed his church to Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), and acted as its overseer until his death in 1984. McKeown became the head of the local branch churches of the UK Apostolic Church, renamed Apostolic Church of the Gold Coast, with its headquarters in Winneba. In 1953, he seceded from the British headquarters after pursuing reforms on worship practices and disagreeing with the church constitution. These tensions became more candent after McKeown received a mission from the American Latter Rain Evangelical movement, which accused the British organization of “muffling the Spirit” with too much formalism (Larbi 2001: 212). The British-based church became what is today the Apostolic Church of Ghana, achieving full autonomy in 1985. McKeown’s organization became the Church of Pentecost (CoP), today the largest Protestant denomination of Ghana. After having set their differences aside, the three churches that emerged out of Peter Anim’s experiment with the Faith Tabernacle Church became the bulk of Ghana Pentecostal Council (GPC), created in 1969 and officially recognized by the 1992 Constitution of

Ghana as one of the five representative religious bodies of Ghana, along with the Christian Council, the Catholic secretariat, the Moslem Representative Council, and the Ahamadiyya Movement<sup>35</sup>.

Classic Pentecostals shared a series of doctrinal traits with the Spiritual Churches, as the tendency to match passionate worship with unemotional moral rigor. A Christian should pay tithes, abstain from alcohol and tobacco, keep the Sabbath, and live in humble holiness. Men and women sat apart in church. Dressing codes were prescribed, and varied among institutions and in time, but all originally included the wearing of headdress for women and some type of apostolic attire for men. Faith healing, deliverance from evil spirits, prayer and fasting were as central to classic Pentecostals as they were to the Spiritual Churches, and yet Baeta (1968) does not register the use of glossolalia among the latter. Although both groups accepted the works of the Holy Spirit, classic Pentecostals are more in line with a globalized Pentecostal sensibility, and despised the reference to angels and the use of material mediators by the Spiritual Churches as heretic or satanic. They did not accept polygamy or hold any food prohibition, and prescribed that conversion should be followed by rebaptism with Christian names. Their ecclesiology was largely borrowed from their American and British inspirers, thus being less centralized around the founder's charisma and inspired directions, and more bureaucratic. Prophecy did play an important role, but this special access to god was much more distributed among the leadership and congregation. In this sense, bureaucratization went side by side with inspiration (and eventually demonization) and decisions were reached through vote and prayer.

As exemplified by the history of schism and continuity reconstructed above, the Pentecostal scene in Ghana was and still is extremely dynamic, being constituted as much by personal revelations and collective revivals as by forms of connectivity with a transnational reach that transport people, organizations, doctrines, and sensibilities. In his history of early Pentecostal theology in the USA, Jacobsen (2003) argues that the dazzling inner heterogeneity of this religious movement should not be understood as the result of a late fragmentation of an originally homogenous phenomenon. Conversely, he argues that Pentecostalism is driven by "a relatively undeveloped spiritual impulse pushing those involved in the movement to seek a deeper and fuller understanding of the Spirit" (11). The same is valid for the movement worldwide. Pentecostals' intense desire for god is matched by their desire for understanding, having produced a plethora of dissenting models and norms sedimented in specific denomination and "entextualized" (Urban 1996) through popular theological treatises, which helped these ideas to circulate globally. As exemplified by Anim's own quest for a deeper experience of god, these forms of dissemination had a missionary impact of their own.

But personal missionary influence was still vital, as shown by the important role occupied by McKeown in the history of Ghana's Pentecostalism. Besides the Assemblies of God and his Apostolic Church, many other foreign bodies arrived in the country since the 1960s, as the UK Elim Pentecostal Church (later absorbed by CoP), Four Square Gospel Church, Church of God, Church of God of Prophecy, and Pentecostals Holiness Church (Larbi 2001: 79). The GPC hosted international crusades of famous Pentecostal ministers as Reinhard Bonke (1985) and Oral Roberts (1988). Associations of local churches with foreign bodies were extremely common, and could have strings attached. For instance, in 1969, Anim's CAC sought affiliation with the United Pentecostal Church (UPC), a Unitarian Pentecostal body from the USA. It was short-lived, since CAC was

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<sup>35</sup> Another founding member of the GPC are the Assemblies of God, which established its first mission in the North of Ghana in 1948, achieving autonomy in 1970.

Trinitarian and doctrinal conflicts immediately emerged, generating schism in the church and the formation of a UPC branch in Ghana (Larbi 2001: 129-30)<sup>36</sup>.

The relation between Spiritual Churches and classic Pentecostals was equally dynamic, ranging from demonization to “sheep-stealing” and partnership. We have seen that churches like CAC and CoP grew, among other things, by absorbing smaller religious organization that had experienced the revival and posteriorly molding them in their likeness. This process included the Spiritual Churches. In the 1940s, the Church of Twelve Apostles welcomed the financial support and supervision of the Apostolic Church of Ghana. McKeown came to Kadjabir and inspected their practices before deciding that the Apostolic Church would assume control of these congregations, but only if gourd rattles were substituted by Western styled tambourines (Baeta 1962: 62). The council of elders was divided, which led to schism and a long juridical dispute concerning church property that dragged through the 1940s, similar to the one McKeown himself would experience in the 1950s with his British partners.

We realize that Pentecostals never stopped responding to both exogenous and endogenous forces in order to seek stability or growth, which included reforms on doctrine. Even Anim’s originally adamant theological opposition to biomedicine, which had generated so much conflict and caused a great exodus from his congregation to McKeown’s camp, was eventually abandoned in the 1970s. New pressures arrived with the emergence of the charismatic ministries during the 1980s, which ironically accused classic Pentecostals of not being flexible or cosmopolitan enough, inducing new changes and adaptations. But before addressing this general refashioning of Pentecostal spirituality, I would like to mention another set of influential organizations: *interdenominational fellowships*.

The 1960s and 1970s saw another evangelical and Pentecostal revival in Ghana. At their forefront were “fellowships” of like-minded Christians whose attendance had no mandatory impact on their members’ church adhesions. Among the most influential parachurch groups were global evangelical institutions as Full Gospel Men Businessmen Fellowship International and its female counterpart Women’s Aglow. They encouraged Christian networking by organizing breakfast and dinner meetings, followed by Bible reading, prayer, preaching, sharing of testimonies, and evangelistic efforts aimed at opening new “chapters”. These institutions were responsible for the early advance of born-again Christianity among the middle classes and elites. Others, as Scripture Union, had a major impact on the evangelization of the youth in Ghana, operating especially by opening “Bible clubs” at schools, publishing devotionals, and organizing youth camps meetings.

This originally British institution had been operating in West African since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by publishing “Bible cards”, scripts concerned in leading the consumer through the habit of Bible reading. It gained greater influence in Ghana in 1956, with the arrival of the British missionary Nigel Sylvester, who established a branch of the organization. The official history of SU Ghana (Barker & Boadi-Siaw 2005), which has been autonomous since 1965, registers that the main concerns of this institution when it set roots in the country were the prevalence of nominal Christians still involved with “superstition”, the mainline churches’ lack of appeal to the youth, and the secularization of the school system.

SU carried forward the evangelical mission of making new converts and rendering nominal Christians real, that is, “born again” subjects. They helped to disseminate in the country the method of “Christian discipleship” whereby more seasoned Christians would mentor recent converts and usher them into the daily routines of the Christian life. Personal mentorship was deemed vital to the

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<sup>36</sup> Unitarians prescribe that baptism should be performed in Jesus name only (Pentecostal Unitarians are also known as “Jesus Only” in Ghana and elsewhere). Today the United Pentecostal Church International has 200 branches in Ghana and a prestigious Bible school centered on “Oneness” Pentecostalism.

achievement of “spiritual maturity”, a qualitative life change undertaken through an everyday practical engagement with Christian disciplines and the convert’s reimmersion in Christian networks. Besides personal piety, mature Christians should exercise leadership, practicing active evangelism and nurturing their own disciples, thus making the whole model self-reproductive<sup>37</sup>.

SU’s original project was to fill the “moral gap” produced by the secularization of education in independent Ghana. They did so informally, by infiltrating the left arm of the state through Christian discipleship after the colonial pact between church and state had been undermined. The current reach of SU Bible clubs testifies to their success. It has opened chapters in over 95% of all Senior High Schools of all ten administrative regions of Ghana. Many teachers are affiliated to the institution, thus playing a double pedagogical role<sup>38</sup>. The exponential growth of SU in Ghana testifies to the impressive porosity of the post-colonial state institutions, especially schools, but also hospitals, prisons, and even state bureaucracies, to religious proselytism. In the case of education, this situation is often justified by anxieties about the moral laxity and lack of guidance of the youth. It is a widely shared opinion in Ghana, reproduced within the secular and Christian public spheres, that life in secondary and tertiary schools is full of moral dangers, especially because students often have to leave their home villages and the proximity of their families in order to pursue higher education. Others claim that school life is “easy”, because “you have 3 meals a day and a place to sleep”, thus leading to immoral behavior. These discourses often reach official heights, which has endowed institutions like SU with impressive legitimacy, being frequently invited by the secular state as a collaborator on the moral upbringing of the new generations:

SU serves as a member with the Ministry of Education in protecting youth morality through its ministry on the school campuses and other programs. For example, in 2002, SU Central region organized a consultation at St Augustine’s College, Cape Coast, on the decline in student morality. The consultation was attended by the Regional and Municipal Directors of Education and their staff, the Central Regional Chairman of the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools (CHASS), Secondary School teachers and patrons of SU groups and SU Regional Committee members (Barker & Boadi-Siaw 2005: 131).

Besides the works with camp meetings, school chapters, and the publication of popular devotionals as *Daily Guide* and *Daily Power*, SU started accepting the formation of “town fellowships” in the 1970s. Especially through these groups, the institutions experienced a sharp emergence of Pentecostal practices, as Holy Ghost baptism, glossolalic prayer and use of spiritual gifts, a process experienced by most evangelical fellowships at that time. The renewal produced tensions between pro and anti-charismatics factions, the latter group finally becoming hegemonic. Pentecostal-oriented prayer groups, called Prayer Warriors, have gained protagonism and official acceptance since then. In tune with its scripture-centered approach, SU has assumed the mission of monitoring the Biblical soundness of Ghana’s Pentecostalism especially through the seminars it organizes.

Although not predicated on denominational allegiances, fellowships like SU had a major impact on the Christian scene in Ghana at large, inciting the renewal of old and the formation of new churches. Aduboffour (1994) and Omenyo (2006) argue that, because they encouraged members to remain in their home churches and revive them with the “fire of god”, first by spreading the news of spiritual rebirth and then by seeking a deeper experience of god through

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<sup>37</sup> SU “encourages its members to see themselves as a royal priesthood, committed to serve the church by knowing the Scriptures and accepting their priestly responsibility to pray, to serve, and to witness – 1 Peter 2:9” (Barker & Boadi-Siaw 2005: 56).

<sup>38</sup> SU has an equally influential counterpart and collaborator amidst tertiary institution in the Ghana Fellowship of University Students (GHAFES).

Pentecostal empowerment, fellowships were one of the main causes of the *charismatic renewal within the mainline churches*. As we have seen, most of these churches had felt an early version of this phenomenon thought inspired catechists and prayer groups<sup>39</sup>. However, the 1960s and 70s saw a much more methodic advance of evangelical and Pentecostal enthusiasm, which reclaimed official recognition.

Presbyterians, Methodist, and Anglicans have tried to circumscribe authoritatively this spirituality by allowing specific branches led by Pentecostal-oriented ministers to alter their liturgies and tolerate breaches of decorum or weekday meetings organized by lay leaders, where congregants could exercise their gifts and pray in tongues. “Youth services” were organized to allow space for a more lively “praise and worship” (music and dances). Paul Gifford surveyed the teachings of the dominant centers of pastoral training of the mainline churches during the 1990s, the Trinity College, in Legon, the Christian Leadership College, in Kumasi, and the Akrofi Kristaller Memorial Center, in Akropong, concluding that they were all marked by a “theological eclecticism” with an obvious evangelical and charismatic accent (2001: 74). The same mimetic tendency was extended even to the Catholic Church, whose Catholic Charismatic Renewal was established in Ghana in 1971. The association organizes prayer meetings, crusades, congresses and national weeks of prayer and fasting in plain Pentecostal style. The seminars *Life in the Spirit* and *Growth in the Spirit* help homogenizing their approach to Pentecostal doctrine and encourage the Holy Ghost baptism among Catholics.

Nevertheless, attempts to comply with the evasion of members through a controlled mimetism were never fully successful, and these measures were unlikely to prevent Spirit-led members from operating their revivalist meetings outside the institution and pushing congregations beyond ecclesiastical control<sup>40</sup>. These groups would eventually secede and become autonomous bodies. Staying only with SU, it is impressive the number of ex-participants who, after seeking Christian maturity and networking in this fellowship, broke with the mainline churches and founded influential *charismatic ministries* in the 1980s, as Alfred Nyamekye (House of Faith), Mensah Otobil (International Central Gospel Church - ICGC), Dag Heward-Mills (Lighthouse chapel International), Sam Korankye Ankrah (Royal House), N. A. Tachie-Yarboi (Victory Bible Church International), Eastwood Anaba (Fountain Gate Chapel), and many others. Many other charismatic pioneers rose to ministry through Enoch Agbozo’s fellowship Ghana Evangelical Society (GES) (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 108-110).

Charismatic ministries were fundamentally urban and youth churches that reached out to the educated classes when they emerged. In this sense, they differed from classic Pentecostals, who had grown especially among the masses through the evangelization of towns and villages, having a large number of members who were illiterate and non-proficient in English<sup>41</sup>. Most of the upcoming charismatic pastors had been simultaneously influenced by theological innovations circulating through the ever-changing transnational networks of Pentecostalism. One of these new doctrines was the so-called “prosperity theology”, today “an integral part of Ghana’s charismatic revival”

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<sup>39</sup> Asamoah-Gyadu shows that “when the first National Conference of renewal prayer groups existing within various Presbyterian Church of Ghana congregations was held in 1965, one of the groups from Kumasi was already 25 years old” (2005: 29).

<sup>40</sup> As elsewhere, the charismatic renewal in the mainline churches momentarily reduced the evasion of members to the charismatic ministries, but ultimately could not avoid it. After all, it is better to have a full meal than a few courts. In the 1990s, a former Methodist justified his shift to a charismatic ministry to Paul Gifford by claiming exactly that the church now “is doing all they do” (2001: 39).

<sup>41</sup> Larbi shows that until the 1970s, the CoP was a “basically a grassroots movement. Most of its leaders and followers were largely from the lower level of the social strata of society. This is not to discount the fact that among the masses were a few highly educated and influential members of the society who had come to its fold mainly because of some concrete help, like healing, they had obtained through the mediation of the church” (2001: 197).



(Gifford 2004: 69), and no longer representative of a specific type of church. The American evangelist Oral Roberts embodied an early version of this school, and his teachings on “seed faith” - which includes among the effects of Pentecostal empowerment material benefits in terms of health and wealth - had been televised daily in the country since the late 1970s, preparing the soil for his glorious crusade of 1988. Prosperity theology preachers produced a true spiritualization of tithing and money offerings in church (called “seed money”), redefining the act of giving as indexing faith, trust, and submission to god, thus becoming part of a covenant. Another American minister with great mediatic influence in Ghana, Kenneth Hagin, complements this perspective on giving with an emphasis on the performative power of faith-charged utterances in the lives of Christians, what is known as “positive confessions”, “words of faith”, or “name it, and claim it”.

Both these trends introduce a Christian norm closely associated with prosperity, thus legitimizing the coupling of Christian otherworldly salvation with a strong this-worldly accent. God wants to give eternal life, but also a joyful life, requiring acts of faith and submission. This position is definitely not unintuitive to a Christian field nurtured according to what I called the “extroverted” Protestant Christianity of European missionaries. In addition, prosperity was and still is a component of the popular spirituality surrounding the Spiritual Churches. By finding a different theological articulation through international “men of god”, property theology in Ghana became a place for the cohabitation of multiple expectations and norms. Other crusaders visiting Ghana who included the prosperity message in their theological arsenal have been Billy Graham, Derek Prince, T.L. and Daisy Osborn, Morris Cerullo and Benny Hinn. By further circulating their ideas through audio and video, these famous ministers also introduced to Ghanaians new glosses on old Christian practices as spiritual healing, deliverance from evil spirits, and prophecy<sup>42</sup>.

As in the case of classic Pentecostalism, Nigeria was also a vital regional node channeling these new global forces into Ghana. Benson Idahosa had founded his Church of God Mission in Benin City in the mid-1970s, a pioneer model of charismatic ministry in West Africa. As most Pentecostal preachers, his rise to stardom was characterized as much by transnational connectivity as by divine inspiration: “Although his biography portrays him as the protégé of several well-known American media evangelists, Idahosa’s ministry is not imported from the West. He is described in his biography as having emerged ‘literally, from the oblivion of a garbage heap to a position of leadership’ as the most popular African televangelist” (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 112). He held a crusade in Ghana in 1977 that had great impact in terms of “signs and wonders”. On the same year, his Redemption Hour TV show started being broadcasted in the country. Idahosa’s influence quickened the advance of Pentecostal spirituality within the fellowships and also left enduring marks at the level of mentorship, since he offered scholarships to young Ghanaian Christians interested in attending his Christ for All Nations Bible School. Some of these pupils founded important charismatic ministries in Ghana, as Pastors Christina Doe Tetteh (Solid Rock Chapel), Godwin Normanyo (Fountain of Life Ministries), George Ferguson-Laing (Living Praise Ministries), and Charles Agyin Asare (Word Miracle Church International). One of Idahosa’s closest and earliest disciples was the today Archbishop Nicholas Dunca-William, a former member of CoP, who became the founder of Christian Action Faith Ministries, with headquarters in Accra and today 300 affiliate and branch churches in North America, Europe and Africa, with more than 100,000 members. His church’s website declares he is “the founder and father of the Charismatic Movement in Ghana and other parts of West Africa”, a position confirmed by many sectors of the local charismatic community.

Generally, Charismatic ministries retained from the evangelical fellowships a marked

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<sup>42</sup> Larbi also recognizes the notable influence of Yonggi Chos’s home cell system in Ghana’s charismatic scene, which helped his Seoul congregation to be known as the largest in the world, with a membership of more than a million.

emphasis on personal salvation. As a result, its members coordinate a strong allegiance to specific “men of god” and their denominations with a non-denominational ethos, and can be seen “fellowshipping” with other charismatic churches and parachurch bodies and organizing their own Christian activities at home and in public places. Leaders often invite ministers from other churches and organize thematic “conferences” with a trans-denominational reach. They also combine the centrality of the Bible as the perfect Word of god and a proactive notion of the Christian subject base on the “priesthood of all believers” with prosperity theology, a typical “word of faith” emphasis on claiming Biblical promises, emotional “praise and worship” (which sometimes takes half of the church services), and the centrality of “signs and wonders”, as prophecy, healing, miracles, and deliverance from evil spirits. The expansion of the miraculous in the past decades in Ghana and worldwide works as a self-fulfilled prophecy to charismatics, which indexes and corroborates their own eschatological view of history: that the world is living the “end times”, a “dispensation”, or period of salvation history, that antecedes the eminent return of Christ. The “end-times” church and Christians must stand in their faith despite opposition from “the enemy”, and act as bold disseminators of the good news of salvation in order to increased the “army of Christ” before his arrival. Military metaphors proliferate as part of this expansion-oriented spirituality.

The pioneer churches above grew exponentially, some of them reaching the status of mega-church (a single congregation with more than 2,000 members) in less than 10 years. Those are wide ecclesiastical bodies, which range from home-cell groups to thematic ministries concerned with specific teachings and activities (children, youth, professional bodies, man and women fellowships, prayer, welfare, evangelism, counseling, music, etc.), and different church services organized on weekdays and Sunday. Usually only the latter, the most massive church encounter, is directly led by the founder and overseer, whereas other meetings are headed by assistant pastors and lay leaders. Their congregations are still mostly urban, but have also stretched their arms into towns and villages through church branches. Many of them have opened branches abroad, in Africa and beyond. Smaller charismatic bodies may fall in their orbit through apprenticeship networks and ecumenical groups as the National Association of Charismatic Churches (NACC), created in 1999 and originally president by bishop Dag Heward-Mills, who was succeeded by Steve Mensah (Charismatic Evangelistic Ministry) and Duncan-Williams<sup>43</sup>. It has 200 affiliated bodies, having therefore a very low degree of representativity and regulatory control over the charismatic field in general, as any other association of this nature. Similar to the Pentecostal Council, they accept only churches with branches, thus preventing the affiliation of a multitude of small charismatic churches that have sprung in cities, towns, and villages. A survey coordinated by the Ghana Evangelism Committee found out that only between 1986 and 1992 3,262 churches were planted in Ghana, most of them charismatics.

The 2010 census confirms the success of the today four century-old project of Christianizing Ghana, and the place of Pentecostal-charismatic spirituality in it. According to these statistics, Christianity comprises 71,3% of the country’s population of 24,658,823, whereas Islam accounts for 17,6%. Still dominant in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, what the 2010 census refers as “Traditionalists” have mingled to 5.2%, indeed the same fraction of the population that declares themselves “non-religious” (5,3%). Among the Christians, Catholics are still the most popular single denomination, with 13,1%, whereas historical Protestants, whose presence remits to the missionary and colonial epoch, as Methodists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans represent 18,4%. Pentecostals have established themselves as the dominant religious trend in Ghana, their various denominations reaching 28,3% of

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<sup>43</sup> Two ecumenical bodies were created in the 1990s, the Council for Charismatic Churches, led by Duncan-Williams, and Charismatic Ministries network, led by Mensah Otobil. Both collapsed. The NACC belongs to Duncan-Williams network.

the overall population, a number that ignores the vast evangelical and charismatic influence in the mainline churches. These statistics are situated in a religious map marked by a persisting socio-economic, cultural, and religious divide between the North and the South. The Sahelian Northern region, for instance, has 60% of its population of adherents of Islam, whereas the Greater Accra region, where my fieldwork was undertaken, is populated by a large majority of 83% of Christians, Pentecostal-Charismatics corresponding to 44% of the overall population, an impressive number for a religion that has been considered in other contexts counter-cultural and radical.

As in the case of the two previous epochs of Christian intervention in Ghana, this general turn towards Pentecostalism has been both heightened and destabilized by the encompassing Spirits of the age, in this case globalization and neoliberalism. As shown by Peter Anim's path to protagonism in this field, since a very early stage Ghana's Pentecostal scene has been markedly transnational. In this sense, Joel Robbins claim that "Pentecostal-charismatic Christians *are* [my emphasis] a far-flung network of people held together by their publications and other media productions, conferences, revival meetings, and constant travel" (2004a: 125) is equally valid to what I am calling classic Pentecostals. As a historian of Pentecostalism, Bergunder (2005) supports this argument when he dismantles the conventional historiography that defines global Pentecostalism as the fruit of a unilinear diffusion stemming from the revival around W. Seymour (1906) in the USA (Robeck 2006) and shows how these American sectors had been in close and reciprocal contact with the missionary movement, a non-denominational evangelical network with a strong and yet doctrinally diffused charismatic and eschatological sensibility. The emphasis on Pentecostalism as a missionary phenomenon and not necessarily an American export explains the fact that the American revival was preceded by similar events happening, for instance, in Korea (1903) and India (1905-1907) (Anderson 2005). Without necessarily disavowing the unequal influence of particular national nodes, Bergunder sustains that "Pentecostalism has been, since its inception, a global project" (2005: 199)<sup>44</sup>.

Authors like Coleman (2000) have stressed the importance of approaching Pentecostalism as an heterogeneous global culture in its own terms, that is, not simply as a reaction to an exogenous and generic process of globalization intensified in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whereby flows of people, ideas, things, and institutions have become more likely to blur the nation-state confines (Appadurai 1996), but as a form of life that has engaged with globalization immanently. He stresses the centrality of three main agents of Pentecostal globalization: organizations, media, and a globalized personal orientation (Coleman 2000: 55-71). What he calls the "global orientation" of Pentecostalism includes its Protestant and charismatic appeal to individualized piety and spontaneity, thus the fact that all Pentecostal had "an experience", both the famous American pastor and the Ghanaian villager, allowing a cosmopolitan form of mutual-recognition to emerge. The shared encounter with the Spirit hence operates both as a doorway and a marker of common belonging to the global *ecclesia*, a turn from a regionalized Babel to a global Pentecost.

And yet, we have seen that the "encounter" per se is not enough to stabilize a Pentecostal norm. This is rendered clear by the gap between classic Pentecostals and charismatics. Although certainly globalized, classic Pentecostals display a different ethos, observed in their generally negative attitude toward "the world". To be sure, charismatics do share with classic Pentecostals a series of

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<sup>44</sup> This is confirmed by early theological disputes surrounding glossolalia affecting Parham and Seymour's disciples. Is glossolalia an unintelligible prayer language or the capacity to speak other languages without previous learning, for missionary purposes, that is, a language "for service"? Was the revival literally a shift from a Babel of national languages to a global evangelistic Pentecost? That was the view that Parham sustained for his whole life, although "the movement as a whole ultimately rejected his claim and instead came to interpret tongues as a gift of speech that involved the humanly unintelligible language(s) of heaven" (Jacobsen 2003: 19).

traits. Those are best captured by their common opposition to other Christian groups. Both claim that the mainline churches have lost their Christian roots by embracing the welfare mission too far. As a result, these orthodox bodies became “cold” and spiritually “dry”. They also consider the Spiritual Churches heretic or syncretic, especially because of their use of material mediators. But charismatics often criticize classic Pentecostals for their “formalism”, arguing that Christianity is not a “religion”, but a dynamic lifestyle based on individual faith and the spontaneity of the Spirit. In terms of liturgy, classic Pentecostals are hence accused of “putting the Holy Spirit in a box”, whereas charismatics thrive for constant innovation, changing church decorations constantly and having diverse types of church service and Christian activities.

In terms of morality, charismatics see classic Pentecostal prescriptions like women wearing headscarves, not wearing pants, and genders sitting apart in church as outdated and “religious”. Charismatics dress sharp and informally. A healthy, beautiful and elegant body is part of their normative understanding of Christian personhood, a temple filled and sanctified by the Spirit, but also supposed to reflect externally God’s blessings. Different from classic Pentecostals, most charismatics understand that the use of alcohol should not be radically banned, a measure that according to them “mystifies” these substances<sup>45</sup>. Christians are allowed to drink in festive occasions moderately and always with sobriety. In his book *Model Marriage*, sold in every Christian bookstore in Accra, and used in Lighthouse Chapel’s Bible School, Dag Heward-Mills prescribes that the main secret to avoid the sin of adultery is to cultivate an exciting sexual life with one’s partner. Sexual positions are even introduced to the reader quite graphically. In terms of family relations, fathers should display love and express their feelings openly, a model of masculinity and fatherhood that departs from the more traditional view, which establishes that the father’s disciplinary rigor and lack of emotionalism is the best way of displaying impartiality, thus avoiding disputes for affection and family feuds. Although they retain the Apostle Paul’s patriarchal model of gender relations of Ephesians 5 - “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything (24, NIV) - charismatics balance this explicit hierarchy by imputing to men the duties of love and care for their wives, “just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (25). The exercise of male authority is frequently predicated during pre-marital counseling on two basic duties: devotion to God and love to the wife. A breach of these duties legitimizes female indocility.

I asked Reverend Ofori, a minister at Full Gospel Church and a famous marital and pre-marital counselor with a popular radio show at *Adom FM*, to comment on the main causes of family conflicts in Ghana today. After mentioning the marriage contract as established by Paul in Ephesus, he attributed most of the fault to men’s lack of affection, and stressed the role of Christianity in producing more intimate family relations:

The majority of them [family feuds] is because of husbands who don’t have time to their wives. They don’t show enough love, affection, care. And the husbands will come and say that: my wife doesn’t respect me, my wife doesn’t take my instructions. It is because of the way we were brought up. If you were brought up in the traditional way, we are made to think that the wife is a second-class citizen, a second-class human being. The husband is always the first class. (...) Modernization has taught us that a wife can work. We are seeing wives that are earning more than their husbands. And if I’m earning more than you, how come you want to subject me to a second-class citizen? If I’m a second-class human being, then you should get more than I’m getting! But if you get more than I’m getting, then your perception must be changed, must be transformed, and the way we used to see marriage in the old days, cannot survive anymore. Things have changed. (...) Men are not introducing affection

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<sup>45</sup> Smoking is still completely forbidden.



and romance into the marriage. See, the moment you mention romance, they think about sex. In the traditional context, emotions are left in their chest, they don't come out.

Rev. Ofori's argument revolves around the idea that men must earn their Biblically legitimized authority over their wives by abiding to their Christian duties, which includes a more individualistic display of affection and intimacy. This configuration may sound highly conservative to Western eyes, and yet it is often seen in Ghana as quite modernizing and liberal in comparison to more traditional gender ideologies.

Although charismatics also embrace the moral disciplines of holiness, most of them understand that, by privileging a judgmental and moralistic tone, classic Pentecostals often incur in the sin of "self-righteousness", thus ignoring that sanctification is the work of grace, not personal might. Perfection belongs to Christ only, and by producing a too marked divide between the church and "the world", their strict moralism undermines another defining trait of Christianity: evangelism. "One should not judge others. Christianity is not about commendation. It is about inviting people to follow Christ", told me a charismatic pastor justifying his personal disconnection from CoP. In order to yield to Christ's "great commission" (Matthew 28:16-20) and "go and make disciples of all nations", the body of Christ should be attractive and not overcritical. The Christian life should seduce, not instill fear of hell. The latter must be evoked in appropriate moments and through the right rhetorical devices, so it does not "scare the sheep away".

As it happened with the mainline churches, charismatic success has also cast a mimetic spell on classic Pentecostals. CoP started giving more importance to evangelism among the youth, and opened the Pentecost Students and Associates (PENSA) in 1979<sup>46</sup>. "English Assemblies" have been created since 1981, which led to the foundation in 1993 of Apostle Opoku Onyinah's Pentecostal International Worship Center, an island of liberality within CoP: sexes can mix, no mandatory clothing, use of English, less moral criticism and biblical literalism (Larbi 2001: 203). Amidst much controversy, CoP banned the headscarf imposition and the prohibition of trousers for women in 2010, although many still abide to this rule for personal conviction or attachment to the tradition. The Ghana Pentecostal Council has since then even changed its name to Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council, accepting charismatic churches. The mimetic dominance of the charismatic ethos in Ghana has therefore prevented any strong claim about the distinctions between evangelicals, Pentecostals, and charismatics, although they might emerge contextually.

We realize that, although Pentecostalism in general has a global DNA, charismatics articulate this global orientation much more consciously than classic Pentecostals. They use primarily English, which prevents the sedimentation of their congregations around specific ethnic identities, a tendency observed in some mainline and most Spiritual and classic Pentecostal churches. Their forms of belonging are explicitly post-national and they frequently carry "international" in their names. It is common to see flags of various countries within their church compounds. Media are the very capillary veins whereby "messages" (as they call sermons), music, spiritual practices, doctrines, and styles that give shape to this transnational culture travel, being embodied, condensed, and glossed by specific men god before continuing their flow. Moreover, one of the outcomes of these "end-time" churches' primary commitment with evangelistic expansion is a drive to literally convert knowledges, values, and goods of global capitalist modernity, instead of opposing them, as classic Pentecostals' more conventional model of asceticism would have. In this sense, instead of fashioning simply an alternative or parallel Christian globalization, charismatic ministries have attempted the herculean task of inhabiting hegemonic global flows and bending these according to their own religious

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<sup>46</sup> In 1991, their youth ministry, the Witness Movement, and PENSA were merged as the Pentecost Youth Evangelistic Movement (PENTYEM).

purposes.

For instance, the highly rationalized techniques of “church growth” taught in mega-church Bible schools Christianize expert knowledge from business and economics unapologetically. The finality is to “maximize soul-winning”. During a class on “Christian economics” in Central Bible College, the Biblical vedette of prosperity gospel, David, raised by divine will from shepherd to king, was described as “god’s C.E.O”, a model of success to be followed and studied in detail. Not by chance, most Pentecostal university colleges existing in Ghana today started with two degrees: theology and business. It is clear that the typically Pentecostal attachment to spontaneously “being led” by the Spirit, as well as its evangelist ethos have resonated strongly with values that are typical of global capitalism: innovation and entrepreneurship. I want to underline how these values have been unleashed in Ghanaian society unprecedentedly after redemocratization and structural adjustment, the exact moment in which the popularity of these churches exploded.

The shrinking of the state produced by structural adjustment points to the figure of Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings (Nugent 1995), who first entered the country’s political scene by leading a military upheaval against general Akuffo in 1979. After transferring power to democratically elected Hilla Limann, Rawlings staged another coup in 1982, and ruled Ghana through the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) for ten years. Ideologically, his government was eclectic and pragmatic, combining socialist rhetoric - inspired on the Libyan revolution, and reflected on strategies of cooptation of civil society similar to those of Nkrumah’s single party regime - with a strengthening of the ties between Ghana and international financial agencies as the IMF and the World Bank. This entrance in the orbit of neoliberal policies was pushed by a devastating economic crisis that produced an 80% fall on family income between 1970 and 1982. In 1992, pressured by the opposition and international donors, Rawlings retired from the military and founded the National Democratic Congress (NDC), being transfigured by the voting poles into the first president of Ghana’s “Fourth Republic”. Since then, the economy has been on recovery, pushed by the rise of commodities prices and having at its core exports of cocoa, mining, and recently found oil and gas. The country was recently promoted by the IMF to the status of mid-income and have been able to go through two alternations of power peacefully, one in 2001, when Rawlings gave way to the New Patriotic Party’s candidate John Kuffuor, and another in 2009, when the NDC candidate and first born-again president of Ghana, John Atta-Mills, took office.

Nevertheless, structural adjustment never produced the flourishing of “civil society”, nor the unleashing of entrepreneurship into the formal job market expected by international agencies. Instead, it brought a persisting informalization of the economy, which today represents, according to the 2010 census, impressive 86% of the employment sector. In sum, money has circulated internally in increasing amounts, especially in large urban centers like Accra, but life is inherently unstable and exposed to vulnerabilities. But if not to Ghanaian society in general, at least to charismatic churches, the institutional deficit produced by the structural adjustment catalyzed opportunities for growth, which they embraced with no time. Besides having today 1,938,411 members and 12802 branches only in Ghana, CoP runs seventy nine basic schools, two secondary schools, one technical school, one vocational school and one university (Pentecostal University College, created in 2003), besides one hospital and seven health clinics. Charismatic are more humble in the fields of education and health, and yet ICGC has created the largest private university in Ghana, Central University College, second only to the University of Ghana in excellence.

But the most important political change induced by neoliberal democratization that incited the charismatic explosion was the deregulation of the public sphere (Gifford 2005: 30-40, Dewitte 2008), which allowed them to give full expression to their global inclinations and rhetoric of witnessing and miraculous experience through airwaves and TV antennas. Once seriously debilitated by the economic crisis, Ghana’s cultural industry saw a Christian booming in the 1990s. After

surveying the plethora of charismatic radio and TV shows, and the impact of these churches on the field of print, music, and video, Gifford argues that “A whole cultural form – a whole industry – has been carried by these new churches and has increased their enormous appeal. Thus, reasons for their growth are not exclusively religious” (35). Gifford’s dissociation of this process of mediatization from any truly “religious” factor is partially due to his own limited conceptual perspective on the matter. However, this resistance also points to one of the potential effects of the deterritorialization of charismatic discourse and aesthetics through media: loss of discernibility. Meyer (2004b) shows how Ghana’s video and music industry have propagated a “Pentecostalite” style in the local public sphere that has transcended its original born-again audience. Gospel singers are true popular stars, and their songs can be heard even in bars and nightclubs. Prophets and pastors are depicted by popular action movies as heroes who use “Holy Ghost power” to defeat their enemies.

As argues Agha (2011), by predicating communication on the circulation of commodities, mediatization expands “the effective scale of production and dissemination of messages across a population” (163), hence losing sight of their uptakes, which are allowed to proliferate, if not freely, at least beyond the normative control of their authors. As it migrates from church to market, worship and miracles might become simply entertainment. Is the Christianization of commodities only a means to the commodification of Christianity? The examples above show that the charismatic project of embracing “the world” in order to change it, in this case, the world of peripheral globalization, may entail an increasing susceptibility to be reshaped at its object’s image. A similar process has affected the charismatic focus on Christian entrepreneurship, which has become dangerously close to the “entrepreneurial Self” (Foucault 2008) of official neoliberalism or worse, the vulnerable Self of practical neoliberalism.

The establishment of a true Christian market in Ghana by the charismatic movement, composed of religious commodities and services, has made of the ministerial vocation a likely source of survival within an otherwise even-more-uncertain social environment, thus inciting the erratic dissemination of small churches and the proliferation of pastors of all sorts, as I described in my introduction. Especially among the youth, the possibility of becoming or “acting like” (how to discern?) a charismatic pastor has been embraced as one of the available forms of economic agency in a popular religious market that encourages not enduring relations but mostly short-lived cycles of reciprocity with clients. Exchanging bread for prayer, these apostles of the post-colonial desert invite us to temper the “global orientation” of charismatics I stressed above with James Ferguson’s (2006) warning about the limited applicability of ideas about global “flows” to an African context.

According to Ferguson, most of the general theories of globalization emerging especially in the 1990s have disregarded regional unbalances, and avoided engaging with the selectivity involved in the process of becoming a member of the global village, or in our case, the transnational ecclesia. Different from the production of a coeval and cosmopolitan global village, Ferguson’s globalization “from below” stresses the marked spatialization of the neoliberal bonus in territorial enclaves and a widespread socialization of its onus according to a logic of “skipping” flows of capital. This strong claim for an analytical dissociation between globalization as an overarching and disembedded imaginary and the concrete access to supranational membership must be taken in consideration. Is Ghanaian Pentecostalism simply an aestheticized and reactive form of global “culture”, whose spectacular rhetoric obscures the prevalence of disconnection at a deeper level? How is Pentecostalism capable to transcend the level of promises and expectations, and ultimately equip African subjects with the tools necessary to imagine and engender the future? And ultimately, how singularly Christian is this future?

The questions above require a concrete investigation able to account for the heterogeneity and variable social productivity of Pentecostalism’s associational life and institution-building in Ghana today. They demand primarily to know how and not only why one becomes a born again and



Spirit-filled Christian, and by which norms and means Christianity is able to establish or not, at a personal and institutional scales, a discontinuity between itself and the world. In order to seek for these answers, I now shift from a historical to an ethnographic perspective.

## Chapter 2 - Of grace and growth: spiritual maturation and the realignments of Pentecostal rupture in Ghana

With the disruptive force of conversion - theologically predicated on the suspension of previous social and cultural attachments - Christianity took the epochs of colonialism, nationalism, and neoliberal globalization in Ghana as opportunities to enlarge its reach, and by doing so, assumed specific countenances and invited different forms of suspicion. My intention in the previous chapter was not to claim that religious change as an ethical and religious project has been inevitably reduced to a tool or reflex of non-religious projects orbiting around the secular values of colonial civilization, nationalist autochthony, and neoliberal entrepreneurialism, but to acknowledge that Christian churches had to establish their own specificity within these encompassing times, which inevitably affected how they defined and defended proper Christianity.

Acknowledging with Gariott and O'Neill (2008) that "What makes Christianity a problem for anthropologists may differ in fundamental ways from what makes it a problem for Christians" (394), in this chapter I start exploring ethnographically how Pentecostals in Ghana conceive, perform, and transmit their own version of Christian discontinuity amidst the horizon of uncertainty traced in the previous chapter. I will argue that, more importantly than a temporal rupture per se, the main problem faced by those concerned in advancing the promises of Christian renewal in the country today is how to sediment the temporal rupture introduced by conversion retrospectively. Using my interlocutors own terms, the problem is how to move from "spiritual rebirth" to what they call "spiritual maturation" by inserting converts into Biblical frameworks, regimes of habituation, and communities of practice with clearer authoritative outlines. I start by reviewing contemporary debates on Christianity, discontinuity, and relationality in Ghana's Pentecostal scene before exploring how the organic and process-like lexicon of spiritual maturation tends to predicate the felicity of the event of conversion quite explicitly on what Engelke (2010) calls the "realignments of Pentecostal rupture". This will lead me to take a closer look at the methods used by Ghanaian Pentecostals to make faith literally grow, first, through a mega-church's discipleship program, and second, through more diffused forms of Christian mentorship unfolding in the everyday of large and small churches. I will then exemplify the interplay of these methods in the personal trajectories of two maturing Pentecostals: a full-time minister and an active leader struggling with his calling and his past. I conclude by pointing to how spiritual maturation allow us to rethink Pentecostal promises of natality, condensed in the idea of spiritual rebirth, through alternative lenses, as what Alasdair McIntyre calls "ethical flourishing" (1999), a process in which nurturance, relationality, and power become closely entangled.

### 2.1. Christianity, discontinuity, relationality: some introductory remarks

If not in Christianity in general, the motif of conversion as an event of radical temporal rupture has been widely recognized as a defining trait of evangelical-oriented Christianity, where the phenomenon of "spiritual rebirth" and the transformative rhetoric of the testimony (Harding 2001) play a fundamental role. As part of the repertoire of Pentecostalism in the so-called global south, these religious tools, when added to Pentecostals' demonizing opposition to traditional religion, have been often characterized as a source of cultural critique and individualistic modernization (Martin 2002, Robbins 2004a). Among the Africanist scholarship, Birgit Meyer's (1998, 1999, 2004) influential work approaches Pentecostalism's concern with a "break with the past" as an analytical hinge giving access to these groups' critical attitude vis-à-vis African traditions ("the past") and affinity with trans-national identities ("the future"). Her analysis coordinates at different levels an anthropological attention to the content of these claims with broader historical debates on post-

colonial African modernity, and has questioned the trouble-free actualization of Pentecostal discontinuity on the ground.

In an influential article, Meyer (1998) approaches the issue not through the event of conversion per se, but through deliverance, or Pentecostal exorcism. According to the temporal therapeutics of deliverance, the “idolatrous” past is not disavowed as fake “superstition” or symbolized as inoffensive “culture”, but demonized and acknowledged in its negative efficacy. Demons connect past and present through a logic of transmission often indifferent to conversion to Christianity, operating through hidden “family covenants” that render the person vulnerable to the predatory agency of evil, thus in constant need of expert intervention. Pastors lead their patients through a recollection of their upbringing that excavates the existence of shrines, ancestral stools, and secretive forms of initiation in their families, a process concluded by a ritual intervention aimed at “breaking” these bonds. Meyer’s argument highlights how Ghanaian Pentecostals often see themselves trapped in endless cycles of deliverance, which evidences that tradition is rejected but never ultimately broken with. According to this perspective, the past becomes a negative force that haunts the everyday of an unfulfilled spiritual rebirth.

As argues Jonathan Smith, “the student of religion must be able to articulate clearly why ‘this’ rather than ‘that’ was chosen as an exemplum” (1982, xi). It is therefore important to reconstitute Meyer’s own selectivity before establishing mine. First, she is especially concerned with charismatic churches’ pragmatist concern in solving problems and providing worldly blessings<sup>47</sup>. In this sense, her thesis reproduces the dominant geopolitical trend that has characterized anthropological studies of charismatic Christianity, in which scholars concerned with its Northerner versions have crafted very detailed ethnographic studies of spirituality at the level of everyday practice (Csordas 1997, 2001; Coleman 2000, Bielo 2009, Luhrmann 2012), whereas works on the so-called Global South, and especially Africa, have focused on these churches’ pragmatist responses to material deprivation and anxieties about the occult. Suspicious about the scholarly obsession with spiritual power as a privileged window into the political and moral economies of contemporary Africa, Ranger has argued that “one almost gets the impression (...) that occult phenomena are the only thing that is happening on the ground” (2007: 255). Agreeing with Ranger, I am not claiming that Meyer’s analytical options have no empirical basis whatsoever, quite the contrary, but that these are best seen as forms of accentuation within a much broader repertoire of practices, sensibilities, and associations, which are often diluted into a homogenous and decontextualized version of the “post-colonial subject”.

Second, once the strategies of born-again reform of the African past are homogenized, the future sought by conversion or deliverance is conflated with the secular teleology of progress and individualism. This is observed in Meyer’s opposition between the deeply relational albeit predatory past of her subjects of research and a definition of Pentecostal personhood that “(...) does not emphasize social ties, but rather the independent, modern individual who does not need to find positive roots in ‘the past’ in order to be guided on the way towards the future” (1998: 340). In this sense, “in practice the ‘complete break with the past’ boils down to a break with one’s family and progress translates well into individualist patterns of production, distribution and consumption” (329). Despite the disclaimer “translate”, Meyer’s argument dissolves the religious specificity of spiritual rebirth into an impossible conversion to modernity.

A similar pattern of selectivity is observed in Paul Gifford’s (2004) project of producing a general picture of the charismatic movement in Ghana. His choices are explicit. He only analyzed

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<sup>47</sup> “Pentecostalist churches have a strong appeal both in rural and urban areas and to members of all classes. Many people initially approach a pentecostalist church in order to solve problems related to health and wealth, and in many cases move from one church to another until the desired result is achieved” (Meyer 1998: 319-320).

mega-churches, and was guided by what he considers to be the “recurring emphases” (44-82) of the movement: prosperity theology (through the Ghanaian branch of the Nigerian Winner’s Chapel); prophecy and deliverance (through Prophet Elisha Salifu); and cultural critique (International Central Gospel Church). His fieldwork included observing church services, very few interviews, and especially reading, watching and listening to media material<sup>48</sup>. The book represents charismatic spirituality mostly as a disembedded form of storytelling that, although obviously responding to Ghana’s circumstances, has no generative impact on the practices of those who follow it. Gifford’s main point is that these churches have expanded not because they perform any specific social function or provide a new form of belonging, but simply “because they claim to have the answer to Ghanaians’ existential problems and especially to their most pressing existential problem, economic survival” (ix).

Much of the epiphenomenal flavor of Gifford’s perspective on religion testifies to his reliance on modernization theory, and the book is deeply concerned with the problem of why and how Ghanaian charismatics are not Weber-style Protestants<sup>49</sup>. In a passage that sounds like it was drawn from a World Bank report, he argues that “ (...) if Ghana is to join the modern world economy the greatest need is the development of transparent and accountable structures, systems, procedures and institutions to regulate all aspects of society” (2004: 197), forgetting that what today is called Ghana has been part of the world capitalist system, thus “modernity”, at least since the slave trade. Not only unable to deliver the moral goods of “modernity”, charismatic leaders have gone against the grain of progress when they sabotage any possibility of an ethics of responsibility: “For a considerable number of Ghana’s charismatic churches, faith, giving, deliverance and the pastor’s gifts are much more than hard work in achieving victorious prosperity” (155-56).

A complementary aspect is Gifford’s recourse to the *plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose* school of culturalism. On the one hand, he stresses how charismatic concerns with health, wealth, and spiritual protection reproduce traditional African spirituality’s supposed aversion to notions of sin, guilt, and the interiorization of moral consciousness in the name of a reciprocal and expiatory relation with the realm of spiritual agencies. On the other, the hierarchical nature of charismatic leadership is stressed as simply a repackaging of the patrimonial model of the “big man”, which he deems “the curse of Africa” (2004: 185). Uninterested in actually extending his observations beyond mega-church services and into the associational life of these religious bodies, his diagnostic is that the apparent democratization of Christianity implied by charismatic doctrine has in fact become a sort of personality cult.

If Pentecostalism has propagated globally through a dual movement of “world-breaking” and “world-making” (Robbins 2004a: 119), we are left with half of the picture. Does Pentecostal Christianity nurture any specific form of relationality in Africa? After all, not even secular individualism was ever opposed to relationality, and, as a social process, it combines disconnection

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<sup>48</sup>“To identify Ghana’s new Christianity, (...) I attended in Accra, between July 2000 and September 2001, and again in March-April and August-September 2002, as many charismatic gathering of all kinds I could – services, crusades, conventions, conferences, prayer meetings. Obviously not even a large team of researchers could attend them all, such is the richness of the phenomenon. However, in understanding these churches, I was considerably assisted by their media output, the broadcasts, tapes, videos and literature that they so assiduously produce” (Gifford 2004: x).

<sup>49</sup>“(...) of the three other factors Weber thought important – investment, internal asceticism and deferral of gratification – this writer never encountered the second and third, and as regards, investment also this Christianity pushes in another direction altogether” (Gifford 2004: 159). Gifford stresses the “medieval” and “Catholic” nature of this Christianity, characterizing these by their fascination with magic. Weber’s refined theory about the relations between Protestant theodicy, labor ethics and the *emergence* of capitalism through capital accumulation is strongly attentive to historical particularities. He never claimed that the reproduction of the same historical circumstances is a “cultural” requirement to “modernization”, especially after the systematization of Capitalism by the market.

from primary allegiances (eg. kinship and its extensions into economy, politics, religion) to reconnection to abstract machines, as the market, the state, and the nation, which socialize labor-power (Marx), biopower (Foucault), and belonging (Anderson). But those are the theories of modernity that anthropologists of Christianity have criticized for deploying a supplementary notion of the Christian faith, interested exclusively in accounting for Western hegemony through the elective affinity between Christianity's cultural inheritance and secular modernity (see a recent version in Anidjar 2009). They indeed help make sense of Meyer's version of Pentecostal discontinuity: since deliverance produces individuals to be nurtured by the market and the state, and since these agencies have seen a deterioration at the margins of the world capitalist system, temporal rupture itself becomes either unattainable or worse, pure disconnection or bare life (Piot 2010). Nevertheless, the immediate attachment of religious change into macro debates about "modernity" may overshadow the ethnographic engagement with "specific existential passions" (Englund and Leach 2000: 234), which is indeed what anthropologists do best.

The stark opposition between African Pentecostalism and relationality has been recently questioned by Engelke (2010), who invites more ethnographic production on what he calls the "realignments of rupture", arguing that "the kinds of conversion that emphasize a break with the past are not only about a renunciation of one's standing culture or tradition (as discursively defined). They are also often about aligning one's self in relation to an extant and imagined Christian history" (179). Engelke is not claiming that conversion should be disembedded from socio-cultural contexts, but that Christian world-breaking and world-making engage with these contexts actively and through Biblical historicity, which, albeit extremely variable on the ground (West and Shomanah 2000), is still authoritative. Analytical fidelity to this emic aspect is vital to the task of understanding the fate of Pentecostal discontinuity in specific contexts, since Pentecostal reform is predicated not on the advancement of secular individualism or liberation from tradition for its own sake, but on becoming a born-again subject, or "giving one's life to Christ". It is vital to understand what this projects means, and how it can be established in practice. And if it folds into secular, neoliberal, or post-colonial modernity and their notions of the good life or a materially better life in mutually affirmative or disruptive ways, maybe both, this process must be followed from within.

## 2.2. From event to process: spiritual maturation and the trivialization of Christian discontinuity in Ghana

The transformation of Saul, the Pharisee and persecutor of Christians, into the Apostle of Christ on the road to Damascus (1 Co 15:3-8, Gal 11: 16, Acts 26) provides a specific template for Christian conversion, based on a personal revelation which strikes as a pure event. According to Badiou, "the encounter on the road mimics the founding event. Just as the Resurrection remains totally incalculable and it is from there that one must begin, Paul's faith is that from which he begins as a subject, and nothing leads up to it" (2003: 17). Badiou sees in Paul's mystical experience the emergence of a subject without previous anchorage, a subject that "happens", of pure faith (*pistis*) and without identity. What strikes me in Paul's case is how Christian conversion appears as a direct subject-making encounter with divine truth, an "interpellation" (Althusser 1971) without a human mediator nor an established ideological apparatus, which allows Badiou to interpret it as the original event of Christianity as a universalist ethics. In practice though, this encounter is more likely to unfold through acts of evangelism, that is, an encounter with others concerned in expanding and transmitting Christian truth, others who "lead you to Christ".

Scholars concerned with the most ritualized moment of evangelical conversion, the so-called "altar calls", have underlined the importance of ministers' techniques of verbal interpellation, which Harding defines as "a bundle of strategies – symbolic, narrative, poetic and rhetorical – for

confronting individuals, singly and in groups” (1987: 161). Preachers induce feelings of guilt, remorse, and fear in their audiences, inviting them to come forward and recite the “sinner’s prayer”, a highly standardized narrative in which the convert admits his or her sinful nature, repents, and invites Christ to be “Lord and personal savior”, and by doing so become born-again. Harding’s linguistic-oriented perspective selects altar-calls, as well as the evangelical practice of witnessing, as examples that allow her to generalize evangelical Christianity as “a particular narrative tradition to which you willingly submit your past, present, and future as a speaker” (179, see also Harding 2000). According to this perspective, conversion is coeval with the subject’s transformative entrance in a new community of speech and self-understanding.

In Ghana, agents of evangelism come in all shapes and sizes. During the more than 150 in-depth interviews with Pentecostal converts I was able to undertake while in the field, I was exposed to conversion narratives in which extremely diverse actors performed this role. The call to convert takes the pulpit through altar calls uttered by pastors, prophets, and evangelists, the latter referring to a class of ministers especially equipped to this activity. But soul hunting has become viral in Ghana, especially in Accra. Street evangelists swarm into schools, hospitals, offices, and public transports, but lay born-again Christians also carry the duty to evangelize, and many of my interviewees were “led to Christ” by their teachers, coworkers, friends, neighbors, parents and offspring. The message of repentance and rebirth has been further disseminated through media, and altar calls are emitted through radio and TV, and may even find the impersonal form presented by the following outdoor placed close to Nkrumah Circle, one of the many hearts of Accra’s urban landscape.



The call to convert has therefore saturated Accra’s public sphere, becoming highly routinized and deterritorialized, one of its effects being a certain skepticism vis-à-vis miraculous life-changing testimonies. This attitude is surely well grounded, considering that many of my interviewees went through altar calls or prayed the sinner’s prayer elsewhere multiple times. “Recommitting” one’s life to Christ after backsliding has become a habit. Others dissociated conversion from the recitation of the sinner’s prayer, and preferred to allocate their experience of Christian discontinuity elsewhere: when they had their baptism by immersion, received their Holy Ghost baptism and first spoke in tongues, or experienced a miracle or prophecy that had a great impact on them. In this case, they had been converted, but became “committed” later, sometimes much later. Some simply avoided attaching personal transformation to any spectacular event, although they were convicted that they had been born-again, thus saved. It became clear to me that the event of spiritual rebirth in Ghana had to be abstracted from an exclusive tie with any ritual marker in order to not be fully trivialized.

Preaching about Christian transformation during an inter-denominational conference in March 2011, pastor Mensah Otabil, the founder and overseer of International Central Gospel Church (ICGC), testified to his own conversion as follows:

I got born again between 1970 and 1972. I say this because I got born again over a period [laughter]. It took a long time. It was a process. I responded to altar calls about 40 times. Any time there was an altar call: "Give your life to Jesus or you'll go to hell", I'd go to the altar call and receive Christ. I did that for about 2 years. I'm sure one of these prayers got me saved, so I stopped going forward. [laughter]. I'm not sure when I got born again, but one of these 40 got me saved. By the time I was getting born again, Pentecostal, evangelical, charismatic Christianity was very peripheral. We met in small groups. My church had about 80 people and was one of the largest Pentecostal churches in town. Pentecostals met in classrooms. We were called *abo nsamu*, people who clap at church. Nobody really took Pentecostals seriously, so we believed that if we increased in numbers, there would be change in our country. Here we are, we have increased in number and we had no radical change. The question is: what kind of increase we have had? People are getting saved, our churches are full, mine included, and people are professing to be Christians in their offices, at school, wherever, in politics, Christians all over. The question is: Where is Christ? Where is he? Where is the change?

Otabil's curious "anti-testimony" might sound shocking in its disregard for the rhetoric of radical transformation that, after all, is still a key component of charismatic Christianity. This is specially the case when it comes to Otabil, who has made of this kind of approach one of the defining traits of his ministry. After the conference, I asked a friend and zealous born-again Christian, Evangelist Agyeman, if he had felt offended by Otabil's trivialization of conversion. He immediately repudiated this possibility, and said: "No. I was really blessed! That's what teachers are supposed to do. They know that familiarity cannot be good for Christians. That's why sometimes they say strange things". Agyeman normalized Otabil's critical rhetoric by pointing to the "office" God has called him, according to the Apostle Paul's comment in Ephesians 4: 11 that "Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers" (NIV). Different from evangelists, prophets and pastors, who exhort and energize congregations to convert or commit with extemporaneous preaching and miracles, teachers instill in their audiences the necessity of more work on themselves. They do so in a highly methodic fashion, often using a big screen, whenever this technology is available, where they lay down bullet points, which are written down carefully by the congregation in their notebooks. The rhetorical arsenal of teachers includes removing their audiences from a comfort zone of piety through constructive criticism.

But the passage also manifests a general unease I found on the ground concerning a disparity between the quantitative and qualitative growth of born-again Christianity in Ghana. Similarly to my interlocutors, Otabil approaches the inner heterogeneity of the born-again field not through a condemnatory attitude or an accusation of insincerity that establishes a sharp in/out divide, but instead (and more generously) through the organic notion of "spiritual growth". Instead of condemning those who confess but do not show their Christianity in practice as "church-goers" or fake Christians, my interlocutors would maternally embrace them as "immature Christians", and so does Otabil:

Let's read Romans 12: 1-2. When I became a Christian and started growing, this is one of the verses that really transformed my life. This is a scripture that really helped me build my Christian life. [Reads the scripture]. There are two types of Christians described in verse two. The first type is someone who conforms to the world. That's a carnal or an immature Christian. They are redeemed from the world, but still have the world living in them. They are the Israelites, who came out of Egypt, but Egypt didn't come out of them. Many of us have been saved, are born again, we have Christ in our heart, but that's all we have, Christ in our heart. Our lifestyle does not make any difference from the person who is not saved. The only difference from most Christians to unbelievers is that we carry Bibles and



they don't carry Bibles! [Murmuring]. We just go to a church, which is born again or charismatic, but apart from that: character for character, habit for habit, behavior for behavior, there's not much difference between most Christians and the world. (...) The other group are those who have been transformed by the Word of God. They are spiritual and mature. They are not perfect, but they have moved from consolation to transformation. People see them and are struck. They say: "These are the children of God!"

Otabil's claim that, in Ghana today, many have "Christ in their heart" but only a few can show it in their habits may strike as surprising, coming from a spirituality that gives great relevance to the experience of inner conviction, or knowing Christ personally. But the fact is that the rapid growth of Pentecostal-oriented churches in Ghana for the past 40 years has brought to the fore much more explicitly the question of religious competency, usually enacted through the notion of spiritual maturation. Frequent examples of immaturity are: excessive fears about witches and demons; overreliance on prophets and pastors for protection and prayer; low scriptural knowledge; incapacity to exhibit the virtues known as the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5: 22-23); and low participation in evangelism and church activities beyond the Sunday service. The remedy prescribed includes the cultivation of a more intimate relation with God through the disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, memorization, and meditation, a more intense engagement with "Christian service", or voluntary activities within and without churches, but also the acknowledgment that adequate mentorship is an essential component of a successful "walk with Christ." This heightened awareness about the importance of "learning religion" (Beriner and Sarró 2008) attempts to establish a normative balance between the event of divine intervention and the process of spiritual growth, which is not new, and resonates, for instance, with John Wesley's distinction between Justification and Restoration as stages of the *via salutis*, the way, not the event of salvation (Maddox 1994)<sup>50</sup>.

What does the emic notion of spiritual growth and maturation have to offer to academic debates on conversion and religious change? Robbins (2007) has criticized anthropologists' tendency to dismiss emic claims about discontinuity. But what does it mean to take emic claims about incapacity to change seriously? Otabil's message shares with Meyer (1998) a resistance to equate all too easily the convert's conscious profession of the Christian faith and actual transformation. In both cases, the matter goes beyond sincerity, or the isomorphism between outer behavior and inner states in terms of intentionality, and is posed in terms of a lack of moral, symbolic, and social resources to move forward in the new life. Moreover, as Meyer, Otabil himself recurs to the idea of the past's haunting influence as a deterrent of spiritual rebirth, addressing it this time not as a matter of demonic influence or "family covenants", but as what he calls the "bush mindset":

Something about the way we think must change. The way we think about power, life, money. Most of us Africans, grew up in poverty. Some of us are first generation middle class. Most people here, if you go one, two, three generations maximum, we're in the bush. Maybe your father was not in the bush, your grandfather was not in the bush, but certainly your great grand father was in the bush. We have not been too far removed from the bush. Some of us are first generation civilized people. We've lived with a lot of poverty. Most of us still live in poverty. Poverty is a second nature to us. Poverty is not an economic state, is a mental state, a mindset that affects our Christianity.

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<sup>50</sup> A vital influence on the evangelical model of conversion, John Wesley distinguishes between the instantaneous restoration of a responsive relationship with God (the New Birth) and the gradual therapeutic transformation of the convert (sanctification). According to Wesley "By justification we are saved from the guilt of sin, and restored to the favor of God; by Sanctification we are saved from the power and root of sin, and restored to the image of God. All experience, as well as scripture, shows this salvation to be both instantaneous and gradual" (Wesley 1991: 488).

We realize that specific to Otabil's self-Orientalist articulation of the problem is that moving "from consolation to restoration" and overcoming the ghostly presence of "bush mentality" is ultimately irreducible to the prospect of becoming more "modern". Otabil is primarily concerned with how poverty and "superstition" hinder proper Christian renewal, and he also preaches often about how affluence and cold secular reason tend to hinder humbleness, thus the possibility of true Christianity in Western countries by inciting a deceitful sense of self-fulfillment. He wants the material dignity enabled by modernity through and with Christ, not secular humanism.

But regardless of Otabil's own articulation of the question, I am interested in how, whenever deployed by my interlocutors at large, the lexicon of spiritual maturation implied that disconnection from the past should be neither assumed at its face value nor explicitly denied, but predicated on the convert's proper realignment with practices and contexts of Christian growth. As a result, piety and the reshaping of the convert's habits and allegiances became closely entangled, and the event of discontinuity was deemed to require a process to be sedimented prospectively as a true event. If not necessarily in the sinner's prayer, how is spiritual rebirth taken up and sedimented as a reality? In the next section, I start following more concretely the organic thread of discourses and practices that stem from the notion of Christian maturation and look at a specific context that catalyze faith growth: the discipleship program of Otabil's own International Central Gospel Church.

### 2.3. Seeking maturity through discipleship programs: the denomination as a place of nurturance

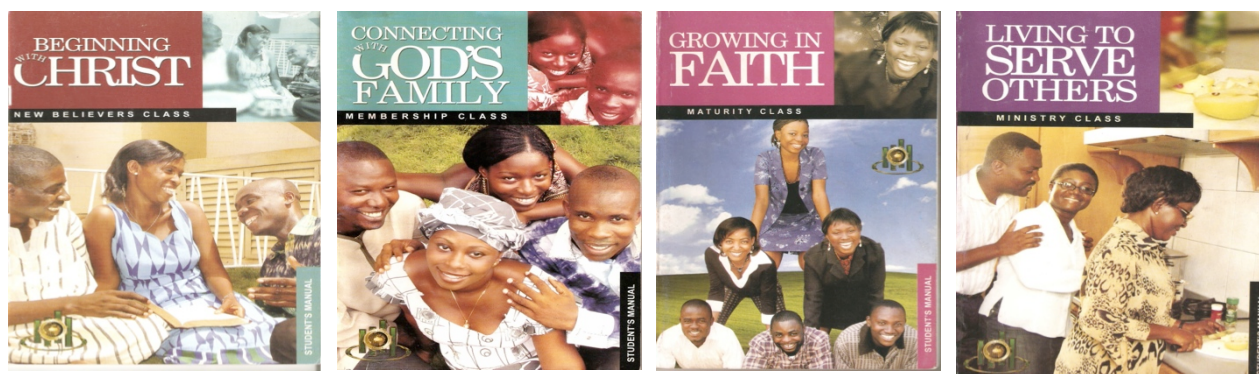
According to Asamoah-Gyadu, "Pentecostalism is a stream of Christianity that emphasizes experience and so those who seek 'membership' do not have to go through a catechism" (2005: 12). I believe this statement depends (again) on what the scholar of Pentecostalism selects as exemplary from the wide variety of practices and sensibilities that compose this spirituality. In charismatic mega-churches, for instance, the quest for spiritual maturity tends to be conditioned to forms of religious training that are different although not entirely alien to catechism. In institutions like ICGC and Lighthouse Chapel International, spiritual maturation is normatively encompassed by discipleship programs and so-called small ministries or specialized sub-ecclesiastical bodies regulated by the church. The finality of these associations is to transform what they call "visitors" into "members", and members into "maturing Christians". After attending altar calls, converts are usually invited for a "pastoral welcome", in which they interact with assistant pastors and lay leaders while having refreshments. They are told informally about the church organization and what is required from them to become full members. The church registers their addresses and telephone numbers with the aim of "following up", or maintaining the institutional connection established through the altar call active and responsive. The next step is to schedule a private interview, where church representatives listen to these converts' life stories and what led them to the altar call. I heard from facilitators that often less than half of those who went through the altar call return to church.

In these denominations, the process of becoming a church member starts with mandatory attendance to discipleship programs led by lay leaders or assistant pastors. During my fieldwork, I was able to attend ICGC's "ABC" for 4 months while in Accra (see also DeWitte 2008: 125-172). Discipleship classes happen every Sunday at Christ Temple, the church's impressive headquarters. Sections start right after the main church service and last between two and three hours. As in any other setting of Pentecostal pedagogy, classes are spiritually loaded: prayers open and close sessions; apparently descriptive statements of faith are taken as "promises", and properly claimed by "I receive it!"; and phatic (Jakobsen 1960) tools of call-response, such as "Amen? Amen" are constantly put to use by students and facilitators.

Class interactions follow the outline provided by four booklets produced by the church and

donated to the students. They are divided into modules called New Believers (5 sessions), Membership (10 sessions), Maturity (12 sessions) and Ministry (14 sessions). These booklets unify the instruction by setting topics, breaking them down into sections, providing scriptural support for each of the facilitator's points, and testing knowledge transmission through quick written exercises and home assignments. Special instructors' booklets establish teaching strategies, testimonies to be provided, additional scriptural support, and even questions to be posed to the students, which do not prevent teachers from adding personal elements.

By hosting a series of surveys, these booklets also integrate new members into the church's statistical apparatus. Certificates are emitted after each module, authorizing the convert's progressive access to the church's associational life. Hence, the New Believers module leads to baptism by immersion, and gives access to the Membership module, which allows students to become official members of the church and attend the Maturity module. The latter gives access to the Ministry module, which allows members to fill a form and apply to volunteer in the small ministries.



I was able to gain insight into the background of ICGC's membership by administering my own survey to 50 students from different modules. Analyzing the results, I learned that, despite its 29 years of existence, and having already watched a generation being born within the denomination, ICGC still attracts mainly the youth. The breakdown by age group in my survey is as follows: 18-20 years (7,5%), 21-25 (36,5%), 26-30 (30,5%), 31-35 (7,5%), 35-40 (2%), 41 < (13,5%). Similarly to most charismatic ministries, the church embraces diverse ethnic backgrounds. Taking in consideration the large number of multiethnic marriages in Ghana today, I opted for asking the students to write down the language they spoke dominantly at their household, other than English. 46% were Akan speakers, 32% Ga, 14% Ewe, 2% Northern languages speakers, 6% expats (Nigeria and Liberia). These numbers correspond to the broad ethnic distribution of Southern Ghana. The gender distribution was close to 50%, and students were in their majority single (71%). ICGC is dominantly a middle class and elite church. 58,7% of respondents had completed secondary education, and 41,3% had some form of post-secondary technical or university training. According to the 2010 census, the latter group amounts to only 8,4% of Greater Accra's population, which is the region of Ghana with the highest educational levels. In terms of occupation, 41% declared themselves students, either on secondary or post-secondary levels. The survey also proved the true inter-generational establishment of Pentecostal spirituality in Ghana. 52% of the students joined ICGC after being already affiliated to classic Pentecostal or other charismatic churches, whereas 44% came from the mainline churches, 4% from Traditional Religion, and 2% from Islam. I learned that 47% of the students had already become born-again before joining ICGC, whereas 30,5% had already received the Holy Ghost Baptism, and thus could pray in tongues. Whereas 47% started speaking in tongues after joining ICGC, 22,5% still could not do it.

One of the aims of the discipleship program is to normalize a church community with highly heterogeneous backgrounds according to the denomination's tenets. Some of the new members are allowed to skip modules, especially those who, during their interviews, proved to have gone through greater spiritual development in their past Christian lives. However, most of them are encouraged to go through all the conventional stages, which are supposed to help them reach a more precise Biblical understanding of the key experiences that compose a Pentecostal life, even if after the fact<sup>51</sup>. Recurring to a widely deployed vocabulary, one of the New Believers facilitators once explained his role to the classroom as follows: "You are newborn babies, and our mission here is to give you the basic principles of the Christian faith, the milk through which you can survive and start growing in the new life". We realize that the notion of spiritual maturity unveils a variety of organic tropes by analogy, in this case addressed to the incorporation of Christian knowledge. Most of this lexicon is authorized by the Scriptures, and I found an obvious parallel between Mr. Kwasi's comment and 1 Peter 2:2: "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation" (NIV). As a mature Christian, the instructor had learned how to "speak Biblically".

The New Believers module was designed to assist new converts to understand systematically, that is, Biblically, what is and how one becomes a born-again and Spirit-filled subject. The course covers basic events that compose the Pentecostal version of the history of salvation: the creation, the Fall, the sending of Jesus Christ, how Christ's atonement was part of a covenant that restored man's direct relationship with God ("succeeding where Adam failed", to remain with the instructor), and how this event makes room for the arrival of the "helper", the Holy Spirit. A final session explains the Holy Ghost baptism, why every believer should experience it and how one can receive the gift of tongues by desiring it and "speaking out of faith" (that is, imitating glossolalic speech before it becomes authentic), and by "laying on of hands as a point of contact" (Acts 19: 1-6). The latter technique is when a mature Christian touches the head of the one desiring the gift, prays for him or her, and utters performative (Austin 1975) declarations like "Receive the Holy Ghost!" I will approach in more detail the relations between charisma and practice in the next chapters. At the end of this first module, those who have not been baptized by immersion are allowed to go through the process in the church's baptismal pool. Those desiring the gift of tongues are encouraged to visit their prayer ministry.

The Membership module, also called "Connecting with God's Family", is concerned in introducing the member to the church bureaucracy as an imagined community, first by presenting them to the institution's history, achievements, constitution, model of government, and organizational apparatus. Formulaic versions of the church's ideology, such as the "vision" ("To establish the house of God through the development of model New Testament Christians and Churches"), "mission" ("Raise leaders, shape vision, influence society") and "philosophy" ("Practical Christianity, human dignity and excellence") are broken down and carefully explained during classes. One of the facilitators once claimed: "Our vision and mission are supposed to sit in your heart as much as the Scriptures, so you know who you are in cases of personal doubt or when other people ask you about us". Members are randomly challenged to recite these formulas along the entirety of the discipleship program, and encouraged to familiarize themselves with ICGC's brand of charismatic Christianity by buying pastor Otabil's book, CDs, and DVDs at the church's bookstore. "If you want to be part of the family, you are supposed to know well our father's message".

Charismatic churches in Ghana, as elsewhere, vary according to the divine call and offices

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<sup>51</sup> Individuals who attended ICGC's children and youth ministry, because their parents also belong to the church, go straight to the Maturity and Ministry modules when they reach the age of 18, also moving from the youth service to the main church service on Sundays.

bestowed upon their founders<sup>52</sup>. This consubstantiality between leader and institution should not surprise those familiarized with Max Weber's original definition of charismatic authority, which is not based on personal loyalty to the leader, but on what Schluchter calls "the mission as a guiding principle" (1981: 121). As any other type of authority, the legitimacy of a leader's charisma, even when divinely appointed, is still dependent on the recognition of his followers. The mission in Weber's sense, which in ICGC is fractioned into mission/vision/philosophy, is hence the emanating center of charismatic authority, and it provides public moral criteria according to which even the leader's behavior and decisions can be judged. The charismatic leader is therefore a hinge between his/her followers and the mission that he/she is the first to embody, which, in the case of Otabil and ICGC, is to produce Christian leaders able to renew Ghana and Africa by articulating high moral standards and intense Christian devotion with secular success<sup>53</sup>. The church puts great weight on lay leadership and the transformative power of education (Christian and otherwise), thus fishing for souls preferably "from the head", among Ghana's elites. ICGC has among its congregants (members and frequent visitors) important lawyers, professors, businessmen, and engineers, state ministers and, according to pastor Otabil (personal interview), politicians from both NDC and NPP; the main political parties. A major example of this conscious desire to reach out and reform secular society is in how Otabil's call to be a "teacher" also resulted in the creation of the largest private university of Ghana, Central University College, which admits students from any religious background<sup>54</sup>.

In order to reclaim full citizenship and enjoy the spiritual, mental and physical benefits provided by ICGC, students are presented with some key duties, morally enacted as "loyalty". Being loyal to the institution means submitting to its authority structure, committing to its higher cause through time and money, and most importantly, displaying particular behavioral qualities which infuse the realm of spiritual activities (being spirit filled, a Bible reader, prayerful, a passionate worshiper, righteous), but also the everyday terrain of secular life (being principle-centered, healthy, neatly dressed, confident, pro-active, endowed with social responsibility, diligent and productive). The model member of ICGC is also represented privately within a "Christian family", with a normative regime of affection, labor division, and authority, a concept socially inscribed and reproduced by some of the church's institutional ramification, such as marriage counseling, pre-marital courses, and ministries for women, men, youth and children. Most charismatic ministers in Ghana attribute great importance on marrying inside the church. Pragmatically, it is more likely to hold the couple within the church community for a longer time, also attracting their children to its orbit. Spiritually, it allows the family to be guided by a more homogenous view of the Christian family. As an encompassing family in the Spirit, ICGC is normatively composed by Spirit-filled individuals, but also by Christian families by blood and marriage, all oriented toward a single mission embodied by the founder.

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<sup>52</sup> Ephesians 4: 11: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers" (NIV).

<sup>53</sup> At its origins, the church had a more explicit Afrocentric content, which some relate to South African Black Theology (Gifford 2004). For instance, the church early manifesto *The Vision* defines ICGC's primary commitment "To prepare the black person to be a channel of blessing to the world". In this official document of the church, we observe an attempt to dissociate the person of the leader from the ideological axioms he embodies, addressed as "the vision": "the vision determines plans and guides resource allocation", "the vision guides acquisitions, capital expenditure and projects development", "each local church, ministry and department's program of activity should be completely consistent with he vision". In a classic charismatic style, we also read that: "the vision must be periodically reviewed to maintain focus".

<sup>54</sup> Despite having only secondary education, Mensah Otabil is widely known as "Doctor Otabil", and anyone exposed to his articulated rhetoric will rapidly notice why. Although highly cerebral, and very different from more spectacular Ghanaian "men of God", his own personal success is widely recognized by Ghanaian Pentecostals (ICGC members and non-members alike) as a testimony of the transformative power of grace and the Holy Spirit.

The model member also reproduces the church locally by belonging to a “Covenant Family”, ICGC’s cell-group system. Small group meetings are considered important moments of horizontal interaction among church members, who often recognize these associations as strategic opportunities for connecting with fellow Christians, making friends, professional contacts and even meeting romantic partners<sup>55</sup>. I visited the Covenant Family of the neighborhood of Santa Maria, in Accra, during five of their meetings. A mature lay leader coordinates the group. He has a list of phone numbers of all ICGC members in the surroundings and is responsible for gathering this flock on Thursday evenings. He always kept rigorous track of attendance, and transferred this information to the church administration on a monthly basis. The one-hour meeting reproduces the main church service in a more intimate setting and without preaching. It is composed of opening prayers, praise and worship, and “prayer points”. Those are topics verbalized by a prayer leader whose finality is to channel glossolalia to specific targets: pray for Ghana, for the church, for the founder, and for specific grievances brought by the members, such as health issues, school exams, and job searches. The group is free to deliberate and organize retreats and leisure programs, evangelistic activities, charity, celebrations, and funerals. It is allowed to do fundraising, but donations must be registered and held accountable by the church office. In one occasion, we visited a member who had cancer, and could no longer attend church or her Covenant Family. It was decided that members would take turns and come to her home every day to greet the ailing member and read the Bible, worship, and pray in her company.

The Maturity module is a twelve-week cycle of meetings centered on spiritual exercises and the importance of Christian “service” and fellowship. They started by covering diverse methods of Bible study: through daily devotionals or by focusing on specific Bible books, subjects or characters<sup>56</sup>. Before reading the scriptures, preferably on a daily basis, one should confess sin, pray, and have a reading plan: “Do not use the dip-and-skip method whereby you just read the page you open”. According to the instructor, a mature Christian knows that “The Word is sacred, but not the book. Feel free to highlight anything you consider important. My own Bible is full of ink!” Methods of Bible memorization and mediation whereby the born-again subject might receive personal revelations from the Holy Spirit through inner testimony were described and illustrated with testimonies.

Although revelations are in definition intimate, discipleship programs like ABC also instill in their members the importance of cultivating a Spirit-led community of Christians. By that I mean the normative idea that visions, dreams and other forms whereby God communicates with his subjects should be publicly shared among church members, thus paralleling the process of sharpening spiritual sensitivity with the establishment of the ecclesiastical body as the authorized arena of expression, testing, interpretation and critique of the members’ inspired interiorities. Central to this project is the doctrinal establishment of the notion of “confirmation”, meaning that God not only emits signs to his servants, but also leads them to true interpretation by multiple means, including other servants.

The Maturity module also goes through the definition and strategies to achieve Holiness (Christ-likeness) through the Holy Spirit’s endorsement and support as a personal “teacher”. The Christian person was defined as a triadic entity, made of a body, considered an ongoing source of sin and wrong desires, a soul, considered the seat of the mind and the will, and the Spirit, a source of grace and virtue. The virtues that summarize the character of Christ are the Fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5: 22-23), and

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<sup>55</sup> On sociality in North American mega-churches, see Elisha 2011.

<sup>56</sup> Specific dictionaries and commentaries are also indicated, as The Bible Knowledge Commentary, by Dallas Seminary Faculty, and the Eerdmans New Bible Commentary.



the students are asked to recite these repeatedly. The finality of holiness is to submit the flesh to virtue and sanctify the body, thus using the Biblical knowledge gathered in the mind to bend the will to proper desire: desire for God's likeness and for his promises. This possibility of transformation is predicated on the atonement, the "blood of Jesus", which endowed the convert with enough authority to bind the devil and the flesh with the Holy Spirit's aid. Holiness was defined as an ongoing struggle and illustrated by various testimonies. Akoswa, the instructor, gave us an emotional testimony about how in the 1990s, after losing her job as a cook, she almost stole food in a marketplace. "The Spirit made me feel the pain of Christ in my hands, and I went home and thanked the Lord. The next day, a neighbor knocked at my door with some food. I didn't ask her for anything! You have to know that the Lord is under control".

A few sections covered the act of giving to church. A mature Christian gives profusely because this act makes her more like God (himself a "giver"); draws her closer to God; strengthens her faith, indexes submission to God ("God uses finances to test our faith"); is a safeguard against materialism and an investment in eternity; and brings blessings in return. Second, giving must be performed with the right attitude: one must give willingly, joyfully, generously and expectantly (central to prosperity theology, and the instructor commented: "A farmer sows his field because he expects to reap what he sows"). These points were followed by debates about when to give (as a habit or to meet a need, as in a "sacrifice" offering); who to give to (God, God's servants, one another); and what to give (money, time, talent). This breakdown of the act of giving was then added to an encompassing, nesting differentiation of types, each justifying different liturgical moments in which money offerings are involved in ICGC: tithing (monthly 10% of income donation to the church), offerings (given during any church service), pledges (donation to specific projects of the church) and vows (a promise to God for what we expect from him). The recursive web of quotations backing this differentiation in acts of giving may be considered ICGC's doctrine of Christian giving. Other sessions produced the same detailed scrutiny of practices as prayer, fasting, evangelism, and the importance of fellowshiping with other Christians.

The fourth and final module, Ministry Class, is adapted from the discipleship program of Saddleback Valley Church, USA, led by the evangelical pastor Rick Warren. Synthetically, the course is concerned in leading the students through a step-by-step process of self-examination framed by a method called SHAPE, which stands for Spiritual Gifts, Heart (motivations), Abilities, Personality, and Experience. Those are the different personal capacities members are supposed to address during the process. The results should be registered in a long questionnaire attached to the booklet, which is used by the members to apply to and "serve" in one of ICGC's small ministries: Omega Generation (youth ministry that organizes special church services and other activities for those between 13-17 years), Children's Ministry (provides child care and organizes gospel clubs and children services for children from nursery stage to 12 years), Precious Vessels of Virtue (Women's ministry, which organizes thematic seminars, workshops and fellowships), Mighty Men of Value (Men's fellowship), Family Enrichment Ministry (Pre-Marital, Wedding, and In-Marriage Counseling, as well as couples and singles clubs), Winner's Forum (business club), Media Ministry (radio and television shows, conferences, tapes, publications, and advertisement), Music and Art Ministry (choirs, singers, bands, sound engineers, actors, etc.), Protocol (voluntary work during church services: ushers, greeters, traffic controllers, janitors, peacekeepers, altar servers, host and hostesses, medical team, cash team), Prayer and Counseling Ministry (includes prayer intercessors, counselors, and the Solution Center, ICGC's "deliverance team", where members can bring their spiritual problems), Outreach Ministry (door-to-door evangelism and crusades in hospitals and prisons).

As a doorway for active participation in the church community, the Ministry module aims to impart in the members the capacity to recognize what God has "planted" in them in terms of spiritual and secular abilities and allocate these according to the needs of the body of Christ,



understood, in a Pauline fashion, as an interdependent organism (1 Co 12: 12-27). As a result, when I interviewed the IT student helping at the church's media ministry, the informal trader organizing traffic during Sunday services, and the deacon displaying his spiritual gifts at ICGC's Solution Center, I was exposed to a similar way of framing these diverse practices: they have all been "called" to these functions. The calling might either fall upon the convert mightily through dreams and visions or simply be felt as a "zeal", "an inner push" to do a specific work, and while performing it feeling "at ease". The Ministry module therefore advances ICGC's mission and challenge, which is an ordered production of Christian leaders according to the church's mission.

The project of making the church a community of ministers through the democratization of the calling entails two main ecclesiastical outcomes in ICGC. On the one hand, it gives institutional access to the less spiritually developed members by spiritualizing the most mundane forms of "service" at the church setting. We have seen that Paul Gifford rejects any connection between charismatic churches in Ghana and a Weberian labor ethics - a rather a hasty conclusion. However, it is obvious that churches of all kinds have disseminated quite successfully among some of their members at least a "church labor ethics" while stressing the centrality of "service" as an index of submission to God and exercise of faith. Volunteers play a fundamental role in keeping ICGC's and Christ Temple's complex machinery running smoothly, amounting, according to the administration, to 90% of the labor force they mobilize.

But by giving an outlet to the intensified zeal of the more spiritually gifted within the church, small ministries render personal piety and charisma institutionally recognizable, reducing the chances of church schism, since personal charisma and the authority implied in "being led" by the Spirit find recognizable outflows. This is observed in the following briefing from Abena, a student of the Ministry module. She has been a member since 2004, but moved to Cape Coast two years later in order to pursue higher education there. There she remained a committee Christian while attending ICGC's local branch and different non-denominational fellowships and conferences before returning to Accra:

I used to be very noisy and very loud, but when the Spirit of God came upon me, I became very calm, more reflective, holiness conscious. I do think a lot about God, and that changes my emotions, the way I think, even the way I dress, walk, interact with people. I don't submit to the world as I used to: screaming, fighting, envying, these things. One early morning, in Cape Coast, I was sitting on my bed praying and then he dropped a word in my spirit: "I have need of you". Three days later, I guess, I was in a fellowship and there was a prophecy [from a minister] for me confirming that God needed me. After that, there was another prophecy confirming it, from another man of God. So I had several confirmations about it. When I left the campus, because of work, I didn't have much time to communicate with God. I was "shelved" for some time. It was only recently, when I came back to Accra and started attending Christ Temple again. I was taking my Maturity classes, the module before the one we're in, and there he touched me again. It was during one particular class, when we learnt about the Fruits of the Spirit. In that class the spiritual ambiance was powerful, and the Spirit of God fell upon me powerfully. I was shaking all over. The facilitator stopped the session, came to me and we prayed. I couldn't control it, so she prayed with me and was able to calm me down. The following week, after the class, it happened again, so she asked me what was it and when I opened my mouth, what the Spirit of God spoke through my mouth was "She has a calling", like "I have a calling". The calling had fallen upon my life, and it was really pressuring me, so I had to submit. After that, she said she'd arrange for me to talk to one of the pastors.

Aware of the possibility that maturity may lead to cases like Abena's, the church has created a non-denominational Bible School (Living Word Schools of Ministry), a theology course in their private university and, recently, a denominational Bible School (Central Bible School) in order to accommodate for the ever-growing demand for full-time ministerial training in Ghana.

It is important to acknowledge that authoritative templates as those transmitted during

discipleship programs can be used as much to shape a given reality as to measure it by contrast. In this sense, the judgment I attributed to the “civilizational mission” in my previous chapter remains valid to the charismatic version of the Christian norm presented by ICGC: its outcomes are never fully saturating at the level of subject formation, producing instead of a specific type of Christian, a wide spectrum of commitment levels. The tendency of charismatic ministries to embrace heterogeneity in an almost Roman Catholic manner is observed in ICGC’s variable church attendance. Whereas each of the two Sunday services led by pastor Otabil easily fill the 5,000 seats of Christ Temple and even require extra chairs, various empty spots can be seen on their single prayer and teaching services organized on Tuesdays and Fridays. This discrepancy reveals the great number of “visitors” who come to ICGC simply to be exposed to the messages that made this man of God a famous televangelist. It also shows the great numbers of ICGC members who remain “immature”, according to the church own standards. The same tendency is observed in the ABC program, and the attendance of the first two modules almost doubles that of the Maturity and Ministry modules, which means that many members are satisfied in simply experiencing the power of God in church services and having a superficial involvement with small ministries and other voluntary activities. Some stay in church for years without praying in tongues, a capacity considered one of the markers of maturity. From a list of 61 members orbiting around Santa Maria’s family covenant, I never saw more than 30 actually attending the church-cell meeting, and they were usually the same faces. This overall variability in attendance therefore indexes the variable degrees of commitment to ICGC’s norm. Some give time and talent and embrace the church as an everyday space of Christian nurturance, others, maybe a majority, only contribute with money, and their connection to the institution is circumscribed to ritual events.

Nevertheless, my experience of ICGC’s life beyond church services still challenges Gifford’s diagnostic that charismatic churches are “not really communities or fellowships at all” (2003: 185). A significant number of people attend the three weekly services and participate actively in small ministries and cell-groups, thus dedicating a considerable share of their lives to working on their Christian selves through the three basic tenets of spiritual maturation: personal piety, “service” or active work for the advancement of the Kingdom, and “fellowship” or informal religious gatherings and the weaving of personal relations that retain a religious component. This breed, the “maturing” Christian, is rarely seen in the scholarship as an example of Ghanaian Pentecostal subject that deserves to be followed, so I made them the focus of my research.

#### 2.4. Spiritual kinship: seeking maturity through personal relations

Although in the previous section I eventually illustrated the effects of charismatic discipleship programs at the level of the congregants through testimonies, interviews, and personal observations, a good section of the information I conveyed was ultimately stored and standardized in artifacts: booklets used by both instructors and students to “entextualize” (Urban 1996) ICGC’s models of and for proper Pentecostal practices, attitudes, sensibilities, and relationality, thus facilitating their transmission. As argues Woolard (1998), it is part of the *modus operandi* of ideology in general to interpellate subjects through meta-pragmatic means, that is, practices that address and objectify practices in order to normalize them. She also calls attention to the “alternate sitting of ideology” (Woolard 1998: 9, see also Silverstein 1979, 1993), arguing that an “implicit” metapragmatics is advanced through linguistic markers that inhere in the stream of talk and the flow of practice, whereas in more “explicit” instances, actors display greater degree of consciousness while articulating meta-pragmatic scripts (see Mertz 1998). Contexts openly concerned with pedagogy, as discipleship programs and Bible schools, are especially suitable to the latter case, which does not mean that they have no generative effect on everyday practice, where the implicit pragmatics of

learning religion also unfold.

Commenting on his spiritual maturation since he became an ICGC member in 2007, Kweku, 29 years, provided me with a good summary of the more practically embedded forms of transmission unfolding in the everyday life of the church:

When I moved to ICGC, coming from the Methodist church, I made new friends especially at the various Bibles classes [discipleship program] they offer. I also encountered here some friends who I knew from school, but didn't interact much at that time. Now we belong to the same family, God's family. We have fun together, and we like sharing the Word of God and doing outreach together [he belongs to ICGC's Outreach Ministry]. They helped me to get acquainted with the church. I realized that listening to other Christians' witnesses helped me a lot in my own walk with Christ. (...) And I witness too. I promised that in every church service that I come, I'll make at least one new acquaintance. That's my target. I get at least one phone number, I call, we meet at church premises and chat, etc. I believe you have to connect with people who you want to be like, people who have already received from God what you desire. Do you want to pray for long hours? Walk with someone who does that. You want to memorize more scriptures? Have more understanding of the Bible? Walk with someone who is a "walking Bible" [the way charismatics address Christians with great capacity to quote scriptures by heart]. It's in the Bible: walk with the wise and become wise [reference to Proverbs 13:20]. But the most important for me was to find a spiritual father, a mentor, someone I can go when I have questions. He is my a counselor, someone I can follow, because he has been where I am today. I didn't have any of these things when I was at the Methodist church, so I was in church, but still belonged to the world.

Kweku's account parallels his closer connection with God - which allows him to be *in the* world without belonging *to the* world - with a deeper insertion into ecclesiastical networks where Christian knowledge and practices are performed and transmitted. In this sense, his narrative confirms but also gives a more immanent version of the scripts formalized in the discipleship program by presenting us to the church as a community of practice and a space of nurturance, analogous to a family. A church-family is not given, but made and remade in practice and through mutual engagement. Central to this configuration is Kweku's capacity to complement his vertical relations with pastors by engaging in horizontal relations among church members in small ministries. One may also notice how he refers to much less formal methods of transmission, as simply observing and imitating more mature Christians, or "people who have already received from God what you desire".

As part of Kweku's description of Christian nurturance, mimesis was unapologetically dissociated from Christ alone, and was refracted through authorized proxy: more mature fellow Christians and especially a personal mentor he addressed as his spiritual father, in this case, a seasoned ICGC lay leader who leads his Covenant Family. As an internal organ of the broad ICGC body, the spiritual father represents an alternative source of vertical relations, marked by a strong everyday and face-to-face accent, which Kweku is unable to find in the somewhat inaccessible figure that Mensah Otabil has become. Kweku does address ICGC's founder as his "father", but their discipleship bond was nurtured especially through church preaching, books, and DVDs. It is clear that a maturing Christian can have multiple spiritual fathers. A few interlocutors preferred to address their most famous and mediatic Christian *exemplum* as "father" and reserve "mentor" to the more personal and interactive *exemplum*, others simply reversed this terminology or made no distinction.

The use of fictive kinship to encode relations of exemplarity and mentorship among maturing Pentecostals in Ghana is widespread, and finds a plurality of uses. More generally, it implies that someone's "walk with Christ" requires the intervention of a human guide, thus mingling with the act of "following" a more mature lay Christian or full-time minister. Intimacy with the Spirit hence becomes entwined with intimacy with Christian models, defined by their pupils as

people they “submit to” (authority), “look up to” (emulation), “love and admire” (affect). This relation may unfold within or without denominational lines. By doing so, it also gives a privileged access to forms of authoritative transmission of Pentecostals knowledge unfolding in small churches and fellowships, associations that do not count with the complex apparatus of government and discipleship that ICGC is privileged to have.

That is the case of Prophet Patrick Sam’s Compassion Ministry, a small church in the neighborhood of Dakurman, whose attendance on Sunday services never exceeds fifty people. The socio-economic background of his flock is variable, going from a number of petty traders to a few civil servants, thus being generally less affluent than ICGC’s. The prophet uses relations of spiritual kinship to complement the spectacular manifestations of his prophetic gifts on Sunday and Thursday services and the Tuesdays Bible reading group he organizes with a much more personal engagement with the congregants. During the whole week, he receives visitors in his office, whom he meets one-by-one, like a medical doctor. He listens to their dreams and visions and personal challenges, provides interpretations and counseling, prescribes Biblical passages, books, and prayer schedules, also praying for them. In order to monitor his influence over clients and members, thus converting them into spiritual offspring, Prophet Patrick is constantly on his cellphone, a technology that has been increasingly popular in Ghana since the 2000s, being today a vital work tool of pastoral care and networking in small churches. “Proph”, as he is widely known, organizes church excursions to prayer retreats at Akoko and Atwia Mountains, where he imparts the gift of tongues onto the congregants by laying on of hands. His followers justified the prestige Proph enjoys as an authentic man of God by evoking the care he dedicates to his spiritual offspring, taking them “under his wings” and being a “good father”. This prestige is not without rewards, and Proph’s vocation has provided him with a good degree of material comfort, which includes owning a SUV. As someone who reflects but also practices the prosperity theology he preaches, the prophet is also a giver, and his caring agency includes financial support for members and the mobilization of personal contacts to seek temporary or stable jobs for his family in Christ.

Having a parent in Christ is an essential component of the upbringing of lay leaders and pastors. Some of Prophet Patrick’s pupils keep his church functional by leading Bible reading groups and praise and worship, performing opening prayers, sweeping the floor, checking the sound system, attracting new members through evangelism, organizing fundraisings, and reminding members of their duties with the church, sometimes even knocking at their doors before weekday meetings. This variable engagement with Christian activities produces even in a small church community as that of Compassion Ministry the same inner heterogeneity in terms of personal dedication that I found in ICGC. Also like in Otabil’s mega-church, maturation and the exercise of leadership may take these individuals to consider the ministerial vocation, and Prophet Patrick has many spiritual sons and daughters who are now full-time pastors.

During our one-year interactions, Prophet Patrick never displayed much interest, at least for now, in opening church branches. Instead of incorporating his more loyal spiritual offspring as branch pastors, he was happy to mobilize these allegiances by cultivating an inter-church network. Proph is periodically invited to perform in other small and medium churches, established by his disciples, receiving a fraction of their offerings. In order to solidify his status of a minor node in the charismatic scene of Accra, he created the School of Prophetic Excellence, where pastors pay a fee of 200 Cedis (90 dollars) for a daily one-semester course with the man of God<sup>57</sup>. During the school period, the prophet prescribed fasting, prayer, and sexual abstinence. His teachings were based on

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<sup>57</sup> As it tends to be in these contexts, fees are flexible, and one of the school’s 15 students of the class of 2011 paid the Prophet with food crops he brought from his village and by keeping the church building tidy. Others paid half of the fees, although I and other more prosperous student, like the wife of a Police Chief, paid the full amount.

his personal engagement with the Bible (which included an insightful one-week-long cycle of lectures on the Songs of Solomon) but also on the vast collection of Christian devotional literature produced by African and international ministers he owns, where he finds valuable glosses and a source of legitimacy. He gave detailed testimonies about his experiences in ministry, lectured on the ethics and pitfalls of the “highest calling”, and invited other seasoned ministers to teach on their areas of expertise (prophecy, healing, marriage counseling, teaching, etc.). Some of these guests were his own spiritual fathers, as Prophet Diallo Opong, an itinerant preacher now based in Finland, which runs his own Bible school in Accra, the Holy Fire Contemporary Bible School. We realize that one of the major reasons maturing Christians seek Bible schools of all sorts in Ghana is the desire to connect to specific spiritual parents who already have the capacities they are looking for, the latter using these contexts to solidify allegiances and extend their personal influence over broader networks.

The highly emulative and embedded methods and networks mobilized by Christian discipleship resonate strongly with the pedagogy of apprenticeship, which in West Africa is an inherent part of the transmission of Islam (Saul 1984), the general upbringing of children in the rural areas (Fortes [1939] 1970: 201-239), and the acquisition of secular skills as disparate as mechanics (McLaughlin 1979), blacksmith (McNaughton 1988), tailoring (Lave 2011), and many others. Apprenticeship methods are extremely common in societies like Ghana, which has large sectors of the economy based on crafts and manual labor. Mission trade schools deployed similar methods, and it was a common strategy among European missionaries in Africa to adopt the local youth as “house boys”, exchanging labor and submission for opportunities to achieve protagonism in church (see Oyono 1990).

As the master of a craft, the Pentecostal man of God represents an opening into a community of practice in which his offspring are introduced by progressively moving from secondary roles to positions of protagonism akin to those performed by the father. Different from the explicit metapragmatics of discipleship programs, the acquisition of Christian knowledge in this case is closely juxtaposed to the weaving of relations and the opening of opportunities to seek protagonism in practice. At first sweeping the church floor, the spiritual son is slowly upgraded and starts leading Bible reading groups and organizing evangelistic outreaches. He eventually enters the pulpit through marginal functions as performing opening prayers or uttering the final announcements. When he has proved himself competent and reliable enough to deserve a more central role, the pupil is seen preaching on weekdays meetings and even on Sunday services, when the main pastor is out on a crusade to the villages. This process means that the spiritual parent is able to monitor what Lave and Wenger call “legitimate peripheral participation”, a concept that

provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers [in this case, the spiritually immature] and old-timers [the spiritually mature], and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. A person’s intentions to learn are engaged and the meaning of learning is configured through the process of becoming a full participant in a socio-cultural practice (Lave and Wenger 1991: 29).

Although this logic is explicitly articulated during the acquisition of the pastoral craft, it is also at work in the division of church labor undertaken through small ministries and cell-groups of mega-churches, associations that either support the pastoral agency of their leaders or expand its reach into the everyday as a “mission”. The difference here is one of mobility within a trajectory of Christian maturation. Whereas some end up taking church activities as a progressive series leading to full-time vocation, others find among these peripheral activities their niche in a church’s division of ecclesiastical labor, serving as a lay leader. Nevertheless, for maturing Christians, lay leaders, and apprentice pastors of any sort, the ecclesia is fundamentally a community of practice that finds in the

man of God a gatekeeper. In these contexts, Christian knowledge is acquired while being deployed as a skill, a competency, that is, a way of doing. By engaging with these spaces of normative nurturance, the once spiritual baby is allowed to shift from the status of listener to that of speaker, but also of doer, consequently growing in her faith.

In the next two sections, I illustrate the overlap in practice of personal piety, church networks, and mentorship in the biographies of one neophyte pastor and one active lay leader whom I met respectively at ICGC's and Prophet Patrick Sam's Bible schools. These conversion narratives will give us a more lively perspective on how spiritual maturation occurs amidst specific realignments of rupture (Engelke 2010), and will help me point to some provisional conclusions.

### 2.5. Pastor Gideon's growth into the ministerial vocation: three iterations of the father

I first met 31 year-old Gideon as a member of the first group of students that joined Central Bible College, ICGC's recently founded denominational Bible School, in 2010. Gideon was born in the Volta Region, being the first of seven children from the marriage of an Ewe man to a Ga woman. He described his parents' religious status as Pentecostal "church goers". His father had constant crises of faith and their relationship was marked by disagreement and domestic violence. In the Volta, Gideon used to attend church with his biological mother only occasionally, and reminded me that the greatest pleasure of his childhood and adolescence was drumming. If not his parents, his activities as a drummer often got him involved in religious gatherings since the age of eight. "I didn't get any money, just enjoyed playing drums". Gideon moved to Accra to live with a maternal uncle and finish Junior High School. In Accra, he frequently played drums during events organized by Ahmadiyya Muslims, and developed the habit of joining them for prayers, admitting that he could not tell the difference between a Christian and a Muslim at that time. He also played for a Spiritual Church, "where they dress these white long dresses". Music led Gideon to establish a personal connection with Christ at the age of 17, when he was invited by a friend to play in the worship team of a Baptist Church:

So, one day a preacher came to this Baptist church when I was there, playing drums. He preached a powerful message, and said that the person cannot be born again unless you give your life to Christ and explained it further. I was touched by it. He asked people who wanted to give their lives to Christ to come forward, and I went. I received Christ. I became fully a Christian. Now I understood the difference. I stopped praying with the Muslims and started focusing on my Christianity. After I converted, I stayed with the Baptists for a while.

In a moment of Gideon's life in which he wondered along religious practices without any inner commitment, the preacher introduced a sharp line of discernment concerning salvation, and affected ("touched") him verbally. But the altar call would not have made much impact if Gideon had stopped there. Although he claimed that the sinner's prayer had made him become "fully a Christian", he also added during our conversation that: "I didn't know much about Christianity. I just put my trust in the man of God. I knew he was right, and started following him." His spiritual rebirth moved from an attitude of "trust" in the pastor to what he later called "commitment" to Christ by engaging in more frequent Bible reading and prayer, being baptized by immersion, and embracing church activities, which he did first by rechanneling his old talent for music. "I got myself more into the things of God. More activities. Not only playing drums. I discovered I could sing. One day the praise and worship leader didn't come to church and I took over, then I realized the gift was there and I started developing it". He "served" in the Baptist church for 2 years, but had to return to the Volta Region to care for his father, who had a stroke. His father died, and at the age of 19, Gideon came back to Accra to finish Senior High School.

Now properly acquainted with the local charismatic scene, Gideon decided to join ICGC, which he first knew as “Otabil’s church”, someone who already had “blessed him immensely” through his DVDs and TV messages. But in ICGC he found much more than Otabil’s inspired preaching. He went through their discipleship program, which according to him exemplifies the main virtue of the church: “They keep everyone busy for the Kingdom [of God]”. In ICGC’s thematic ministries he found a fertile terrain to expand and exercise old and acquire new skills. He first opted for joining the “Intercessory Department”, a ministry concerned in praying for the church, its members and pastors. Many interlocutors celebrated the vital influence of this ministry in their spiritual maturation, especially for articulating the art of prayer with the virtue of self-renunciation. “Every pastor who is coming to ministry has to have a strong foundation, and the Intercessory is a selfless department, because you don’t pray for yourself, only for the needs of the church. I was still singing, but I needed this foundation”. Gideon’s schedule of voluntary activities did not stop there. He became a facilitator in the Youth Ministry on Sundays. He would also gather the members on Tuesdays, before the Teaching Service, and lead a one-hour prayer meeting. On Wednesdays, he sang at members’ weddings and funerals. Such dedication to serve the church community exemplifies Gideon’s generosity with his fellows congregants, but he never hid the fact that what also attracted him to these activities was the opportunity to gain experience and to be exposed to practice, taking these events as a form of apprenticeship:

It was all part of being into the church life. I was always exercising what I had. You can’t be given one Sunday: ‘Go and preach’. You need to start somewhere. In the worship group, for instance, I had the opportunity to lead prayer and give an exhortation before rehearsals. I was being exposed to the ministry, step by step.

In consonance with the non-denominational vein of evangelical-oriented Christianity, Gideon’s allegiances also transcended immediate church belonging. In the company of friends from other churches, he created in 2009 an interdenominational “outreach group” dedicated to prayer and evangelism in tertiary institutions. At this point, he had already joined Living Word School of Ministry, ICGC’s non-denominational Bible school, which grants one-year certificates and two-year diplomas to anyone interested and willing to pay a modest fee (fee-remissions are also applied). He felt he needed to give more practical expression to his growing zeal, and the association met every Wednesdays. It was called “Able Men”, a title inspired by 1 Chronicles 9:13<sup>58</sup>. Able Man had its own “mission”: “Giving hope to the hopeless”. “We encouraged young people to live for God, prayed with hem, organized seminars, programs, music, worship. I was the president and a praise and worship leader. Out of that group, many people have joined the ministry. They are now pastors in different churches”.

In a panoramic account, Gideon weaved together his pre and post-conversion life through the narrative thread of family belonging:

My mother and my father never got married before they gave birth to me. They had only this boyfriend and girlfriend relation. He got her pregnant and they kept going. I didn’t know what is love. I was not shown love in my childhood. Everyday what I saw was my father beating my mother. My family was broken. Everyday there was fight, and love was really an empty word for me at that point. I was struggling with my identity: Who am I? Why am I here? I felt I didn’t have a father, but when I met Christ, he made me know that my father was alive and well. After my conversion, I immediately committed to the Christian life and started to grow. I realized that God is not someone unreachable, but he’s the father of the fatherless, someone who loves and cares for you. Even before your mother

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<sup>58</sup> “13 and their brethren, heads of their fathers’ houses—one thousand seven hundred and sixty. They were very able men for the work of the service of the house of God”.



and father had you, he knew who you were and your potential. When I discovered that, it released me from a lot of stress and doubts about life. I started reading the Bible and memorizing scriptures, and I realized that I was like David, very young, inexperienced, rejected, but the Bible says that the hand of the Lord was upon him. From that point, I started developing this relationship with God, being serious with his Word, joining the choir, helping in church. In ICGC, I was almost living in church, and sometimes I used to sleep there. I wanted to serve, swiping the floor, teaching at the youth ministry, and especially growing in praise and worship, learning new spiritual songs, rehearsing, taking part on the Tuesday services.

Through crisis and repentance, Gideon found in Christ a replacement for his biological father, embracing a new life under his tutelage by joining his family, the *ecclesia*. Allegories of suffering as ethical preparation, embodied by the figures of king David and the Israelites in the wilderness, figure widely among born-again Christians in Ghana, as elsewhere. Through this Biblical type, the suffering past is embraced as inaugurating the process of unlearning that precedes and follows the life in Christ. Those are moments in which the world “breaks you down”, and “empties you” to the point you are ready to submit and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Conversion interrupted a vicious and mundane pattern of affection and inserted Gideon on a regenerative one, the cycle of holiness, mirrored on Christ’s likeness:

I used to get angry very quickly. I was very very sanguine. I realized that what my father used to do, I was also doing. When I was in the world, playing with girls, I used to beat them just like my father did to my mother. See? I was following his model, even though I was suffering with it. That is the cycle Christ takes you out. The Word of God, going to church consistently, living according to the Word started transforming my life gradually. I still fail, repent, ask for forgiveness, Christianity is a constant work. But I know where to go now. I look up to Jesus. I look up to my mentors too.

Gideon’s unlearning was coeval to his encounter with Christ as a new behavioral archetype, which he opposes to his biological father in terms of two alternative models to be emulated and followed. On the one hand, bonding with Christ is understood as a gradual and life-long program that includes eventual slippages and indeed provides a horizon to encompass error as an inevitable part of Christian pedagogy. On the other, the original intimacy of the Christian model finds public expression when it is channeled through “service” and mediated by human mentors. Both processes characterize Gideon’s realignment with contexts and agents of learning. We have already testified to his deep immersion into “church life”, which became intensified through IGGC’s small ministries and cell-system. He also found new fathers in the born-again community by bonding with particular mentors, replicating the transcendental and intimate paternal role of Christ through spiritual fathers he encountered within and without ICGC:

I also got closer to men of God. There was not one spiritual father, but many. God led me to a lot of people. One of the most important goes to Christ Temple, Mr. Joshua Ade. He saw the potential in me, and started encouraging me. I go to him most often than to anyone else. He’s not active in ministry. He’s a councilor [at ICGC’s Counseling Department]. He is not on the frontline, but he’s walked with men of God, and he knows how they behave, their weaknesses. So any doubt I have, I go to him. Of course, Dr. Otabil is my mentor, but I don’t have a very close relationship with him, like with this man. Anything personal, that I can’t share with anybody, I go to my spiritual father. Another person I learned a lot in terms of spiritual life was Prophet Daniel. He’s in South Africa currently. Other man of God was Prophet Assoman, he runs a ministry at Dansuman roundabout. I served him, so I learnt all these things from him: fasting, praying for long hours and all this. Because I desired what God was using him for, I just got closer to him, going to his house, ironing, washing, doing any small work he needed, just to hear from him. That was the only way I could reach him. That was the only way for me to get in contact and learn. I served him in his home and all that, because he had what I desired. I knew that when you are called by God to do his work, there are some stages he takes you through. When you study the life of the Israelites, they passed through a lot of hardship, but their

destiny was settled, and God took them through it. God took them to the wilderness because he wanted to take certain things out of them. That's what he was doing with me at that early stage of my life. I served these men of God in their churches too, but basically in their homes. That's the service I'm talking about. It's like Elijah pouring water in Elijah's hands. It's all part of the apprenticeship.

The narrative underlines a few overlapping aspects of the spiritual kinship relation. First, the different roles performed by spiritual parents occupying specific positions within the ecclesia: the famous (and distant) pastor and mediatic reference; the elder and lay leader; the close model of/for spiritual disciplines, taken as the master of a craft. Second, and consequently, the diverse attitudes and demands directing the spiritual son: the admirer who attends eagerly Otabil's massive church services and consumes his media material; the youngster seeking counseling and intimacy with an elder in order to sooth doubts and anxieties about his new life; the apprentice soliciting practical references to piety and the ministerial vocation, "serving" men of God with the same submission he dedicates to the church. Finally, we see how this quest for a vast array of practical knowledges produces a juxtaposition of denominational and non-denominational allegiances.

When pastor Otabil announced to the congregation in the beginning of 2010 that a new Bible school was about to be inaugurated by ICGC with the objective of training new pastors for the denomination, Gideon immediately knew that was the chance he had been expecting to make of Christianity his lifetime vocation, a calling that he was able to recognize only retrospectively, that is, amidst the practices, relations, and models that compose the born-again life as an environment of nurturance, in which subjects grow anew and come to know themselves and God's will in an organic mutuality:

The calling was there, but I realized it later. I used to dream and see myself preaching. A man of God also confirmed that through prophecy. But when he told me: "You will be in ministry", I didn't know what he was talking about, because I never really desired to preach. As time went on... one of the people I admire is Benny Hinn [famous international televangelist]. When I used to watch him ministering, I just felt in my heart: "that's the kind of thing God wants me to do", without fully knowing about it. When I started praying and leading a Christian life, things became more and more clear.

Since then, Gideon has married an ICGC member and lay leader, graduated from the school, and opened a new branch of ICGC in Dansoman, Accra. In the flyer of his church, which he circulates on Facebook, we see his pastoral image closely associated to the father of "ICGC family", one of many agents of Christian nurturance who this neophyte pastor has followed along his walk with Christ, but who ultimately secured his disputed allegiance by providing him with stable channels for exemplarity, practice, and a new life.

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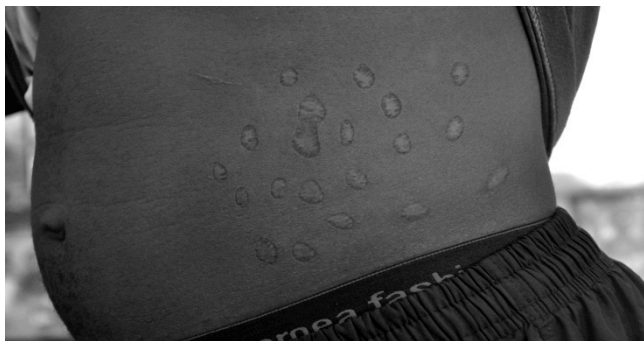
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<b>SUNDAY</b> 8 <sup>AM</sup> Freedom Service	<b>WEDNESDAY</b> 6 <sup>PM</sup> Power Service
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## 2.6. Engaging with a “family covenant”: evil and piety in evangelist Daniel’s conversion and maturation

I first met evangelist Daniel in 2011, as a student of Prophet Patrick Sam’s School of Prophetic Excellence. Daniel was by then 30. He was born in the Volta Region, within an extended family that hosted in their compound house an important town shrine. He grew up observing the activities of his paternal grandmother, the main keeper of the shrine: “All I knew about life was pouring libation and doing sacrifices. I knew no other God than the small Gods”. Ewe shrines are inherited in the family, and Daniel had also established more intimate ties with this spiritual entity. When he was born, sickness was prevailing in the household. As a response, oracles were consulted, and the lesser God declared the desire to enter in what he calls (using post-conversion language) a “covenant” with the new family member. In order to appease the divinity, Daniel was dedicated to the shrine through a ceremony that left a scarification in his belly. After telling me about the event, he promptly raised his shirt and invited me to take a picture, displaying a proud and defiant attitude towards this tangible mark of his past allegiances.



In a Pentecostal fashion, Daniel narrated his early life through highly enchanted lenses, as enmeshed in a “power struggle” in which light and darkness disputed his loyalty. Curiously, moral dualism is not without flexibility here, and his story is also about the refashioning of evil into good, defilement into purity, both predicated in acts of self-donation. In this sense, his conversion narrative is exemplary of one of the styles of spirituality through which prophetic networks have expanded in Ghana, thriving on a field of spiritual and moral uncertainty and yet producing its own forms of relationality and nurturance.

Daniel moved to Accra in 1989, to be fostered by a paternal aunt. Despite the early age, he still remembers having highly recursive and “strange” dreams, which kept haunting him for a long time. Since he was now living apart from the shrine and his close kin’s expertise on spiritual matters, these dreams found multiple interpretations:

I'd dream that I had been taken to heaven. I was given wings, I'd be flying, and people would be following me. Sometimes it was different, and there'd be whole armies fighting me. I didn't know what all this meant. I also used to see some things in a dream and within a few minutes I'd see the same thing happening in real life. I talked to a friend who was also a pagan, so he was giving me the wrong interpretation: the witches want to kill me, or pick me to be trained. I was seeing things in the spiritual realm. Within a few minutes, these things would take place. They were coming to pass. All that I saw in my dreams was evil, and they were happening in real life, accidents, death... I thought I was making them happen in the physical realm. I was scared.

Daniel got close to a Catholic friend (a “Roman”), who took him to his church around 1996. He was baptized (“only sprinkling of water”), and attended mass with some frequency, but never

committed. “It was like any activity for me. I still didn't know any other God apart from our small God. My mind had not changed”. Among Catholics, the new convert found access to different expert knowledge about the content of his supernatural dreams. He received counseling from a priest, who tried to pacify the young convert’s heart with an alternative interpretation: “He told me that God had something good for me. God was calling me. This was not about wizards and witches, it's rather from God”. Daniel received the father’s version with skepticism. His engagement with the Christian life remained slim, but this new possibility produced at least an inner unsettlement that heightened his desire to disconnect from the “idols”.

As his agonistic dreams continued, Daniel was “on and off” with his Christian identity, in fact, mostly off. He moved to Accra to live with his “auntie”, who led him to E.P. Church, where he first prayed the sinner’s prayer. He judged his experience there disappointing, especially because the institution lacked a good youth ministry: “The Bible says: you should give to the young ones the milk of the Lord, and E.P. doesn’t have a good youth ministry. I was going to the main church service, with all the adults, so the message was not being absorbed, having an impact. I was receiving meat, not milk, so it was not for me. It was meat for the idols!” A friend took him to ICGC’s branch at STS Junction, where he received a personal prophecy, but quickly rejected it as non-sense: “Any time salvation was at my door, the devil would tease me and I’d leave it behind”. Things started to change when a girlfriend led Daniel to an “all-night” meeting at Prophet Nicholas Mensah’s Mountains of Miracle Church.

I had a dream on Thursday morning, before I went to this all-night service on Thursday evening. Prophet Nicholas was calling people and started to prophesy. He was calling people one by one. I didn't believe in those things. I said to myself: “This man is a liar”. I was saying it within myself: “He's calling only people he knows. It's a scam”. I was the last person he called. He asked me: “What is worrying you, son?” I said: “Nothing”. He said: “There's an angel standing on your side”. He said I had a dream in which a lady was trying to sleep with me. I was shocked; because that was the dream I had before coming to the All-Night [sexual intercourse through dreams is one of the ways witches attack]. I had not told it to anyone. The word of prophecy is what kicked me into that church. He said a whole lot of things about myself, and said that God had called me into a unique ministry. God had called me to be a prophet. He started pointing out to what I intended to do in the future, to what I was doing now, and then the dreams, my family background, things I knew were true. I felt relieved... I felt like: “This is God, because I don't know this man, and he knows all these secrets about me, things no one else knows”. I felt shocked. I was then 22, 23. I was alone, doing everything alone, so when he told me those things I denied all other Gods and accepted Jesus, and started following him.

The importance of prophets as agents of evangelism in Ghana today must be further qualified, since Daniel’s case exemplifies much broader trends. By giving salience to the public unveiling of secrets, personal prophecies mobilize a modality of knowledge that in West Africa resonates deeply with the exercise of power, human and otherwise (Ferme 2001). As an animator (Goffman 1981), the prophet lends his voice to divine utterance while retaining his own consciousness and responsibility. The prophetic addressee can be an impersonal “you” projected onto an anonymous crowd, expecting individuals to identify and stand out. In one of Prophet Patrick’s appearances in a Christian all-night, he uttered the following prophetic call in Twi: “You, who is a tailor and had a dream about ants, come forward”. But this interpellation can also make use of a highly situated “you”, with a face, which endows the prophecy with a heightened chance of infelicity. Prophet Mensah boldly took this step into the unknown and risked losing face. Nevertheless, he found confirmation in those he approached, one by one, including Daniel, who was deeply moved by the performance. He felt “shocked” but ultimately “released” with the fact that God - and now the prophet and the audience - knew his secrets.

In this sense, charismatic prophets may respond to cultural expectations already in place. However, it is important to underline that, by embracing these given expectations, they may also point elsewhere: into Christian discontinuity. Prophets move into the hidden pasts of their audiences through “words of knowledge”, and connect them to the future through “words of wisdom”, considered two distinctive spiritual gifts put to use during prophetic séances. The first reveals what has already happened, the later what will unfold. To an evangelistically-inclined prophet, whatever this past is, its future, at least if carries a positive prognostic, must be with Christ, submission operating as a condition of possibility to the prophecy’s fulfillment. Prophetic séances might easily decay into a form of entertainment or spectacular display of ministerial power, but they may also become a powerful tool of Christian interpellation, aimed at either expanding the Kingdom of God or reviving the faith of old members. As in many other cases I came across, Daniel also received from the prophet a vicarious version of his calling to ministry. Although rarely accepted in its face value, this “outsourced” version of the calling is at least considered a supporting factor in one’s decision to take the ministerial path.

But the miraculous concatenation of events at Mountains of Miracle Church could have been to no avail if Daniel had not used these as a springboard to a general realignment, breaking old bonds and being ushered by Prophet Mensah into a community of faith and practice that transcended the context of that church meeting.

For the first time, I connected to a man of God. He led me through the sinner’s prayer, and instructed me to enter a three days fasting, dry [no food and water]. He then took me to Akoko Mountains on Sunday. We went to fast with the church, and he selected me as one of the prayer warriors, a leader, and he began to train me. To the glory of God, he was the first mentor who trained me to know God and to fear God.

Akoko Mountains are one of the main natural retreats used by born-again Christians from Accra to “wait for the Lord”, a place for fasting, spiritual exercises, and revelations. Daniel received the Holy Ghost baptism there and started praying in tongues, which intensified his spirituality. Soon, he became “a little deeper in the things of God” and developed a taste for evangelism. He decided to “no longer watch the souls be led astray”, and spent long periods of time preaching at public schools. “School outreach” has become one of the main instruments of apprenticeship for Ghanaian converts, since these venues allow plenty of space for try-and-error:

I happened to know a friend who was in it [school outreach], and he decided to take me with him. The first time we went, he preached and introduced me as a friend pastor. In the next week, he asked me to share a word with them, so I talked, and when I talked... I was not good at preaching, so I just shared my testimony with them. Through that, the desire to share the gospel grew, and I didn’t know how. I had no teacher to lead me, so I made it my own way. I read a portion of the Bible and prayed over it. I knew it was not what I shared that was going to move the person to salvation, but the Spirit in the Word, backing the Word, that will make people to repent. I made the decision to go and do it. Whether people laughed or not, I still had to do it, because the Bible sais the gospel is the power of men to salvation. I went often to a school called Apraku. I preached there for about 4, 5 years. The Spirit was so mighty there... When I was finishing my trade school, I heard about the Prophetic Excellence School on the radio, I was the first person to pick the phone and call.

Deprived from more bureaucratically established church-networks, Daniel grew spiritually by shamelessly taking the world as his parish. He also reshaped his allegiances and projects. He stopped wasting time playing soccer and “chasing girls”, and changed his immediate circle of friends. He became more serene. Today, he speaks less and considers himself more thoughtful in his decisions and more selective with what he does and with who he “walks around”. He doesn’t “waste time” anymore, and dedicates at least 3 hours a day to prayer, mostly in tongues, and one hour to Bible

reading. His major source of entertainment is listening to gospel music. There was also economic progress. At first, Daniel was selling counterfeit DVDs in a small shop in Awoshie, but people at Prophet Mensah's church raised money, so he could go to a trade school. He became an electrician and opened a second shop. These improvements are not what we might conventionally understand as "prosperity", but that is how Daniel understands them: "Now I can testify how God has changed my life: no background, I lived in total poverty, when I say poverty is total poverty. I fed from hand to mouth. Through the Word I was able to come out good".

Prophet Mensah was his first mentor, and when he heard at Adom FM, one of the most popular evangelical radios in Accra, that one of Mensah's own spiritual fathers, prophet Patrick Sam, was opening a Bible school, he promptly called and asked for information on how to apply. The school had a great impact especially on his "delivery", or the way he approaches people during evangelism and uses his prophetic gifts. At the school, Daniel met apostle Atiemo, one of the lectures, who because of a noisy neighbor was looking for a new home. Daniel invited the apostle to live with him, and made this man of God his main source of inspiration:

For now, apostle Joseph Atiemo is my mentor. I love him. Everything about him is spiritual. He'd not spend even 5 seconds doing unnecessary things. Anytime you see him, he's with his Bible reading or working for the Kingdom. If he's not praying, he's reading his books. He doesn't even watch TV. I want to learn much from him, now that he's with me. With this man of God, I want God to lead me to where he wants me to be. I won't leave Proph [Prophet Patrick's nickname]. He happens to be my spiritual father, and through him I met the Apostle [how Joseph is also known]. Even when I met the Apostle I called Proph and said: "Daddy, if God could exchange our spirits, I'd ask him to exchange my spirit with that of Apostle Atiemo". He was happy for me.

Daniel is an active Christian and his main ability is to lead prayer meetings, which he does often in Prophet Patrick's church and itinerant ministry. Most of his income comes from his secular jobs, and when I asked him about the possibility of becoming a full-time minister, he said he would rather wait and seek for confirmation: "I need to pray more about it".

Knowledgeable about Daniel's family background and having been exposed to the deep inscription of the past in his own body, I could not avoid leading our conversation to issues of demonic influence. Is the past all gone? Apparently no, and Daniel presented his spiritual situation as immersed in a dualist field of forces, in-between an old covenant that constantly reclaims his belonging, and the tutelage of a divine father and his human proxies:

Sometimes they call me from the village and say they're praying for me to their God, to make me prosperous. But the Bible says that every good gift comes from above, and these are idols. Worship no other God except Jesus, or God. It's like I'm in-between Gods. These people are pouring libation to the shrine and calling my name [during the recitations that follow the practice] and I am here in Accra calling on the heavenly father, so I'm in-between. Evil can come on my way; good can also come on my way. (...) As much as they're calling my name, I'm also calling my God. The power of God supersedes any other power, so what they do back in the village will come to nothing. Jesus Christ, the son of the living God, has died for me. If somebody tells you that when you're a Christian, you're free from all those things [demonic influences], it's a lie. They'll still fight you. "Sit at my right hand side, until I've made them a footstool under your feet" [Psalm 110:1, cited by Jesus in Mtt 22:44]. Those were words of Jesus Christ. It's something they have been doing for generations, so there's no way you could say you're exempted from it.

The argument seems to corroborate Meyer's point about how the cyclical recourse to deliverance from evil jeopardizes the temporal discontinuity of spiritual rebirth. After all, Daniel reads his relation to the Christ as an inverse mirror of the traditional practices his kin address on his behalf to the shrine, a tie that persists despite his own chosen exile from the family. Once

demonized and negated, the past is not disavowed, but agonistically repressed, remaining “under his feet” with the aid of divine authority. Daniel departs from Meyer’s examples though when he situates his ongoing “power struggle” beyond the church site and the ritualized interference of men of God. He was never exposed to a formal “deliverance” ceremony, observing that, in his case, the war against “principalities and powers” (Ephesians 6: 12) has been waged in the everyday of piety, through Bible reading, prayer, and mentorship.

When you look back to what you were doing first, it is always with you. Now I know their secret, but as long as I fight them, they're also trying to draw me back to their covenant (...) [I asked: It never ends?]. The effects? They end! Now I don't have these experiences anymore, the demonic dreams and attacks. I was filled by the Spirit, and also started feeding in the Word regularly. I memorized scriptures. The Bible encourages me a lot. I got close to men of God, received advice, and improved my prayer life. This made me a little mature, and the attacks stopped. So I'd say that the Word, the Spirit, and prayer can deliver you.

Evil affects emanating “from the village” are indeed an ongoing potentiality in his life, but they have not jeopardized, at least until now, his certainty about spiritual rebirth. Instead of the decay of a Christian “symbolic of sin” into a “symbolic of defilement” (Ricoeur 1969), which seems to be Meyer’s (1998) prognostic about the endless resource of Ghanaian Pentecostals to deliverance sessions, David has converted evil and the past into a negative motor for increasing piety, understood as both sanctity and purity. Against the possibility of being predated upon and “eaten” by witches, he has developed his own spiritual diet, becoming full with the Word and the Spirit, and “strong” in prayer.

I can't even remember the last day I got into a fight. I've never fought anyone since I became a Christian. I don't beat anyone. I fall on my knees and pray. Our body is the temple of God, and the temple of God has nothing to do with darkness. My father is a pagan, not my enemy. The enemy is behind him. So I don't fight the physical body, I fight the spirit in him, and I use the weapon of prayer.

Militaristic intensity is transpired from Daniel’s transfiguration into his “prayer warrior” persona. During the 4-hour prayer sections I experienced in his company, his short thin body and calm countenance were infused by a sacred fury that often scared me. Guttural glossolalia, sweat, and physical exhaustion signal that “travailing prayers” are part of Daniel’s own personal sacrificial economy. The subject of faith here is neither an event-like blank slate, as it retains the past, nor a self-possessed individual, but a subject that constitutes itself through continuous self-donation, of body and soul, to God. Evil has itself been converted into an ongoing fuel to Christian zeal, transforming the past into a piety-increasing negativity.

## 2.7. Rethinking Pentecostal natality through spiritual maturation

In this chapter, I found in the notion of “spiritual maturation” and the various organic tropes of nurturance and kinship that stem from it a productive ethnographic path to trace in the field and analyze some emic responses to the question of Christian discontinuity and relatedness. Although anthropologists (Meyer 1999, Cannel 2006, Robbins 2007, Engelke 2010) and natives alike, as recognized by Gariott and O’Neill (2008), have been disturbed by the problem of defining Christianity, it is important to note that, whereas the observers’ position often displays a normativity that remains undeclared, “native” responses are unequivocally concerned with the shaping of a Pentecostal norm amidst contexts of uncertainty and the trivialization of the rhetoric of discontinuity.



Whenever approached from the point of view of Christian maturation, conversion tends to be dissociated from the idea of a self-fulfilling event, working instead as a doorway into a longer “conversion career”, or “the members’ passage, within his or her social and cultural context, through levels, types and phase of religious participation” (Droogers, Gooren, and Houtepen in Gooren 2010: 48). Whereas the grammar of the event is concerned with introducing a sharp in/out, before/after divide between Christian and non-Christian, spiritual maturation mobilizes a dialectics of grace and growth, discontinuity and realignment in which pedagogy, practice, and discipleship play key roles. The result is a dual notion of spiritual rebirth, which indicates, on the one hand, a shared adoption by grace producing a common and homogenous identity of “children of God”, and on the other, heterogeneous communities and publics endowed by diverse levels of growth, thus competency, authority, and influence, in which one enters as a “spiritual baby” in need of nurturance, guidance, and care. By going through maturation a process of maturation, one may even become a “man of God”, making of Christianity a life vocation. The logic whereby growth stabilizes the effectiveness of discontinuity retrospectively also means that converts are always at risk of remaining in a lifelong Christian infancy, helplessly populated by demons and witches, and characterized by the lack of personal engagement with the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and the Christian life, activities that the immature Christian is ready to fully delegate to men to God.

The event of conversion and its ritual marker, the sinner’s prayer, still had a relevant place in the testimonies of Gideon and Daniel, even when trivialized. I begin here, then, to draw some conclusions about how discontinuity and realignment cooperate concretely in a conversion career. Let us take a closer look in this ritual technology of Pentecostal discontinuity. During an altar call that concluded one of Lighthouse Chapel’s massive Sunday meetings in April 2010, bishop Dag Heward-Mills led approximately 150 men and women through the following recitation, after inviting them to stand up and walk toward the pulpit:

Repeat with me: Jesus [pause for repetition], I am nobody [pause for repetition]. I’ve made far too many mistakes in my life [pause for repetition]. I’m small and insignificant [pause for repetition]. I cannot save myself. Daddy, you died for me on the cross and resurrected to save me [pause for repetition]. Come and dwell in me [pause for repetition]. Be my Lord and personal savior [repeats 3x increasing the intensity]. Thank you Jesus [3x decreasing the intensity]. Amen? [Answer: Amen]. You’re blessed. You’re a new creation now. Let’s clap our hands for them [everyone claps and cheers].

Due to its highly formalized and transposable nature, this joint prayer could have been performed in any Pentecostal church of Ghana or even outside the church boundaries. According to the Arminian theology adopted by evangelicals and Pentecostals at large, the individuals who followed bishop Dag and recited the prayer consciously chose to convert and join the Kingdom of God. Disavowing any trace of Calvinistic “election”, grace is presented as an abundant and universally available good, resulting from Christ’s atonement. Christ wants to save you, and the bishop goes as far as to claim: “You *are* a new creation *now*”. But what is one choosing in this case? And how to approach the radical performativity of these words?

As I understand, although sharing some qualities with the genre of the creed, whose recitation indexes a personal confession of a set of doctrinal propositions, the rhetorical model here at stake is dominantly that of a verbal contract and a promise, two exemplary forms of performative speech acts (Austin 1975). As a contract, conversion requires from those who go through it “accepting Christ as Lord and personal savior” or “giving one’s life to Christ”. Both verbalizations of agency stress passivity, as either compliance or self-donation. They reveal how the act of conversion is performed by a will divided, which chooses freely to “give itself” to Christ in order to “receive him”. What the convert chooses is basically to submit to divine will and no longer choose on its own, as a self-possessed individual, thus restoring this hierarchical relationship at a personal

level<sup>59</sup>. Moreover, and taking into consideration the possibility that conversion may be infelicitous, the sinner's prayer can be also read as a promise, or a conditioned form of anticipation: if you do  $x$  (give your life to Christ),  $y$  will be delivered (salvation, spiritual rebirth). In this sense, as a ritual event, spiritual rebirth marks the beginning of a process (the "walk with Christ") whose felicity can only be established *a posteriori*, hence anticipatory statement as "you are a new creation now" have the finality of inducing submission rhetorically.

Retaining the organic lexicon that characterizes the notion of spiritual rebirth, we may argue that, more than a "break with the past" per se, moments of evangelistic interpellation like those experienced by Gideon at the Baptism church and by Daniel through Prophet Mensah are best understood as what William Connolly (2011) calls "pregnant moments" (69), events of crisis, trauma, surprise, or hope that elicited a momentary lack of self-mastery, pulling the subject out of its conventional horizons of self-recognition and into a murky and excessive duration, from which emerges the new. A secular parallel would be the smoker who right after being exposed to a documentary revealing the shocking truth behind the tobacco industry or to the death of a significant other by lung cancer, is convinced that he will quit, only to be dragged into the old gestalt in the next hour. These are events "in which layers of the past and future anticipation reverberate" (*idem*), and can easily recede into oblivion and being aborted. Daniel had prayed the sinner's prayer at E.P. Church, but left the temporal discontinuity offered by conversion abort, according to himself, much because of the church's incapacity to "feed" him properly. At the all-night prayer meeting things came out differently, and Daniel inhabited this event with a different attitude, as did Gideon at his first opportunity, making it thrive by pushing the will divided who recited the sinner's prayer into a project of wholeheartedness. By doing so, Gideon and Daniel made the contract and promise of salvation inscribed in the otherwise formulaic words he recited full of actuality, gravity, and futurity.

The two biographies revisited above definitely confirm the general affinity between Christian conversion and disconnection, and not only with old values and practices, but also with kin, friends, and familiar places. Migration was part of all of both of them, and religious change was achieved far from home and led to enduring dislocation. In both cases, conversion entailed a more or less forceful alienation from nuclear and extended family networks stemming from "the village", understood as both an imaginary and concrete site. To be sure, those were lives already characterized by some degree of uncertainty, abandonment, and mobility, and by the ubiquitous presence of religion at the background, as it is often the case in Ghana. Those were worlds already broken, but not methodically broken, and spiritual rebirth brought religion to the foreground as an organizing principle that provided Gideon and Daniel with the possibility of regaining what MacIntyre (1984) calls "the unity of a human life", or "a life that can be conceived and evaluated as a whole" (205).

As part of a unitary life, at least normatively, the born-again identity is irreducible to simply one more "social role" or persona these subjects perform in specific contexts. This new life, a whole life in Christ, started through radical transformative events, and yet had to slowly come to actualization through a process of maturation in which two interdependent forms of "realignment of rupture" (Engelke 2010) played a key role: a realignment with new regimes of habituation, and a realignment with networks of practice, transmission, and nurturance.

In my introduction, I presented C. S. Pierce's (1955: 5-22) pragmatist notions of belief, which is both embedded in habituation and open to contingency, making of the quest for truth an

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<sup>59</sup> Christ here plays the role of an advocate, whose atonement mediates the restoration of the bond between God and humans. This process of restoration is necessarily individual, since he died for humanity as a virtual whole but can only save "you" as an actual singularity.

everyday process of sedimentation that oscillates between “fixation” and “irritation” by doubt. Here, I am interested in how Peirce’s gradational notion of fixation addresses a phenomenon isomorphic to the one tackled by maturation: the variable intensity of belief. In order to be conceived through degrees of intensity, thus beyond the dualism of “do you believe it or not?”, the definition of religious belief must be dissociated from that of a mental consent to a set of theological propositions of a symbolic nature, which has been its hegemonic understanding in anthropology and the secular study of religion more generally (Poullion 1982, Asad 1993, Ruel 1997, Smith 1991). Although my Pentecostal interlocutors used the categories of “believer”/“unbeliever” in order to typify the divide between Christians and non-Christians, they addressed the inner variety of the Pentecostal field itself through the much more dynamic category of “faith”, defined by the Apostle Paul in a widely quoted passage of the Book of Hebrews (11:1) as “(...) being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (NIV). Different from belief, understood as a cognitive engagement with a set of propositional truth-claims, faith indexes submission to the will of God side-by-side with an attitude of expectation. Faith can be tested by the seductions of “the world” and demonic agents, but also edified through public preaching, worship, and miracles, as well as by private piety and revelations. Faith can be “weak” or “strong” and it can oscillate within one’s walk with Christ. These various shades of faith as intensity reveal its performative nature as an energetic component of both ritual gatherings (church services, crusades, prophetic and healing séances and all-night prayer meetings) and the everyday of piety, the preferable site where it finds higher levels of fixation<sup>60</sup>.

In the latter case, faith is nurtured and grows at a personal level through the convert’s dedication of time to Bible reading, meditation, and memorization (“feeding in the Word”), fasting and prayer, praise and worship, witnessing, and various forms of fellowship. We have seen in ICGC’s discipleship program that one of the effects of this encompassing spiritual diet is the attunement of the born-again subject to the Holy Spirit as a supporter of moral sanctification and a source of charismatic empowerment. Moreover, according to the Pentecostal ethics of church labor, faith can be evidence through practices deemed less spiritual at first sight, as “service”, or the giving of time and talent to the body of Christ. In all these contexts, the performativity of faith appears as a process, thus requiring an enduring expression of submission, whose exercise is fundamental to the project of making discontinuity thrive and seek fixation.

When most of my interlocutors insisted in dissociating in their conversion careers the moment when they became born again (sinner’s prayer) from the moment in which they achieved “commitment” or “conviction”, they were addressing a qualitative shift affecting their faith, or a shift toward greater fixation. We may remind that habituation made Gideon move from “trust in the man of God” during the ritual event that gave birth to his conversion to “commitment”. Both Gideon and Daniel recognized the effects of commitment through changes of personality, a drive to disentangle oneself from worldly associations and distractions, and the desire to dedicate greater portions of their days to spiritual disciplines, church activities, and evangelism.

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<sup>60</sup> Church services can also be sites of learning and cultivation of faith, but men of God also tend to attract large numbers of people seeking spiritual protection and intercession. The place of faith as an index of submission in these contexts is best understood through a closer attention to how agency is normatively distributed in them. For instance, divine healing is not only about channeling divine power through the Pentecostal minister, as the believer should be able to “receive” one’s healing by displaying faith during these events, making intercession cooperative while inhabiting God’s promises and generous will with the right disposition. We have seen that, according to prosperity theology, faith is evidenced at a ritual context by giving, but also by displaying specific attitudes while giving. The emphasis on faith as a normative disposition that should be displayed by the receivers helps us understand why the promises of healing and prosperity are not falsified when they are not actualized. It is not God or the pastor who should account for the misfiring of intercession, but the believer, who did not display enough faith, thus was not ready to receive.

In fact, one of the problems in theories of conversion that define it as a cognitive shift in worldviews or narrative frameworks (Horton 1971) is the fact that converts do not fully know the religion they are embracing when they convert. My interviews at large revealed a spectrum of motivations to convert that stretch into much weaker levels of engagement with Christian truth than “trust”. A few of my interlocutors were even sincere enough to confess quite unapologetically that what attracted them to Christianity at first was some sort of short-term material or social gain through the church: make use of their development or charity apparatus, look for someone to marry, enjoy their lively praise and worship bands or simply hang out more often with friends who had become members. Someone who is today a Lighthouse Chapel’s pastor told me that the reason he answered the altar call was the possibility of being physically close to bishop Dag Heward-Mills, a famous man of God he had seen on TV. Others sought charismatic churches explicitly as “clients” looking for intercessory relief from material and spiritual problems. Nevertheless, as maturing Christians, all of them claimed that along their walk with Christ “something changed”. They did not know what they were doing during the altar call, but the diverse motivations that first led them to recite the sinner’s prayer were themselves converted into something else: commitment.

It is telling that this terminology (“commitment”, “conviction”) refers especially to matters of volition, and not only to matters of understanding. The emergence of commitment is frequently recognized not only as the moment of finding greater intellectual clarity about what is Christianity, but especially as the critical point in one’s conversion career in which submission to the moral and spiritual disciplines of the Christian life ceased to appear as mandatory, oppressive or external to the subject and became more spontaneous, natural, and desirous. This process reveals how the will can be thought as a shared faculty, an attitude, but also as an acquired capacity, a power to act that, albeit divided, as in any ascetic regime, seeks wholeheartedness through re-habitation. As argued one of ICGC’s lay leader, when he committed “the burden of Christianity became lighter”. By precipitating disciplines as a desire and a sensibility, I believe that commitment indicates that habits are starting to precipitate as what Marcel Mauss (1978) calls a *habitus*, a notion that allows us to conceive the link between the religious subject and a narrative tradition in its practical dimensions, understanding religious values as an acquired craft, a set of aptitudes and dispositions in which repetitive practice and the body figure as centrally as the mind and the soul. According to Asad (1997), Mauss’ key point in his essay of the techniques of the body is that:

(...) the human body is not to be viewed simply as the passive recipient of ‘cultural imprints’, still less as the active source of ‘natural expression’ that are ‘clothed in local history an culture’, but as the self-developable means for achieving a range of human objects - from styles of physical movement (for example, walking), through modes of emotional being (for example, composure), to kinds of spiritual experience (for example, mystical states) (47-48).

This awareness brings productive input on two interrelated aspects of the “spiritual diet” of spiritual maturation: its generative and teleological nature. First, my interlocutors’ recognition that habituation as a means to spiritual maturity was not simply the onus of Christian conversion, or the biographical baggage they had to leave behind, but also the bonus of Christian discontinuity disallows Robbins’ (2007: 10) reduction of the *habitus* to a figure of “continuity thinking” inducing indigenization and syncretism. That is indeed the prevalent meaning of this concept in the work of Pierre Bourdieu (see also Mahmood 2005: 138-39), whose habitus theory is taken explicitly as an unconscious tool of social reproduction: “The habitus, a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history” (Bourdieu 1990: 54). But as a tool of Christian maturation, habituation indicates simply that Pentecostalism as a conscious life project is irreducible to a “worldview”, an abstract system of values and ineffable experiences, being best understood as a series of prescribed practices that

embed and embody virtues, values, and experiences, thus varying according to the level of personal submission.

Maturation therefore evokes the generative nature of personal piety, or what Faubion (2001, 2011) calls the “autopoietic” mechanisms of pedagogy, a concept he deems essential to understand “the dynamics not simply of ethical homeostasis but also of ethical change” (2001: 9). The autopoiesis of Christian maturation is exemplified by the very notion of commitment referred above. On the one hand, commitment is a cultivated volitional state acquired through a repetitive engagement with the Christian disciplines. On the other, a more intense dedication to these activities is the very outcome of becoming committed. The result is an organic cycle of faith in which practice produces positive feedback into itself. As a result, faith is intensified into commitment as the “break with the past” becomes further established. In Gideon’s case, the generativity of growth is seen rendering his calling to full-time ministry, which he recognized as a “desire”, progressively clearer. Second, it is important to stress that when I recognize the generative connection between habituation and the event of conversion, I am not claiming that mature Christians take their “break with the past” as self-evident and unproblematic. They become “convicted” not about their salvation, but about their decision to embrace the Christian life as a teleological project. Moreover, although habits of faith are vital to the cultivation of a closer relationship with God, they cannot normalize the very substance of faith according to the Apostle Paul’s quotation above: hope and expectation. Christian truth and the caesura of conversion cannot be fully embodied or established simply because they are always a projection into the future, a promise whose delivery belongs to God’s sovereign will.

The generative and teleological nature of Pentecostal habits of faith help us understand why the charismatic churches’ very dissemination of “signs and wonder” in Ghana can also produce negative feedback into Christian maturation. By delegating one’s personal relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit to ministers, converts might be preventing themselves from taking the first step into the cycle of faith necessary to the fixation of belief, thus remaining dependent and immature. This is not a sharp opposition. Pentecostals of all sorts believe that specific individuals have been specially equipped to perform miracles. But they also know that miracles can be either important tools of evangelism, giving verifiability to the claim that God is still a living God, or simply manifestations of spiritual power without any generative effect on those who seek them. One should definitely “trust” men of God, but this should not be a hindrance to personal “commitment”, and the notion of maturity requires a “balanced diet” of autonomy and heteronomy.

Furthermore, the narratives above demonstrate how men of God often exert a double-role of mediators of divine power and of models, guides, and mentors. These two modalities of power, one intercessory, the other emulative, reveal two facets of Pentecostalism’s social productivity, one ritualized and spectacularized, the other pedagogical and centered on regimes of habituation, which albeit not necessarily contradictory, might inflict the promises of Christian natality and growth with double binds. Daniel’s case is telling in this regard because of his capacity to deal with the demons of the past in an almost everyday basis without resorting to deliverance ministers, hence opting out of the generative and teleological cycle of piety. Different from Gideon, who organized the vicious autopoiesis of the past, which shaped him in his biological father’s likeness, and the virtuous autopoiesis connecting him to Christ as two stages of a temporal sequence, Daniel described his status as living “in-between Gods”. Although this moral and spiritual economy does not necessitate incapacity to break with the past, I argued that it inevitably shows how Daniel’s past has had a formative impact on how he accommodates contingency and uncertainty within his Christian project. This is a past that has been encoded by Pentecostal demonology, as in the cases analyzed by Meyer (1998), but it is also a past that has been encompassed by Christian teleology, feeding upon what I called a piety increasing negativity.



According to Engelke, the realignments of Christian rupture are always an “exercise in boundary making” (2010: 184), and Daniel obviously performs this labor in ways quite distinctive from those of Gideon. As a result, the two realignments of rupture these subjects have given birth to two alternative styles of Pentecostal faith. Indeed, Daniel’s highly agonistic faith would not have thrived as such if he had sought nurturance in alternative networks like ICGC or Lighthouse Chapel, where this sensibility tends to be seen as “villager” because of the excessive weight it attributes to demonic opposition. How to account for this divide? First, these two styles cannot be explained as resulting from different socio-economic backgrounds, which are quite similar. More importantly, Daniel’s personal proximity to traditional religion is also not a sufficient cause. During my longer research at Lighthouse Chapel’s Bible school I met a variety of neophyte pastors, most of them Ewe, whose living and deceased mothers were “fetish priestesses”. Nonetheless, all of them were much less concerned with the effects of their village kin’s “covenant” upon them. Although they included “travailing prayers” in the spiritual diet, the potentiality of evil was not experienced as an ongoing threat, and they never described their status as “in-between Gods”.

One might conclude that the gap between Gideon and Daniel, and between Daniel and these students is not biographical per se, but testifies to a way of engaging with the past that has been acquired through their realignment with communities of practice and sensibility that have a denominational and non-denominational reach. It was within these spaces, and not in a social vacuum, that they found, framed, and channeled the generativity and teleology of their new regimes of habituation. In sum, they were interpellated and committed, but first “followed” specific men of God, triggering alternative styles of Pentecostal spirituality.

The fact that most conversion narratives I was exposed to made sure to acknowledge the names of specific agents who “led” their protagonists to Christ testifies to the fact that, by adopting Christianity, converts were also being adopted, thus finding in the evangelist a doorway into associations that had a formative impact on their faith. As Asad argues: “Why does it seem so important to us to insist that the converted are ‘agents’? Why do we discount the convert’s claim that he or she has been ‘made into’ a Christian?” (1996: 271). Asad shows that religious conversion tends to evade a flat equation between subject and agent, as well as the opposition between choice and constraint. The variety of allusions to “leading” and “following”, and especially the ubiquitous recourse to kinship terminology in the conversion narratives I collected indicate that the agency and responsibility for these “breaks with the past” have been defined and distributed across networks and allegiances with both social and spiritual components.

The privileged link between kinship - fictive and otherwise - and what Carsten (2000, 2004) calls relatedness is no stranger to Ghanaians. This is testified by the widespread use of kinship terminology within one’s age groups (brothers and sister) and as a marker of authority and deference to elders (fathers, mothers, “aunties” and uncles). Gideon and Daniel’s lives also exemplify the robust social productivity of extended family networks in this country, often used as a means to allocate and redistribute wealth and opportunities. Seeking better education, they had been adopted temporarily by foster parents in Accra at an early age, a practice extremely common in the whole of West Africa (Bledsoe 1990, Alber, Martin and Notermans 2013). As argues Goody (1973), one of the visible effects of the delegation of nurturance beyond the nuclear family in this region is how in order to grasp someone’s upbringing it is required to ask both “Who bore you?” and “Who reared you?” (182).

But kinship is no stranger to Christianity itself, which begs the question of how specifically cultural is Pentecostal relatedness in Ghana. Although a vast set of scholarly works have provided important ethnographic evidence about how conversion to Christianity in the global south induces the individualistic suspension of kinship allegiances and responsibilities, including the place of ancestral spirits in them (Keller 2005, Robbins 2004b, Keane 2007), the relevance of kinship to

Pentecostals has not passed unnoticed. In a very general comment on new forms of belonging provided by Pentecostal churches in Southern Africa, Maxwell argues that “the new focus of the believer’s social life becomes the church: an unending round of Bible studies, prayer meetings, choir practices and concerts, revivals, evangelistic activities, weddings”, concluding that “the church becomes the believer’s extended family as ties based on kinship diminish (Maxwell 1998: 353–355). Maxwell’s comment still works through a contrast between biological and Christian kinship, but church and household can be also seen overlapping in Pentecostal practice, for instance, in Kamp’s (2011, 2012) studies about the dissemination of Christian notions of the family and gender in Mozambique. As I illustrated rapidly in the section about ICGC’s discipleship program, the Christian family is an internal component of their definition of proper born-again Christianity, being instilled pedagogically among members through the facilitation and encouragement of church endogamy and pastoral influence over partnerships and families through counseling services<sup>61</sup>.

Closer to my own interests, Klaitz (2010) has explored in his ethnography about an Apostolic church in Botswana how “faith is about the quality of a person’s engagement with others” (20). The church community is explored as a space of kinships that thrives and is unsettled by specific “moral passions” cultivated through networks of generosity, love, and envy. In a passage that resonates with some of the accounts I reproduced above, he argues: “For many Bitshepi members, hearing the word is a matter of becoming “spiritual children” of MmaMaipelo [the church leader], whom they call their ‘spiritual parent’” (8). Maxwell and Kamp are not referring to anything peculiarly “African”, although they obviously deal with African contexts that facilitate these forms of connectivity. On the other hand, Kleits tends to ground his analysis of faith as relationality through a culturalist argument that opposes it to Christian rupture:

While I have heard some quite arresting stories from Bitshepi members of how conversion experiences had brought about radical ruptures with their past conduct and desires, the thrust of such accounts was that faith in God had recast their ongoing relationship with other people. A relationship with Jesus tends to be less important than the quality of relationships to the others, as previous studies of Christian movements in southern Africa have likewise indicated (2010: 19).

Although the book illustrates with extreme richness the relational thickness of faith during everyday and ritual church life, I saw no evidence about why and how these horizontal and vertical church bonds have a necessarily detrimental effect on members’ personal relationship with Christ. Regardless of the cause of such opposition (analytical or empirical), my interest on spiritual kinship is quite distinct, as I see it as a requirement set by Christian maturation to a felicitous temporal rupture. Let us consider the place of kinship in Gideon’s life story. When Gideon embraces the ICGC family through its peripheries, as a community of practice that enables him both to express and to increase his commitment, he was not seeking communal life per se. When his conversion narrative fractured and reproduced the figure of the father into biological/Christ/mentors, he was opposing his pre-Christian past to his Christian present and future but also acknowledging that the realignment with personal and mediatized spiritual fathers sedimented his conversion and personal piety. When he refracted submission to Christ during his informal pastoral training as “submission to the man of God”, he was not engaging in a relation of bigmanship (Price 1974), since the religious component of learning and emulation that animates these relationships disallows such

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<sup>61</sup> This process includes even a biopolitical component. In ICGC, when a couple applies to pre-marital counseling, the church leads them through counseling sections about love, sex, childbearing, and household responsibilities within a Christian family, but also through medical exams intended to diagnose any sexually transmitted disease, if one of the partner has been sexually active.



reduction. This is far from claiming that discipleship is deprived of power, but one still needs to ask further questions about how authority is exercised in this case.

It is telling that, whenever inquired about the prevalence of kinship terminology as a way of encoding Christian discipleship in Ghana, the large majority of my interlocutors addressed me to two relational Biblical types: Prophet Elijah and his servant Elisha, who inherited his master's prophetic mantle (Gideon: "It's like Elisha pouring water in Elijah's hands. It's all part of the apprenticeship") and especially the Apostle Paul and his pupil Timothy. The terms "adoption" and "Spirit of adoption" are used several times by Paul in connection with the Father-son relationship between God and his children. Fredriksen (2000) relates this to Paul's reading of the Christic event as the expansion of God's family from the Jews to the Gentiles by fulfilling the Law (and the covenant's bodily marker, circumcision) through the Holy Spirit: "Through the Spirit, the Gentile is made a son of God through adoption (Gal 4: 4-6; Rom 8: 15, but cf v. 23, Jews are already son, 9: 4). Through the Spirit, the spiritually mature or perfected individual (*teleios*) can receive the secret and hidden wisdom of God, namely, the good news about Christ (I Cor 2: 6ff)." The Spirit therefore allows the participation of the believer in the dying and rising body of Christ, understood as an adopted messianic family.

But this individualized and messianic version of Christian adoption, which corroborates Badiou's characterization of the Apostle as a "poet-thinker of the event" (2003: 2), is complemented by Paul's pedagogical role as a church leader and producer of disciples. As shown by Castelli (1991: 89-117), Paul used kinship terminology extensively in his letters in order to legitimize his leadership, often displaying an ambiguity of parenthood as fatherly love and patriarchal authority. In one of the most synthetic passages unearthing his discipleship method, Paul pleads to the church at Corinth: "Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church (I Corinthians 4: 16-17, NKJV). In the passage, Paul refracts Christ's paternal type as an authorized token, a function that he is transferring to his spiritual son Timothy before continuing with his mobile mission. The community is hence urged to access Christ through a particular mimetic lineage stemming from Paul, reproduced through Timothy, and codified through the language of kinship.

By stressing that Ghanaian Pentecostals are explicitly concerned with granting the Christian nature of spiritual kinship, I am not denying that its practical uses might be inflected by cultural expectations and attitudes or specific strategies. Nevertheless, it is important to notice that spiritual kinship does find in scriptural models like the one provided by Paul and Timothy a script for shaping and managing, that is, governing relations according to authorized religious templates. It is obvious that the very level of social productivity of spiritual kinship must be taken with caution. I showed above how both Prophet Patrick's and ICGC families in Christ are highly heterogeneous assemblages, inhabited by "visitors" and having among its members a series of "church-goers" and "immature Christians", but also a good number of maturing Christians and lay leaders supporting their full-time ministerial staff. Following these various levels of realignment we find various shades of faith as intensity, ranging from entertainment, distraction, uncommitted edification (as a form of "self-help"), trust in the man of God, to active commitment and emulation. As it travels through various degrees of submission, the church-as-family might vary from rhetorical and trivialized to deeply affective and effective.

Moreover, spiritual kinship can do many things and assume various modulations. It might become depersonalized as the denomination's vision and mission, hinges that helps converting the leader's charisma into disciplinary forms of self-government, a *telos* for action and self-recognition. But it might also be a highly personal and emotional relation of counseling and learning connecting individuals at different stages of their conversion careers. In the case of upcoming pastors, spiritual

kinship becomes quite straightforwardly a component of apprenticeship, whereby spiritual offspring learn as they are progressively exposed to the pastoral *métier*, moving from fringes to center, where the father lies. And all these options might also overlap in complex and diverse ways, and that was the case for Gideon and Daniel.

I am nevertheless interested in how, taken in its entirety, the chain of organic motifs stemming from Christian natality illustrated above - spiritual rebirth, growth/maturation, kinship - can be approached as Pentecostals' own way of reckoning with what MacIntyre (1997) calls ethical flourishing. By translating the Greek *eu zēn*, often understood as the “good life”, as “to flourish”, MacIntyre enriches the idea of ethics as a set of practical prescriptions with an emphasis on how ethical norms are acquired through cooperation and nurturance. He argues that ethical inquiry should start not from a subject already endowed with ethical faculties, a fully matured subject, but with the figure of the child, a being whose vulnerabilities are slowly converted into capacities through nurturance. In this sense, tutelage is a necessary stage of anyone's moral development, a process in which the authority to define what is good for me must be delegated temporarily to others: parents, guardians, teachers, trainers, etc. By engaging practically with these agents of nurturance, individuals find “different and alternative sets of goods to be achieved, with different possible modes of flourishing” (75). Aware of the danger of falling into an idyllic pastoral of human sociality, MacIntyre also recognizes that these institutionalized networks of giving and receiving “are also always structures of unequal distribution of power, structure's well-designed both to mask and to protect those same distributions” (MacIntyre 1999: 102).

It became clear to me that, considering the widespread anxieties about charismatic authority and authenticity and the deterritorialized nature of Pentecostalism as a discourse in Ghana today, the quest for mid-range everyday models of/for piety through discipleship has become a vital source of authoritative transmission of this spirituality. In this sense, when those inciting more spiritual growth claim that, as an event, spiritual rebirth is the beginning of a new life as a spiritual baby, they are pointing to the fact that, despite this spirituality's individualistic, anti-traditionalist, and experiential definition of proper Christianity as having a personal relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit, this definition can only thrive through proper agents of guidance and exemplarity. It is better to accommodate learning and sociality within the toolkit of proper Christianity than to watch these fade into “the world”. As a result, the “break with the past” comes to require a conversion of habits and primary allegiances in order to flourish, and by doing so, assumes specific designs.

Many questions are left unanswered: How is practice and emulation embraced by a religious tradition in which the directedness of charisma and experience are so central? Are the relations accompanying discipleship as generative as the teleology of religious devotion? How both these instances, personal devotion and discipleship, overlap? And what are their effects in the dissemination of Pentecostalism in Ghana as a power of natality and nurturance? Having pointed to a few contexts and mechanisms that propitiate pedagogy and flourishing in the Pentecostal ecclesia at large, in the next three chapters, I address the questions above by focusing on a particular denomination, Lighthouse Chapel International, and its Bible school, Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center.

### Chapter 3 – A zeal machine: pedagogy, charisma, and authority in Lighthouse Chapel International

In the previous chapter, I tracked the organic thread of discourses and practices shaping Christian maturation, and outlined some forms of “realignments of Pentecostals rupture” (Engelke 2010) whereby conversions become established and faith grows, assuming specific designs. The notion of maturation allowed me to consider Christian conversion not only as a “break with the past”, which can be successful or not, but as the beginning of a lifelong process of personal renewal predicated on the convert’s engagement with new narrative frameworks, regimes of habituation, and social allegiances of a Christian nature. Through the analysis of two conversion careers in particular, I offered a glimpse of the figure of the man of god that transcends spiritual intercession and miracle-making. Pentecostal ministers are also thresholds to communities of practice and an exemplum to be followed in one’s “walk with Christ”, enveloping Christianity into a logic of apprenticeship and discipleship. This logic is encompassed within the discourse of “maturation” as a key pedagogical dimension of Pentecostal power, which points to the practical and generative engagement of converts with regimes of self-fashioning (Asad 1993, Mahmood 2005, Hirschkind 2006, Faubion 2010). At the same time, maturation calls attention to the importance of others in conversion careers (Gooren 2010), individuals responsible for the concrete transmission, and for the immersion of converts in communities of nurturance that are ethical, spiritual, and which flourish socially (MacIntyre 1999).

In this chapter, I take a more situated look at the social productivity of Pentecostal pedagogy by focusing on a particular denomination, Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI). The church’s history, vision, mission, and organizational networks are presented, with a focus on an apostolic ideology that is explicitly concerned with producing lay leaders and fulltime pastors. I analyze how Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center fits in this broader framework, and introduce the reader to its facilities, while also offering a general picture of the student body--socio-economic and religious backgrounds, diverse trajectories to the school, and conceptions of the call to fulltime ministry. The chapter finally elaborates on how LCI’s apostolic project is advanced through a mix of charismatic authority (following Weber), centered on a strong leader and his revealed mission, and the kind of pastoral power envisioned by Foucault, in which individualized technologies of the Self become diffused throughout church networks. In the following two chapters, I examine in greater detail the pedagogy of Anagkazo.

#### 3.1. Lighthouse Chapel International: an apostolic mission and ethos

The history of Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI) begins in 1982, when then brother Dag Heward-Mills - who had found Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Christian maturation as a secondary student through the Scripture Union - was admitted at the University of Ghana’s School of Medicine. Immediately upon his arrival at the Legon campus, brother Dag decided to give a more active expression to his Christianity and founded a chapter of Calvary Road Incorporated (CRI), a Pentecostal fellowship dedicated to the promotion of praise and worship meetings and Christian drama. Brother Dag’s project was suddenly interrupted when Jerry Rawlings’ military regime shut down the university for 10 months in the same year, as part of his strategy of silencing political opposition at the institution. Having family in England, Heward-Mills moved to London and started a fellowship at Pastor Michael Bassett’s burgeoning Victory Church, where he rapidly became a lay leader<sup>62</sup>. He returned to Ghana in 1984, resuming his academic life and the CRI meetings. Through

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<sup>62</sup> Once a pornographer and casino owner, pastor Michael Bassett became a leading charismatic leader in England during the 1980s and 90s, and a renowned specialist in “church growth”.

the fellowship, he met one of his longtime collaborators, Eddy Addy, and his future wife Adelaide Baiden. In 1985, brother Dag was transferred to Korle-Bu on residency, and transposed his Christian activities from Legon to Korle-Bu and Korle-Gonno. Still struggling with the prospects of a full-time ministerial vocation, brother Dag also organized a prayer group that met in Korle-Gonno beach for prayers daily, from 10pm to 12 am. At that time, he met another of his key collaborators, E.A.T. Sackey.

As I showed in chapter 1, immersion in Christian networks enabled by fellowships frequently led to the foundation of new churches in Ghana, and that was also the case with LCI. Under the leadership of brother Dag, the Korle-Bu branch of CRI progressively coalesced into church form: its "horizontal" fellowship practices began to articulate with a more "vertical" and hierarchical pastoral leadership. Still connected to CRI, the emerging Korle-Bu Christian Centre (KCC) started meeting at the Medical School Auditorium, later relocating to one of the School of Hygiene lecture rooms. Their lively Sunday morning and Tuesday evening services and noisy all-night prayer sessions attracted a good number of medical students, but also sparked opposition within the student body and school authorities. Nevertheless, brother Dag was able to mobilize his Christian connections and stretch KCC's activities within the school's public facilities for a long time. In 1987, KCC officially broke bonds with CRI, and brother Dag was excommunicated from the fellowship, which was against the idea of having churches being formed<sup>63</sup>. KCC was rechristened The Lighthouse in 1988, according to the church's website, because pastor Dag "believed that the vision of The Lighthouse extended beyond the suburb of Korle-Bu"<sup>64</sup>. The church grew and required larger spaces. Meetings were first relocated to the Medical School Canteen and then to the House Officers' flats, where students on residency live temporarily. Pastor Dag completed his medical studies in 1989, the same year in which the church acquired its current name and started the construction of its first building in Korle-Bu surroundings. The congregation began using the church even while it was being built. Step-by-step, the church grew into the denomination's first headquarters, the Light of the World Cathedral. In 1990, brother Dag was officially ordained by Pastor Michael Basset in London, staying abroad for a few months working as his assistant pastor and fundraising for the LCI project. As an rising minister, Dag Heard-Mills had also been mentored in Ghana by Nicholas Duncan-Williams, whose Action Faith International was already thriving at that time. LCI grew exponentially since then, and its headquarters were transferred in 2003 to the Qodesh, a grandiose set of buildings located in the neighborhood of Kaneshie<sup>65</sup>.

According to the accurate description of the denomination's website, the Qodesh is "a soul-winning hub powering [LCI's] the vision"<sup>66</sup>, and organizes various Christian activities from Monday to Sunday. At its heart lies the Jesus Cathedral, which can accommodate more than 5,000 people in each of its major Sunday and weekday services. Four smaller chapels host various types of events: special church services (in other languages, such as Twi and French, and for specific audiences, including children and youth), small ministries meetings (prayer groups, choirs, praise and worship teams, counseling teams, etc.), discipleship courses (New Believers, Water Baptism, and Holy Ghost baptism courses), a weekly "prayer clinic" (dedicated to transmitting to members the art and habit of prayer), and pre-marital counseling meetings<sup>67</sup>. Three large office buildings, called Judea 1-3, are reserved for the church bureaucracy and periodic pastoral workshops. The Qodesh includes a

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<sup>63</sup> A few years later, then Pastor Dag apologized to the leaders of CRI, which forgave him and restored the relationship.

<sup>64</sup> <http://www.lighthousechapel.org/lci2/index.php/about-us/history>

<sup>65</sup> Qodesh is an Old Testament Hebrew word meaning "The Holy Hill".

<sup>66</sup> See <http://www.lighthousechapelqodesh.org/qodesh/>

<sup>67</sup> Annex chapels were named Adelaide (reference to Heward-Mills' wife), Fred Prince (famous American Word of Faith minister), Uncle James (one of bishop Dag's spiritual fathers at Scripture Union, when he was growing in the faith), and Yonggi Cho (famous Korean minister and bishop Dag's friend).

baptismal pool, the Milk and Honey snack bar, the Promised Land restaurant, and the Vision Bookstore. All these facilities were built around an enormous patio used as a parking lot, where one can see the tens of buses and hundreds of vans that facilitate the transport of members coming from diverse neighborhoods of Accra. In the background, one can see a tall antenna that broadcasts church services and conferences live on radio and TV. A fertility clinic was built in 2006 right beside the Qodesh, supplementing LCI's belief in prayer and faith healing with scientific expertise.

The intense transit of people and the variety of activities performed at the Qodesh often reminded me of an updated version of the missionary Salem system discussed in chapter one, but in this case LCI was a globalized *regnum* within Ghana's independent *regnum*, providing members and visitors with miracles, entertainment, media, health services, preaching, Biblical education, and networks of friendship, marriage, and discipleship, all these overseen by an effective system of church government. But the "Lighthouse family" also stretches its hands into "the world", and not only through media. The Qodesh organizes periodic charity actions targeting prisoners, the homeless, the sick, and the poor, managed by Lady Reverend Adelaide Heward-Mills. She has also founded an orphanage, the Lighthouse Christian Children's Home, and a primary school. The Qodesh community finds a more capillary expression in their cell-group system, dedicated to weekly one-hour Bible study meetings. They are called "Bussells". Today, the Qodesh counts with 605 "Bussells" grouped into 65 zones of Accra. They have no more than ten members each and are conducted by lay leaders trained by the denomination. As shown in the picture bellow, a sticker is placed on the front door or gate of the member's household, marking its status of meeting point and Lighthouse territory.



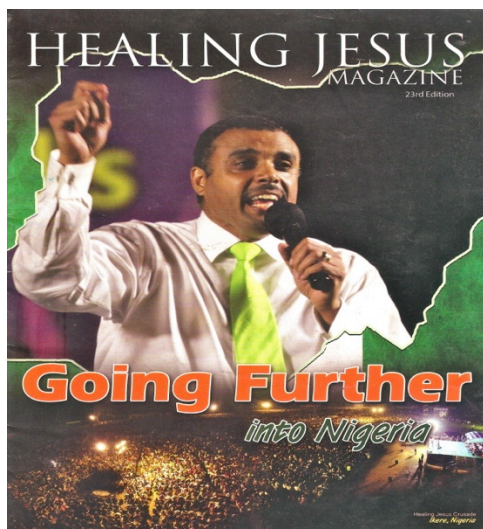
The Qodesh is the energetic heart of a much broader network of church branches spread throughout Accra, all regions of Ghana, and the world. LCI counts today with more than 1,200 branches in 61 countries worldwide. The most thriving churches are in Ghana and different African countries, especially South Africa and Kenya, although churches in different stages of development can be found in Asia, Oceania, Europe, the Caribbean, South and North America. Bishop Dag's messages have also travelled beyond Ghana's borders through books, DVDs, and the Internet. A prolific writer, he has published thirty books on diverse topics, which summarize his more than twenty years of ministry. He has written manuals about Christian piety in general (*Born Again* and *How You Can Be in the Perfect Will of God*) and for women (*Daughter, You can Make It*), prosperity (*Why Non-Tithing Christians Become Poor...and How Tithing Christians Can Become Rich* and *He Thant Hath, to Him Shall be Given*), "positive confessions" (*Name it, Claim it, Take It*), demonology (*Demons: How to Deal with Them*), Christian meditation (*Quiet Time, Hearing God's Voice*), and a long compendium on Christian marriage (*Model Marriage*). A larger section of his publications are dedicated to Christian leadership, both lay and full-time. He has published manuals about church planting, growth, and government (*The Mega-Church: How to Make your Church Grow, Church Planting, Rules of Church Work, Rule of Full-Time Ministry, The Art of Leadership, and Transform Your Pastoral Ministry*) and is widely known as an expert in the "anointing", or how to be empowered by the Holy Spirit for the ministerial work, as exemplified by the title of some of his most popular books, as *Steps to the*



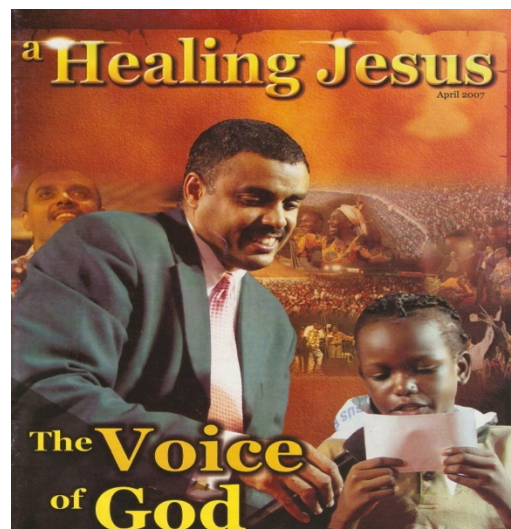
*Anointing and Catch the Anointing.*

Spiritual kinship and the relations between maturing Christians, apprentice pastors and mentors are among Pastor Dag's major preaching and writing topics, often being inflected by another ubiquitous theme, the importance of loyalty as a core value for the Christian life. The notion that loyalty and respect for spiritual parents are key components of a mature church community and successful pastoral team are summarized in books like *The Art of Following, Father and Loyalty, Leaders and Loyalty*, and *Loyalty and Disloyalty*. The importance of serving the body of Christ through lay leadership is the theme of *Many Are Called* and *The Art of Shepherding*. The pitfalls of the ministerial work and church life are dealt in graphic details by the trilogy *Those Who Leave You, Those Who Pretend, and Those Who Forget*. These books have been “planted” abroad, that is, donated to ministers of allied churches, today being used and commercialized by all LCI branches and many other denominations. As a result, they have been translated to Portuguese, French, Spanish, Russian, Indonesian, Latvian, Tamil, Sinhalese, Chinese, Korean, Afrikaans, Swahili, Amharic, German, Hungarian, Estonian, and Polish, with prefaces written by famous international ministers.

Since 2003, bishop Dag started the Healing Jesus Crusade project, massive itinerant meetings in which he exercises his gift of healing. These events have taken him to various towns and villages in Ghana, Nigeria, Mali, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, and Liberia. Thousands of “souls” have been won both to local branches of LCI and other charismatic churches invited by the bishop to help “following up” on those attending altar calls. His experience as a healing evangelist have led him to write a book on the subject, called *Tell Them*, and released a series of popular DVDs about different crusades, showing both the background of these meetings, in a documentary form, and the powerful evidence of spiritual healing.



One of LCI's publications: *Healing Jesus Magazine*



Following the successful transnational scaling up of his ministry, Heward-Mills has been invited to serve on the board of international Pentecostal organizations like Church Growth International, founded by the Korean pastor Yoggi Cho and dedicated to disseminating the methods of church growth to pastors worldwide through publications and conferences. LCI is a member of the Pentecostal World Fellowship, an association of global Pentecostal mega-churches founded in 1947. Bishop Dag was one of the 5 keynote speakers of their 23<sup>rd</sup> World Pentecostals Conference, held in Kuala-Lumpur, Malaysia, in August 2013, which received 3,500 church leaders from 69 countries.

Heward-Mills stands for a specific breed of Ghanaian Pentecostal minister, and not only because of his popularity and strong ties to global networks. Using the “fivefold ministry” model outlined in chapter two, my interlocutors would promptly point to his ministry in connection with a Ghanaian tradition of famous men of god. In some ways, he is the perfect example of an apostle, someone in constant movement, whose God-given mission is primarily “church growth” and “church planting”, that is, expanding and multiplying churches. Although he is still officially the main pastor of the Qodesh, bishop Dag now seldom appears at the pulpit of Jesus Cathedral, having delegated most of his earlier functions to his assistant pastors Addy and Sackey. The latter are responsible for pastoral care of the flock, and for managing the vast number of fulltime ministers and lay leaders who keep LCI’s headquarters running. That is only one of the signs that, as an apostle, the bishop has become mainly a *pastor of ministers*, both lay and fulltime, a role he performs both outside and inside his denomination through travel, media production, camp meetings, and pastoral workshops.

Being an apostle, he accumulates the capacities of many other Christian “offices”. As a pastor, he can preach informally and extemporaneously, energizing his audiences with promises of prosperity, miracles, and exhortations; as a teacher, he can break down scriptures and render Christianity practical through everyday examples that identify the lives and challenges of Biblical characters with any average born-again Christian; as an evangelist, he constantly preaches about Heaven and Hell, Christ’s atoning work, and salvation, leading masses through the sinner’s prayer<sup>68</sup>. What makes him an apostle is exactly his capacity to channel all these diverse functions toward a major purpose: to produce other Christian leaders in his likeness, as the Apostle Paul did with Timothy, his “son in the Lord”.

This apostolic drive has been nested in LCI’s very constitution, which states that the denomination’s main purpose is: “To provide a solid foundation of Bible-based instruction, equipping our members to preach and teach the Gospel, while abiding by the laws of the country where the church is located”. This is obviously not unique to LCI, since most major charismatic churches in Ghana inherited from the evangelical fellowships a theological and practical attachment to the “priesthood of all believers”, which equates proper Christianity with the active exercise of leadership (Asmoah-Gyadu 2005: 96-131). The difference here is in the intensity and the strategies whereby Christian leadership is reproduced in LCI. Prophet-centered churches tend to condense around the intercessory powers of a spiritual father, thus growing but not spreading as much. And teacher-centered churches, like Otabil’s ICGC, tend to put a predominant weight on lay leadership as a means to impact secular society. Conversely, LCI makes of evangelism, church growth, and the ongoing expansion of its church networks its most central mission, which is defined quite unambiguously in its constitution as: “To build 25,000 churches. To have churches in 150 countries. To fight fiercely and relentlessly in all battles for the advancement of the churches and the Gospel. To produce radical Christians who work for God. To go to heaven and to hear Jesus say: ‘Well done, good and faithful servant’”. Inspired by this aggressive and expansive ethos, LCI has become the Ghanaian church with by far the largest number of branches, both domestically and abroad. Whereas ICGC’s bible school admits twelve students yearly, a reference to the twelve apostles, LCI’s Anagakzo Bible and Ministry Training Center admits three hundred.

Bishop Dag preaches frequently about church work, spiritual kinship, and the calling, even during Sunday services, thus addressing the problem of Christian leadership explicitly and reflexively. In December 2011, he conducted two crowded services in Jesus Cathedral on the theme

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<sup>68</sup> After bishop Dag received his calling to become an evangelist and start the Healing Jesus Crusade, he has received the title of Evangelist Dag Heward-Mills. It is therefore important to highlight that, as the origin of specific titles, Biblical offices can be used contextually. This is especially the case for apostles, which perform multi-sited functions.



of “Five Facts About the Call of God”, which started with a frontal challenge to the pastoral tendency to monopolize leadership in Ghana and elsewhere:

If you were God and you had six billion people to save, what would you do? Would you send one or two people to save them or would you send a lot of people? Of course, you would send many people into the fields of harvest. And that is exactly what God has done. He has called many people! Do not be deceived by the few pastors you see sitting on the front rows of churches. That always gives the impression that a few have been called, or that the majority of the congregation have not been called. Actually, it is the exact opposite. Many, and not just a few pastors are called to the work of saving the world.

Recurring to a classic rhetorical arsenal of teachers, the bishop started breaking down 5 aspects of the call of God through PowerPoint slides, starting with Matthew 22: 14 (“For many are called, but few are chosen”). He questioned interpreters who have emphasized the last sentence, forgetting about the first. Establishing that “many are called”, he continued with his criticism of charismatic churches he deems large, successful, and yet “selfish and barren”:

Sadly, most pastors treat their congregations as people who do not have a call. They relate to them as people who cannot do much for God. Most pastors teach their congregations how to have a better life. Much of the preaching is about ourselves, our lives, our marriages, our homes, our finances, etc. This kind of preaching is what creates the large, selfish and barren congregations of today.

He then tackled the problem of the nature and modes of expression of the call of God, making sure to acknowledge that born-again Christians are not all called to be apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists and teachers, which he defined as “fantastic high callings”. Going back to Mathew’s scripture quote above, I would say that LCI’s dominant hermeneutic of the divine calling assumes that “many or all have been called, but few have received higher callings”. Born-again Christians in general are simply “called to be fruitful”, which was the bishop’s second point. The idea is to dissolve the dichotomy between called/non-called, which segregates leaders from followers, into a gradational spectrum of leadership connecting less dramatic “high callings”. This model was legitimized, among other things, by referring the audience to the difference between the gift of prophecy and the office of the Prophet. According to the apostle Paul, all Christians should desire and have the gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14:1), and yet only a few are called to “sit” on the office of a prophet.

To be “fruitful” means basically to be active in building the Kingdom of God. It means to be a sacrificial subject who expresses her submission to God in everyday life by giving her time and energy to his cause, which is one of the reasons Jesus has bestowed salvation widely through his sacrifice and atonement: “If we were to follow our Christian teachings to their logical conclusions, most Christians would become sacrificial and do something for God”. Continuing with his message, the bishop arrived to points three and four, which simply elaborated on the two poles of the calling described above: “Some people are called in a spectacular way” and “Some people are called in an ordinary way”. Paul’s calling on the road to Damascus was presented as a classic example of a high calling. But it is dangerous to simply identify these dramatic events with the calling in general: “Everybody wants to see a light and hear a voice; otherwise, they will not believe they are called. But God cannot be put into a box and He cannot be expected to repeat Himself in the same predictable way time and time again.” One comment ubiquitously made at discipleship meetings and Bible schools pointed to the idea that “God cannot be put into a box:” an effort to balance Biblical soundness with spontaneity and innovation. As the inerrable Word of God, the scriptures are an authoritative source where converts can find God’s eternal *modus operandi*. Nevertheless, especially after the arrival of the Holy Ghost, divinity has operated in heterogeneous albeit still orderly ways.

The bishop argued that it is definitely valid and even desirable to expect a miraculous calling similar to Paul's, but this does not summarize what is the call of God.

The fifth point presented to the audience was about how God interpellates servants in most ordinary ways: "Some people are called through their desires". Timothy 3:1 was evoked to legitimize this statement - "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" - and Bishop Dag used his own ministry as an example:

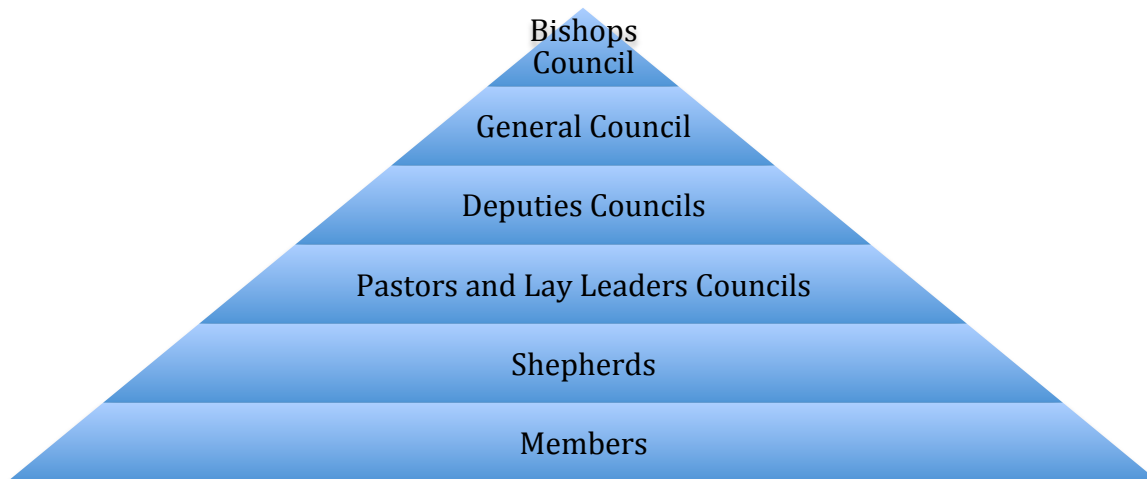
This is the way I received my calling. I did not have all the dramatic experiences that people speak about. I am constantly amazed when I hear of how people receive their call to the ministry. I have had no such dramatic encounters but I believe I am genuinely called by God. Amen? Look at this church? Am I not called? [the audience nods affirmatively and answer yes]. I did not see a light or hear any voices. Jesus has never appeared to me commissioning me to go into the world of ministry. Yet I believe that I am genuinely commissioned for ministry. God has many ways by which He calls His servants. Unfortunately, you cannot program God into a particular mode. He simply does not fit into any of the patterns that we would like Him to fall into. God is not a computer who can be programmed to behave in the same way every time. Every time you press Control 'S' the computer saves something. Every time you press Control 'C' the computer copies something. Every time you press Control 'V' the computer pastes what has been copied. The computer never varies its response to the same command. That is a computer, but that is not God!

As we will see in the next chapter, the bishop's own discourse about his calling is quite chameleonic. At his preaching in Jesus Cathedral though, he opted for equating rhetorically desire for God and the calling (and, by default, his personal success) with the objective of exhorting his audience to expand their forms of attention to the ways God expresses his will by speaking to and acting through his servants. He concluded affirming unapologetically that, in various ways, "You too have been called!", thus interpellating and challenging his audience to find out how the call of God has been planted in their own lives, in order to allow it to grow and become a reality.

The setting for the speech above was a Sunday service--a context characterized by a relatively large gap between addresser and addressees, pastor and flock. To be sure, one of the key rhetorical components of pastoral speech is the constant testing of the responsiveness of the communicative flow through call-response formulas as "Pastor: Amen? Flock Amen!" Nevertheless, the sheer number of people, the massive building, the sound system, all these factors both expand the reach of the bishop's interpellating voice and prevent a more careful control of how his injunctions are taken up by his audience. But as we have seen in my analysis of ICGC's discipleship program, charismatic denominations also lead converts through more situated, monitored, and small-scale practices of self-transformation with the aim of catalyzing personal commitment. In order to advance its project of building a community of ministers, LCI has implemented the same "church labor ethics" it disseminates from the pulpit through solid structures of authority, hierarchy, and church government spearheaded by a council of 19 bishops<sup>69</sup>. Bishops issue decisions and guidelines that are further mediated by various councils: the general council (140 reverends from churches worldwide), the deputies' council (pastors from area circuits meeting at a regional level), and church based councils of pastors and lay leaders. Members are the largest body of the church, and are divided into lay leaders or shepherds, who contribute to the vision with time and money, and normal members, who contribute only with money and diverse levels of personal commitment.

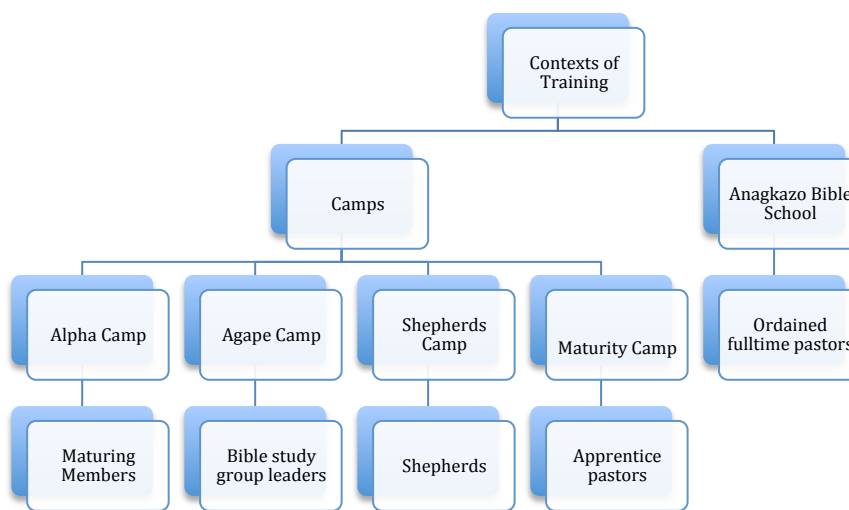
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<sup>69</sup> Bishop Dag and the other "founding bishops", Addy and Sackey, do retain the upper hand on various decisions. Nevertheless, their awareness about the importance of delegating power in order to expand the church vision is also evident. One of the signs is that the founders do not hold a different title than other bishops, as does Duncan-Williams, called "Archbishop", Mensah Otobil, called "Overseer", and many other charismatic pioneers of Ghana.



Graphic 1: Organogram of church government at Lighthouse Chapel International

In order to advance its expansion-oriented mission and democratized version of the calling orderly, LCI has produced a vast and interconnected number of contexts of explicit pedagogy, which includes specialized camp meetings and Anagakazo. These associations produce specific outputs into the church’s ecclesiological apparatus.



Organogram of religious training in Lighthouse Chapel International

In terms of format, LCI camp meetings are very similar to those introduced by Scripture Union in Ghana more methodically in the 1960s, where Dag Heard-Mills started his religious transfiguration into “brother Dag”. In LCI’s case, they are organized in different church branches, hotels, and places of retreat. Regardless of the location, camps last one or two weeks and provide participants with a highly immersive environment, usually addressed by my interlocutors as a “spiritual atmosphere”. From dusk to dawn, participants follow a methodic schedule of prayers, praise and worship, and teaching sections. The importance of camp meetings to LCI’s discipleship agenda is evidenced by the fact that bishop Dag is often willing to trade massive Sunday services at Jesus Cathedral for these much more intimate encounters with members, which happen periodically in various regions of Ghana and in LCI’s international branches.

Similar to ICGC's discipleship program, members can be slowly relocated from camp to camp as they mature in their Christianity, starting with the Alpha camps, whose content is very similar to that of the Maturity module in ICGC's counterpart<sup>70</sup>. Agape camps are aimed at producing leaders to LCI's Bible study group system ("Bussells"), whereas Shepherds camps introduce lay leaders into LCI's Shepherd system, which encourages the formation of bonds of discipleship between more and less mature Christians. During the camp meetings I was able to attend, shepherds were defined as individuals who "feed, gather, carry, and lead" recent converts. Those are basically activities of "follow up", post-conversion procedures aimed at helping "spiritual babies" to become established in their Christianity and find deeper insertion in church life. Beyond their more conventional roles of mentors, shepherds are responsible for monitoring recent members and constantly reminding them of their duties, as "feeding in the Word" periodically, but also attending church meetings. They therefore "gather" the flock, "lead" them or even "carry" them to church by calling them repeatedly on the phone or knocking at their doors, as true holy bullies would do. Saturation, as we will see, is one of LCI's secrets for church growth and church planting, assuming various expressions in its overall pedagogy.

Maturity Camps are designed for lay leaders already considering becoming full-time ministers. They are one of the main sources of input into Anagkazo. Apprentice ministers simply add to the repertoire of shepherds four other functions: praying for others, visitation (or going to members' homes systematically and listening to their grievances and achievements), counseling, and interaction. Interaction means that ministers are expected to engage on a daily basis with church members, memorizing their names, greeting them, chatting with them, and making clear that the church cares for them and considers them "precious souls", regardless of their past or socio-economic background. During a Maturity Camp meeting in LCI's branch First Love Church, in Legon, bishop Dag exemplified the art or technique of ministerial interaction with the following examples:

When I knew I was coming to First Love Church to lead this camp, I did two things. First, I introduced myself to the elders and pastors, and to the praise and worship team ministering here today. I greeted them, talked to them about the Camp. This is their church, your church, not mine, you understand? You have to show you care. It's like the politicians. I was invited to the last National Day of Prayers<sup>71</sup>. President Mills was there, and when the program was over, he was supposed to leave. All these black vehicles came in, security officers everywhere, everyone stopped. Then, instead of rushing to his car, the president walked toward the people. He shook hands with so many people, listened to them, talked to them... Then he moved to the pulpit and greeted all of us, the religious leaders. You see? He didn't just get in his car and ... zupt... He interacted. It's the same here. He needs votes...we need souls. It's a job. We work for Christ. So even when you're not feeling like it, you have to interact.

"Interaction" was defined simultaneously as a personal, voluntary, and affective expression of pastoral care and a professional duty, a standardized form of sociality comparable to a politician's public relations strategy. This perspective was generalized to the ministerial vocation as a whole, which was described quite bluntly as a "job".

When the bishop stresses the irrelevance of inner states for the performance of basic pastoral duties, he is not being cynical or reducing the ministry to an instrumental rationality, but simply arguing that ministers should orient their practices towards a mission, one that transcends

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<sup>70</sup> All LCI members go through the New Believers, Water and Holy Ghost baptism courses at the Qodesh, where they are instructed on topics covered by ICGC's New Believers and Membership modules.

<sup>71</sup> Ecumenical event organized by the government of Ghana with the presence of major representatives of all religious currents in the country.

their fluctuating moods and motivations. Inner states are not irrelevant, but they can be indifferent, since the ministerial “job” must be accomplished methodically and systematically. This potentially contradictory overlapping of pragmatism and conviction exemplifies charismatics overall tendency, mentioned in chapter one, of embracing “the world” with the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God. We have seen that, in order to abide to Christ’s “great commission” (Matt 28:16-20) and show itself attractive to new converts, these churches have Christianized pop culture, reproduced a more modernist notion of the Christian family, and displayed a less marked definition of holiness. Bishop Dag’s comparison between ministers and politicians exemplifies charismatics’ appropriative relation with the wisdom of the world. This is not exclusive to the political field and, as a “church growth” expert, he is frequently willing to embrace the economic wisdom of marketing and business as desirable models that should be taken up with no regret by the body of Christ.

In the passage below, drawn from one of the manuals of church administration authored by bishop Dag and adopted in Anagkazo, he contrasts Ghana’s economic place in the world with what he deems the desirable insertion of charismatic churches’ in the global ecclesia:

God instructed me to industrialize my church. He showed me how our nation, at that time, was only importing goods from western countries and reselling them at a profit. “There is no future in this,” the Lord said. “Have you noticed that the richest nations of the world are all involved in producing important products?” “Yes,” I replied. God showed me that the richest nations of the world produce cars. The best cars come from the richest countries of the world. These countries are rich because they produce something. The church will be rich in souls if we begin to be spiritually industrialized! Just as the success of the nations of the world depend on their producing something, the success of the church depends on her producing souls. An industry is an organized system of producing goods and services regularly (...) I am a ‘businessman’ for god, and my currency is human souls. (...) Jesus said in Luke 19:13, “Occupy (do business) until I come.” That is, industrialize and commercialize with diligence until I come. In other words, Jesus expects us to take the business of soul winning as a very serious enterprise. Soul winning should be intentional and not incidental (2007: 205).

The message is almost shocking in its unapologetic belief in the possibility of converting the secular weapons that have taken capitalist modernity to the confines of the world into tools for the dissemination of the “good news” of salvation. The vision orienting LCI is not only about global insertion only. It is about playing a protagonist role that outperforms the one played by Ghana’s independent state and economy in the world capitalist system. LCI is not simply a consumer, a passive recipient or an exporter of low value products. As a true Christian industry, the denomination advances the business of soul winning in a larger scale. This project must be undertaken with both professionalism and commitment.

The idea of a church-industry may sound contradictory once it is juxtaposed to the idea of a church-family we started tracing in chapter two. And yet, it is exactly this overlapping the major challenge of LCI as a denomination. Whereas the church-industry gives expression to its quantitative and evangelistic concern with expansion, the church-family gives expression to its qualitative and apostolic concern with discipleship and maturity, which implies that growth can only acquire depth when undertaken through communities of practice and nurturance. Although this norm suffuses LCI’s ecclesiology in general, it finds a strategic point of articulation in Anagkazo, where LCI’s “Timothies” are produce through both a highly rationalized organizational structure and the methodic cultivation of an intense personal piety. If LCI is a zeal machine, Anagkazo is of its major propelling pieces.

### 3.2. Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center: mission and facilities

In 1997, bishop Dag started executing his plans of establishing an encompassing institution

dedicated to pastoral training in Ghana, inspired by Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 4: 11-12: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up"<sup>72</sup>. The project began as a one-year part-time Bible school called Christ Missions Academy, later evolving into a two-year full-time program, assuming in 2006 the current length of four years. In the same year, the school also embraced its current name, Anagkazo, which comes from the Greek verb "to compel" found in Luke 14:23: "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full'" (NIV). Anagkazo's evangelistic drive, condensed in its very name, is addressed by the school's website as follows:

Our students are trained to compel, necessitate, entreat and constrain the unsaved to enter into the kingdom of God (...) Graduates of Anagkazo are known for their soul-winning and church-planting passion, and have a strong desire to see the gospel preached to every soul everywhere! Their life's aim is to see every soul 'anagkazoed' into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Coming to Anagkazo would definitely help you to nurture and fulfill God's calling upon your life<sup>73</sup>.

In the same webpage we find the school's mission, modeled according to the hyperbolic style that characterizes LCI: "Our mission is: To Train 100,000 people to work in the Ministry. To appoint 10,000 pastors into the Ministry. To ordain 10,000 Ministers of the Gospel. To consecrate 1,000 Bishops".

Anagkazo is a total institution, where students dwell for 4 years before being ordained personally by bishop Dag Heward-Mills during LCI's yearly pastoral convention *Iron Sharpeneth Iron*. The school is situated in the denominations' first headquarters and today the Light of the World branch, in Korle-Bu, pastored by Bishop Emmanuel Nterful. School and church life unfold in the same space and intersect in various ways, the latter being taken as a opportunity to expose students to the practical aspects of their future métier. The church-school's imposing facilities contrast with the impoverished surrounding of a neighborhood, originally a Ga settlement of fishermen.

An important section of Anagkazo routines happen in a five-floor building supported by tall columns. The building itself is called Grace tower. At the ground level we find the Light of the World Cathedral, where church services are held. This space is also used for various school activities, as periodic prayer and praise and worship meetings, and weekly churches services of Friday morning led by 4<sup>th</sup> year students, which are mandatorily attended by the whole school community and carefully judged by an instructor. It also hosts less periodic meetings as the "Night with the fathers" event, in which seasoned ministers from LCI's network or allied to the bishop and the denomination are invited to "feed" the students. I was able to attend only one of these events, which was conducted by the famous Ghanaian evangelist Ampiah Kwofi, another son in Christ of Duncan-Williams, thus brother of bishop Dag and, by default, father of Anagkazo students.

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<sup>72</sup> In Anagkazo's detailed website, we find the following comment, which sounds like a provocation to ICGC's first Bible school, which ended up transforming itself into Central University College, which privileges secular content: "It is the founder's greatest desire that the school would always remain a pastors' training school, without ever evolving into a secular institution partly or fully".

<sup>73</sup> In <http://anagkazobibleseminary.org/absf/>



*Students' choir performing before the Night with the Fathers meeting*



*Ampiah Kwofie preaching*

At the subsoil of the cathedral, we find the school's main lecture hall, which can fit three hundred people. This space is complemented by three other large classrooms located in the second, third, and fourth floors. The schools' main administration offices are on the last and fifth floor and have a privileged view to the sea and the neighborhood, since besides Korle-Bu hospital Anagkazo is the only tall building in the area. Moving eastward from the cathedral, one reaches a set of stairs leading to a modern library used by the students for individual and group studies. The library has a large flat TV screen attached to one of its walls, where students gather to watch Christian DVD's, most of them from the bishop's crusades and church services. The library owns various copies of each of bishop Dag's books, which amounts to approximately half of Anagkazo's collection. It also contains various types of Bibles, concordances, dictionaries, books about Islam, Judaism, African Traditional Religion, religious sects, and manuals of apologetics, along with books authored by ministers who have influenced the bishop's ministry, as Kenneth Hagin, Yoggi Cho, Derek Prince, T.L. Osborn, Morris Cerullo, Benny Hinn, Robert Liardon, Duncan-Williams, Idahosa, and others<sup>74</sup>.



*A view from Anagkazo's Library*



<sup>74</sup> Exemplifying a more random dimension of the criteria used by the school to purchase books, I also found copies of Vincent Crapanzano's *Serving the Word*, Peter Berger's *The Heretic Imperative*, and Shaw and Stewart's edited volume *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism*, selected probably only because of their titles.



In order to care properly for the large number of students living in the school, LCI erected a large six-floor annex building across the street, the Power and Wisdom Towers, used as a hostel for the students. From my perspective, life in the hostel is all but comfortable. Students sleep in mattresses laid on the floor of overcrowded rooms that fit ten people each, although they seem to be more suitable for five. Male and female students sleep in different rooms and floors. There is a single bathroom in each floor, where students also shower. As the rest of the school, the hostel is a spiritual environment. As I walked through its busy corridors and rooms and interacted with the students, I witnessed constant prayer in tongues, singing of spiritual songs, Bible reading, testimonies and informal conversations about the scriptures, sermons, as well as the Christian and the ministerial life.



*Upfront, we see one of Anagkazo's offices, in the patio of Light of World Cathedral  
At the background and besides, we see Anagkazo's annex hostel*



Despite the odors produced by periodic water shortages, the place is incredibly well organized and tidy, considering that almost five hundred people, most of them youngsters, share the facilities. One of the senior students, a forty five year old female lay leader from one of LCI's branches in Kumasi, reminded me of my own relative standards of life quality by praising the bishop excitedly for providing her with a "private" toilet, something her husband was never able to do<sup>75</sup>. She recognized in this peculiar "blessing" evidence that god and the spiritual father have been working as real providers.

As in other Bible schools I visited in Accra, fees are highly flexible in Anagkazo. The church confers a large number of fellowships. Some students paid a 400 cedis (200 dollars) yearly fee to attend the school, having this amount fractioned in small portions. The resources came from fundraising organized in their families, neighborhood, and church communities. The school does not provide students with stipends, which must come from remittances from their families, friends, mentors, or from their own religious activities. These are especially church services and conferences happening on Saturday evenings, when the school gate closes later, and students can be invited to preach, lead prayer, or perform in praise and worship teams in any church. It is part of Anagkazo's

<sup>75</sup> Although Ghana has improved in the field of sanitation for the past 20 years, the government report Sanitation for All points to the fact that only 13% of the overall population have access to "improved sanitation", which includes private toilets. See [http://www.sanitationandwaterforall.org/files/Ghana\\_-\\_2012\\_Country\\_Profile\\_EN.pdf](http://www.sanitationandwaterforall.org/files/Ghana_-_2012_Country_Profile_EN.pdf)

apprenticeship schedule a series of regulated excursions outside the school compounds with the purpose of doing door-to-door and bus evangelism. In these circumstances, students are allowed to “take offerings”, which are often no more than a few coins. Having gone with some of the students to buy lunch in the “chop bars” [popular food joints] of Korle-Bu, it became clear to me that the local population is often willing to donate meals to Anagkazo’s future men and women of god, a reflex of the school’s positive insertion in the community and deep reverence of Ghanaians at large for religious leaders. Reciprocity among richer and poorer students is also ongoing<sup>76</sup>.

Whenever asked about their livelihood, Anagkazo students often expressed a general lack of concern with short term material needs, dismissing my questions as irrelevant while pointing to the economic attitude prescribed by Jesus in Matthew 6:25-34

31. So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32. For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

The Biblical reference implied that the possibility of material scarcity, always looming large at the daily horizon of some of the students, should be almost mocked by a general display of an unplanned economic attitude vis-à-vis the near future. This unconcerned posture ultimately transforms life itself into an ongoing act of faith. Moreover, taken in its context of citation, these scriptures do speak much about the economic dimension of the pastoral lifestyle. Students know that, as future pastors, they will always feed from the relations they build, thus activities as preaching, teaching, counseling, praying for others and visitation are also ways of establishing reciprocal links with people through whom God will work as a provider. Do the work of God, and all other things shall be added.

This disavowal of economic rationality, highly incongruent with the production-oriented and consumption-repressive ethos of classical Protestantism stressed by Weber, becomes even more paradoxical to a secular sensibility whenever followed, in the charismatic case, by prosperity theology. Despite their overall resignation to short-term hardships, students never hid their long-run ambition to become prosperous by following the highest calling. As it tends to be among zealous charismatics, this expectation was expressed not only through dreams of consumption, like building a home, helping their families, going to a university or owning a car, but also by a constant incitement to express faith through giving. As upcoming ministers who will preach prosperity, they are constantly reminded by the school (and by default reminded me) that pastors must be the first to give constantly and abundantly, thus exemplifying what they expect from their future congregations. This incitement to give is actualized through classes on prosperity theology and pastoral ethics, but also enter the everyday of the school. In the entrance of Anagkazo’s main office, a large and flashy poster written in golden letters reads:

Excerpt from [bishop Dag’s] *Why Non-Tithing Christians Become Poor...and How Tithing Christians Can Become Rich*: Every time you pay your tithe you make provision for the house of the lord (Malachi 3: 10). When you pay your tithe, god will build a house for you (Psalms 127:1). When you pay your tithe, god will be touched by your tithe; god will be touched by your effort to build a house for him (2 Samuel 7:16).

Future pastors are not only taught in Anagkazo how to ask for offerings, tithes, and money sacrifices through lectures and preaching exams, they are also supposed to express their faith

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<sup>76</sup> Moreover, as we will see, Anagkazo imposes constant cycles of fasting, one of the results being that students can easily live with a little less than a dollar per day, which is often the price paid for one meal.

economically during church services, student services, night with the fathers meeting, and even during simple praise and worship meetings held at the hostel. As a sign of the givers' overall material condition, I could hear only the trickling of coins falling in the heavy but not so loaded offertory basket used to collect contributions in these events.

### 3.3. A broad picture of Anagkazo's student body

Anagkazo admits yearly groups that may reach 300 students. In order to have a better picture of such a large student body, I was allowed to conduct a survey that covered 200 individuals equally divided between the third and fourth year cohorts<sup>77</sup>. First, the survey revealed a marked gender unbalance. Whereas women can be often seen even outnumbering men during Sunday services at the Qodesh, male students represented 76% of my sample<sup>78</sup>. In terms of nationality and ethnic background, 74,5% of the students was Ghanaian. Similar to the survey I applied among those attending ICGC's discipleship program, I asked for the first language spoken in the household that is not English, if that is the case, recognizing that, despite the large number of multiethnic marriages in Ghana, often one language tends to become dominant. 62% of the students pointed to one of the Akan languages, 21,3% to Ewe, 10% to Ga, and 6,7% to various Northerner languages. Among the 51 international students, or 25,5% of the overall sample, I found a larger number of Kenyans (19), followed by South Africans (9), Nigerians (5), Guyanese (3), Ivoirians, Namibians, Mozambican, Ethiopians, Indians (2 each), and single students from Uganda, Togo, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Malawi. The schools has admitted students in the past or who are currently on first and second years coming from Cameroon, DRC, Zambia, Tanzania, St Lucia, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Australia (Ghanaian in diaspora), Holland, Papua New Guinea, Scotland, and USA.

The average age of Anagkazo students exemplifies well the attraction exercised by the pastoral vocation among contemporary African youth. 51,2% of the student was between 20 and 25 years old, 38,2% between 26 and 30, 7,6% between 31 and 35, and only 3% were between 36 and 45. One should also have in mind that these students arrived at the school 2 to 3 years before I applied the survey in 2011. In terms of education, a majority of 68,1% had complete or incomplete secondary education only, whereas 27,8% had complete or incomplete post-secondary education, technical or academic. A small number of students had only primary education, 4,1%, which also shows that the school's official requirement that applicants must have secondary education is more flexible than it seems<sup>79</sup>. In order to have a hint of the students' economic background, I asked those completing the survey to write down their profession before coming to the school. A large number chose student, but many had been working on activities as disparate as dispatcher, security consultant, "entrepreneur" (probably a "name it and claim it" version of informal trader), agricultural engineer, teacher, real state agent, journalist, biochemist, cook, publisher, baker, mechanic, hair dresser, caretaker, electrician, herbalist, mason, seamstress, tailor, mechanical engineer, IT professional, factory worker, lab technician, sprayer (agriculture), driver, carpenter, clerk, painter, tailor, *kente* (traditional cloth) designer, vulcanizer, secretary, hotel cashier, book seller, quality inspector, electrician, and IT teacher. A few had already been involved economically with the ministry before joining the school, and wrote down minister, worshiper, or pastor.

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<sup>77</sup> As LCI in general, the schools keeps detailed statistical records about the student body, which I was not allowed access to.

<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, this configuration still signs a significant shift towards more gender equality if compared to the much greater unbalance found in LCI's higher decision making instances: the council of 12 bishops is composed only by men, and among the general council of 140 reverends, only 3 are women. It is early to judge.

<sup>79</sup> Officially, the school requires "a Senior Secondary School Certificate with at least passes in English and Mathematics" or "Any equivalent qualification" (In Anagkazo's portfolio).

In order to have a hint on the religious background of the students, I asked those filling the survey to tick their parents' religious adhesion and write down the specific denomination they currently belong. I refer here only to the Ghanaian students, since in chapter one I have already laid down the typology I am using. 41,65% of the parents belonged to the mainline churches. 23,9% of the students had one or both parents in a classic Pentecostal church, whereas 23,85% had one or both parents in a charismatic church. 5,2% had parents who were adherents of African Traditional Religion, 2% of Islam, and 0,5% (or one) of Spiritual Churches. 2% declared their parents non-religious. 10% of the overall number of students surveyed had one or both parents as LCI members, a sign of the inter-generational influence of the denomination<sup>80</sup>.

When it comes to the students' personal religious allegiances, it is valid to remind that Anagkazo is a semi-denominational institution, meaning that apprentice pastors from other churches can also apply. Those are a minority though, representing 9% of my sample. A few of them had applied to the school base on personal conviction, and, unsure about their future, still declared themselves members of Church of Pentecost, Apostolic Church, Assemblies of God, Victoria Bible Church International, Winners Chapel and other less known charismatic churches.

Some of the non-LCI group had been "sent" to the school and had their fees covered by smaller charismatic churches interested in absorbing bishop Dag and LCI's apostolic wisdom. Surprisingly, I interviewed a senior student who had been a pastor for 15 years in a local branch of the Assemblies of God. Despite being a seasoned minister, he had no formal training and a certificate, which he decided to seek in Anagkazo and not in the system of pastoral training of his own denomination.

A second source of input to Anagkazo has been bishop Dag's evangelistic crusades. During his itinerant preaching, he developed the habit of uttering "Bible school calls", in which individuals interested in applying to Anagkazo are invited before events are closed. Those who respond to the call have their background checked by the crusade team and letters of recommendation may be required from their pastors. Most of them end up naturally falling into the LCI fold while at the school.

The main source of input of students to Anagkazo is LCI's formal and informal discipleship networks. Most of the students have matured and reckoned with their calling by becoming immerse in the associations I described above. Many of them brought to the interview with the school direction that precedes acceptance not only desire to advance the kingdom of God and more or less fantastic testimonies about dreams and visions, but also letters of recommendation from spiritual fathers and branch pastors. All international students who answered the survey entered Anagkazo through LCI's discipleship networks. This tends to be the case for this sub-group in general, but I found one exception to this rule, the second-year Scottish student Caleb McLaughlin. Bellow I reconstitute a few of Anagkazo students' conversion careers, starting with Caleb.

### 3.4. Many paths lead to Anagkazo: a typology of conversion careers

I was able to add a more qualitative perspective on the student body by complementing my survey with 45 in-depth personal interviews. These narratives exposed me to rich and complex life stories marked by moments of rupture, rebirth, reorientation, which albeit formally similar, represent quite distinctive trajectories. Unable to account for the full vitality of these conversion careers, I will organize them here according to specific types named according to the student's precedence: the non-LCI apprentice, the pure breed LCI offspring, the already maturing Christian embraced by LCI's networks, and the immature Christian who yielded to bishop Dag's "Bible school calls".

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<sup>80</sup> This transmission can be both ways, and I was exposed during my personal interviews to cases of children who led their parents to Christ and to the LCI.

*The non-LCI apprentice:* I start with Caleb McLaughlin, who was only 19 when I first interviewed him in 2011. Caleb is the grandson of pastor Bernie McLaughlin, a popular charismatic minister and the founder of The Bridge Church, with headquarters in Ayrshire, Scotland. Despite his family's deep involvement with religion, Caleb went through a quite unholy childhood and youth. His father was an alcoholic and his nuclear family was highly dysfunctional, eventually falling apart. At an early age, Caleb became involved with alcohol, drugs, and street gangs in Edinburg. He defined his religious life as "a rollercoaster", especially because his grandfather's ubiquitous presence never let Christianity fall completely out of the picture: "It's like, we had a youth camp, and I'd be on fire for God, then it'd cool down and go back to my old life. That was my life for a long time". Someone who has prayed the sinner's prayer hundredths of times, Caleb led a deeply unchristian lifestyle amidst an environment suffused by Christianity. As a result, opportunities and events for Christian renewal had always been there, right in front of him, although only after a while he actually embarked into a new life.

Similar to the cases I revisited in chapter two, Caleb became ripe for Christian discontinuity not by heroically pulling himself together and abandoning a vicious past, but especially by going through personal encounters with others who helped his commitment to spark, among them bishop Dag. His grandfather was invited by the Ghanaian minister to preach in the Qodesh in 2009, as part of LCI's *Iron Sharpeneth Iron* (ISI). At that point, Caleb was 17 and had been struggling to abandon his "street friends", so pastor Bernie found appropriate to invite him to come along:

I became born again seriously, serious for god, during the second day of the ISI. That was July 28, 2009. [So recent! Now you're becoming a pastor! Wow]. Yes! When my grandfather invited me, I was also going to join the marines. I was focusing on that. I was waiting until I turned 18, so I could leave home. I even sent the papers... I was going, but after I became born-again, I felt God really wanted me to work for him right now. I was touched by the messages at ISI. So many prominent men of God. The conference was a blessing. I prayed the sinner's prayer alone, in our hotel room here in Accra (...) There was also this team that came from America [to the conference], and there was this girl... Me and my girls... My whole life was like this... Her name was Christie. We fell for each other straight away. She said something to me that really affected me: I love you for who you are, not for who you're trying to be. I think that started changing me...

Back to Scotland after spending ten transformative days in Accra, Caleb started his quest for a deeper experience of god in his own peculiar ways: "I started jogging. I'd go to the top of a mountain and talk to god as I'm talking to you right now. I didn't know much about prayer. I sat in my papa's [grandfather] preaching, but I didn't know how to pray". In a short time, Caleb developed the "feeling" he had been born-again, although he admitted that, at that time, "the fire and the zeal were still not there". His American friend was back home and Caleb was heartbroken, but they kept their connection alive through periodic Skype meetings. She was glad to know he was making progress, and he shared his doubts about joining the marines. "She said: 'Maybe you should go on a fast and ask God what to do with your life'. I just fasted lunch, 3 hours and than I ate. I didn't do prayer, as I said, I'd just go and talk to god. I wanted to join the marines, so what should I do?" Bishop Dag came back to the scene at the end of Caleb's 14 days fast, which he deems an act of divine providence. Pastor Bernie had reciprocated the Ghanaian preacher's hospitality and welcomed him in his own conference in Scotland.

So bishop Dag gave us a message called "The Heart of a Champion". It was powerful. He was teaching, and right when he was high on his anointing, he started prophesying. He gave me a personal prophecy: "The Holy Spirit just told me you're anointed, and you're supposed to go". I didn't really know what that means. I asked him, and he said: "You're supposed to go to my Bible school".

Although it might sound like a parody, bishop Dag's interpellation was the most defining "pregnant moment" (Connolly 2001: 69) of Caleb's conversion career, the event he needed to clear the thick mist of doubts and possibilities away from his horizon and have a first glimpse into what today he firmly believes to be his divinely appointed mission: come to Ghana and bring the fire of god back to Europe. After telling me about all the material and cultural difficulties he had gone through since he arrived in Accra for a long four years staying, he commented excitedly on Ghana's spiritually conducive environment, a gift he could not have found elsewhere:

The first miracle I've ever seen was here. The first time I ever healed someone was here. The first prophecy I ever deliver to somebody. All my dreams and visions were here. There's something in the air in Ghana (...) I believe Lighthouse is an example of the end-times church (...). Look around Bruno, who else is like me here? Who would do this?

Indeed, not many. And yet, Caleb's trajectory, despite its obvious peculiarities, is not so different from that of Daniel and Gideon reconstructed in chapter two: they all were interpellated, followed, and, by doing so, committed to a personal and collective cause. Caleb graduated this year and is back to Scotland working in his grandfather's church.

*The pure breed LCI offspring.* Let us shift the focus to Emmanuel Yuchet, who I met in 2011 as a fourth-year student in Anagkazo, and then went on to become an ordained LCI pastor serving in a town branch in Ivory Coast. Emmanuel was born in Abidjan, and migrated to Accra in 2007 to escape from the daunting economic effects of the civil war in his country. He had earned a tertiary certificate in "Transit", being equipped to manage import and export procedures in ports and airports. His initial plans were to reach Francophone Benin, but after stopping in Accra and hearing about new opportunities opened at the Tema harbor, Emmanuel decided to stay longer, and found lodge in a hostel very close to the Qodesh. This apparently random decision had surprisingly deep effects in his life.

Soon, Emmanuel became a constant target of evangelists from the church: "It was not easy. They insisted and came to my house many times, told me about Christ, came to pick me up to church on Sunday". Now Emmanuel knows he was being "anagkazoed". Eventually, he stopped resisting the pressure of LCI's shepherds and visited the Qodesh on a Sunday morning:

I came to church and gave my life to Christ [prayed the sinner's prayer]. In the beginning it was not easy. I was smoking, drinking. The drinking was not too much, but I was smoking a lot. Even after giving my life to Christ I was smoking. But two, three months later I quit smoking totally. Something that was keeping me in the habit was the environment. I was living with friends from Ivory Coast and in "French countries" we smoke outside, openly (...) I then became a church member (...) When you give your life to Christ, they call you to a smaller room, and a pastor receives you there. When I gave my life to Christ there were 32. My pastors called us, received us and told us to come back the next day at 6:30pm. They were having these courses at 6:30pm every day. At the first day there were 3 or 4! At the end of the week I was left alone! Maybe that was the will of god, so I was alone with my pastor, and he taught me about being born again and the will of god, and all these things. This was the membership course. At that time they had pastors doing this, now they have shepherds and other lay leaders. But even up to now the main people teaching are pastors. After the teachings, he baptized me in the Holy Ghost and I started speaking in tongues. He asked me to go to the water baptism later. I refused at the beginning because I had another understanding of it. I thought the water baptism was something very religious. When you do, you'll become another person and all that. In a sense it's true. You become another person. But I thought it was a mystical thing. So he baptized me by immersion.

When inquired about his conversion, Emmanuel started addressing me to a concatenation of events. Different from a radical life crisis or a sudden change of moral and narrative framework, his narrative implies that conversion for him was consubstantial to his immersion into a series of ritual

events (the sinner's prayer, the Holy Ghost baptism, and baptism by immersion), mechanisms of "follow up", contexts of religious training (the membership course), and informal networks of apprenticeship and nurturance. As a totality, these associations provided him with a new "environment" in which spiritual rebirth flourished, quite similar to the one initially hindering his intention to quit smoking. Emmanuel called himself a "a pure son of Lighthouse", acknowledging that he became born-again through both personal choice and a highly organized evangelistic agency working throughout a network of people and practices, whereby the will of God had been actualized in his life. Amidst this complex assemblage, the figure of the personal mentor stood out in his narrative, condensing authoritatively the whole process whereby he was "led to Christ".

I was not a shepherd, but I was very close to one of the pastors, my pastor, the one who taught me during the membership course. He became my spiritual father. Every Sunday, after service, we went to the ministry meeting at a chapel he's responsible for. After ministry meeting, I used to go to visitations and evangelism with him. My pastor started training me. He actually saw the call of god upon my life and invited me to come to the school in October 2007.

Emmanuel stressed that his first spiritual father was not simply a pastor, but "his pastor", that is, a personal and everyday reference that monopolized his allegiances by rapidly shifting his role within LCI's church apparatus from a passive recipient of information, promises, and interpellation into an active disseminator. He did so by taking Emmanuel under his wings and carrying him as both an observer and a peripheral participant into visitations and door-to-door evangelism. Still developing his personal commitment, Emmanuel even confessed unashamedly that he simply delegated his calling to his personal mentor, who saw the hand of God upon his life when he was not yet prepared to feel it personally. Emmanuel trusted the man of god, and after only a few months from his conversion, he was moving to Anagkazo.

An even more literal example of a LCI offspring, that is, someone who adopted Christianity by being adopted by the denomination's networks is "pastor Mohammed", who was 31 years old and a fourth-year student when we first met. Mohammed was born in the small village of Bembera, Northern region, being "a Mamprusi by tribe". His name, which he makes sure to retain, testifies to the long Muslim presence in one of the poorest regions of Ghana. Conversion is "still a mystery" to him. Mohammed was having worms, a trouble that kept disturbing his health until he decided to seek help with his uncle, who lived in a town nearby. His uncle took him to a hospital and gave him some money to take the public transport back home. Mohammed disobeyed and used these rare resources to reach Tamale, the regional capital, where he had a friend who worked as a taxi driver, with whom he lived and worked for a few weeks. On a Sunday, he was going to the marketplace before being approached by a shepherd from a local LCI branch:

I don't remember what happened, I just know that I followed that man. During church service, I just remember coming to the front when the pastor called [an altar call] and reciting the sinner's prayer after him. After that, they took me to some place, gave me water and food, talked about Christ, and wrote my name and address down... I was excited. I liked the environment, the people.

No miraculous transformation can be discerned from Mohammed's passive dive into the flow of events, including his formulaic recitation of the sinner's prayer. One more day in the life of a young and deprived Ghanaian, whose everyday relationality had been inflicted by a "survivalist orientation" (Simone 2004: 9), a perpetual present in which the idea of a "life project" becomes almost surreal. Nevertheless, choices, even without deep conviction, still entail social costs, and the new convert had to go back to his previous allegiances after leaving the safe territory of the church building. The immediate result was secrecy. Mohammed hid his conversion from his mostly Muslim



circle of friends and extended family in Tamale. A few weeks later, he received a furious call from his senior brother demanding prompt regress to his village, where the academic year was still on course. Mohammed went back to his family's compound house, and his change of habits soon signaled to his father a shift of course. "My father told me: 'I see you're not praying like a Muslim. I'll give you one day. If you don't start praying properly... I'll sack you from the house'. I was having fear in my heart". Soon, the threat came to reality, and his father threw all his things out of the house and beat him violently. It happened in 2003, and until 2011 Mohammed has never returned to his family household, and only communicated with his mother and siblings a few times over the phone. He never spoke to his father again, who died in 2010.

If Mohammed's conversion lends a visceral meaning to the trope of temporal rupture, it does the same with the notion of Christian adoption, since he was literally fostered by LCI members after being ejected from his kinship network by blood and alliance. "When I left Tamale, I came to know that they had called my hometown pastor [LCI had an "octopus", a small branch in formation, in a village nearby] and told him: 'We won a soul who is going back to Bembera, we want you to take care of him'". Mohammed soon found shelter with an old schoolmate, who he found out to be a LCI member. He completed senior high school in 2005, when he was invited by a LCI pastor living in a near town to come and live with him. He started working with this pastor's assistant, who had a bookstand where he sold Christian devotional literature and media, including the prolific production of Bishop Dag Heward-Mills.

Mohamed took the assistant pastor as his spiritual father, thus making of his experience in his new home one of Christian discipleship. He started reading the Bible, and "getting deeper into the things of god". He acquired the capacity to pray in tongues through the laying on this pastor's hands. While in Anagkazo, Mohammed still fostered the connection with his first spiritual father by calling him once a week on his cellphone. Whenever he was out of credits, he would "flash him" (text message) a greeting. Full of gratitude, he recognized the critical nurturing role of his first mentor in building the foundation of his Christian life.

He gave me books, exposed me to tapes, and helped me to see how a pastor lives. I lived in his house. I woke up, cleaned the house, did what I had to do. Then I went out and sold the books. He made an impact in my life. I feel that the foundation I have was laid with his help. Prayer, reading the Bible, evangelism. Yesterday, we were having apologetics, and I stood and said to the class that we should be able to give to new converts directions on how to build a good foundation, because the Bible says: If the foundation is destroyed, what a righteous man can do? It can't stand. The foundation is discipline.

In 2005, Mohammed had a chance to visit LCI's "Mecca", the imposing Qodesh. Iron Sharpeneth Iron 2005 was about to happen. Mohammed was there to help his pastor sell books, transport a new load of LCI products to the North, and attend its diverse meetings, prayer sections, workshops, and church services. It was the first time Mohammed saw bishop Dag Heward-Mills in person, during one of his crowded teachings sections. LCI's global partners were also invited. Among them was Tom Deuschele, a popular American pastor based in Zimbabwe, who delivered the main sermon on the second day. Mohammed was sitting at the back.

The man of god was preaching a powerful message on evangelism. At some point, a prophecy came. I didn't even hear the whole statement, but at some point he said: "You, from a Muslim background. I want you to come forward, I have a prophecy for you". I was intimidated as I went. I noticed some women laughing at me. As I was coming, I noticed I was the only one. And the church was full! [the Qodesh can fit more than 5,000 people]. He told me: "You'll preach the gospel to all nations, and all peoples". And he gave me a CD from his church entitled "All Peoples, All Nations". He even told me I'd preach the gospel in Egypt. I didn't know the significance of Egypt in the Bible. I went back home, and my pastor also gave me a book, entitled "Reach out". It was a book about how to evangelize to

Muslims. I was impressed by the titles of the DVD and the book: “All People, All Nations” and “Reach Out”. On the book you see a white hand shaking a black hand. Those were some of the signs that made me see that I'd preach the gospel. I had heard about the school. When I went back to my hometown, my pastor was coming to another LCI conference, in November, and I gave him money to buy a form, so I could apply to the school.

Deeply moved by the personal prophecy, Mohammed applied for two consecutive years with no avail, until finally, in 2008, he was accepted. He graduated and was ordained in 2012. Since I could not attend the ceremony, Mohammed sent me pictures by email and called me the next day, telling me he was getting married in November of the same year with an old schoolmate. He is now back to the North as a missionary, and has found in his broken past his own segment within LCI's overall mission: to evangelize Muslims. He also plans planting churches in other regions of Ghana and abroad, something that today became a reasonable life project, a possible future.

*Maturing Christians adopted by LCI's network.* Another great number of students had become born-again before joining LCI, and yet started giving an unprecedented expression to their Christian leadership only after joining the denomination. This is the case of 29 year-old Joshua Darko. Joshua became born-again when he was 15 through Winners Chapel, where he was baptized by immersion and received the Holy Ghost baptism. Two years later, his family moved to Korle-Bu and started fellowshipping at LCI Light of the World. Fathered by bishop Nterful, Joshua became a member and started moving step-by-step through all the stages of LCI's discipleship program reconstituted above. He attended membership lessons and various camp meetings and, in due time, became a Bible reading group leader and eventually a shepherd. Joshua was then admitted to the University of Ghana and pursued a degree in engineering. He moved to the university's hostel for four years and transported the “fire of God” with him to the Legon campus, where he held different leadership positions in LCI's university fellowship. To his family's disappointment, after graduating, Joshua decided to join Anagkazo and become a missionary and pastor.

The Kenyan Amorine Agengo was 25 years old when I interviewed her. She grew up in a Christian family, which attended the Pentecostal Church of Christ in Africa, Nairobi, every Sunday. Looking back, she admitted that her mandatory presence in church since an early age did have an edifying effect on her, but she also claimed that this inherited routine was ultimately deceitful, as it made her mistakenly believe she was an authentic born-again Christian for a long time. Her mother was indeed no churchgoer. A devout Christian and a potential model for Amorine, she read the Bible periodically and organized a weekly all-night prayer meeting with her lady friends at their family's household: “My mother was like: I have to protect them [her and her 4 siblings] through prayers, because I can't protect them physically. Specially ladies at adolescence, we are at more risk than the guys. She decided to pray and advice. I thank god for her life, because we had a foundation, even when we were not that serious”.

Amorine started developing personal commitment when she was 14, after joining the Christian Union (CU), an evangelical school fellowship with Pentecostal influences, in the likeness of Scripture Union Ghana. She defined her initial engagement with the organization as superficial, especially because her Christian activities did not hinder her involvement with what she called secular “entertainment”: “I was having entertainment in the world and visiting the CU. Most of the time, I went to entertainment and they played secular music”. At 15, she decided to become more involved and assumed practical responsibilities at the fellowship, acting as a moderator and praise and worship leader. She received her Holy Ghost Baptist during one of CU's meetings, when she was 17. This attempt to erect a more discernable boundary protecting her born-again identity was interrupted when Amorine became 18 and moved to Mombasa to attend college and pursue a

degree in IT. She started living with her aunt's family. They were Roman Catholics and the environment was not conducive:

She [her aunt] was married with a Spaniard. My uncle used to go to mass every Saturday, and because I was with her, I went to the Catholics. We just brought our offering. I didn't even listen to the priest. I was backsliding. Then I had the desire: I want to go to church, because the Catholics are not good for me. She resisted, but I went back to the Church of Christ. I knew if I did not leave, I could not continue with my Christian life. They drank, watched movies, no prayer at all.

At the same time, Amorine started being “anagkazoed” by a LCI pastor who had opened a thriving church branch in her neighborhood two years before: “He came to our house around 4am sometimes. In Kenya, we are not welcoming as they are in Ghana. I thought he was bothering us. But he kept persisting. One day I decided to go to church, to keep him away from us”. In her first visit though, Amorine “fell in love with the church”. She was attracted by the practical and informal style of the preacher, the lively praise and worship team, the youth, the decoration. She felt at home. Her cousin was the first to become a church member, and she followed her in a few weeks. Her mother and aunt were against the idea, and disapproved having their children attending a church from West Africa: “They told me funny things: ‘Why is it Lighthouse?’ Dark and light, you understand? ‘These people are from West Africa. They have juju and witchcraft. They’ve come to take out children away’. I can say that LCI in Kenya is 90% young people, so rumors spread”. But she disregarded the rumors, and after only 6 months as a LCI member, had rapidly assumed various responsibilities as a lay leader, doing evangelism and joining the drama ministry. Her sister had gone through a similar process, and was offered a fellowship by their pastor to travel to Ghana and attend Anagkazo. She declined and Amorine was the next to be invited. She had just graduated and was even working and starting to earn some money at that time. Nevertheless, she accepted the pastor’s offer and took an airplane to Accra within one month. “I didn’t even know I was called. But now I’m very glad I listened to the man of god”, she said.

Another interesting case of an already maturing Christian adopted by LCI was Henry, a Ga student who was 27 years old and at his third year at the school when we first met. The news that I had been inquiring students about their spiritual growth had spread, and even before I asked him anything, Henry started our recorded interview by promptly recognizing his mother’s dual role in his life as a progenitor and a spiritual guide: “Anything about my Christian life up to now was about the kind of training my mother gave me”. Henry told me he was “brought up as a worshiper”. He mentioned proudly that he could quote big chunks of scriptures by heart since an early age, and started doing street evangelism when he was 14. At the same age, he became the leader of Scripture Union’s branch at his school, and acted as a lay leader both in his base church, Winner’s Chapel, and in various non-denominational fellowships. He was constantly invited to lead worship in diverse charismatic churches and had been in close contact with many men and women of God. All these experiences served as credentials for his successful application to Anagkazo.

Impressed by the lack of moments of breakthrough in his narrative, I had to inquiry, with a hint of irony: “So Henry, were you born born-again?” He laughed and answered by evoking his own life changing event, which tempered a narrative heavily centered on learning and growth with the miraculous intervention of grace:

Good question. Have I ever “become born again”, since I was born inside this environment? It’s important to know that God has no grandchildren... It’s true, I was brought up in a church type of home, but I truly had an experience with God when I joined the Lighthouse... That was in 2006. We moved to Tema that year, and I always loved bishop Dag, so I started fellowshiping at their branch church. That's when I had a powerful experience with God, when I really felt the power of God in one of the services. And I felt that God was calling me. It was a Wednesday service, and during the

time the pastor was ministering, I had a vision: I found myself before God. I had been reading the Book of Revelations during that period too, so I knew how the presence of God would look like. It was like Revelations 4 and 5, the “sea of glass”. I could see myself before God. Suddenly I felt like oil had been poured on me, and when I opened my eyes, the pastor was standing in front of me, and he was anointing me! Physically! He then told me I had been called by God to service. That was one of our branch pastors, Emmanuel Lateney. And that was it! From that day, whenever I took my Bible, I had this desire to seriously read it, and I had this depth of understanding that I hadn't before. I could be on a single verse for about 3 days, you know? Depth. The eyes of my understanding had been enlightened. And it was through that same pastor that I came to the Bible school. He became a spiritual father to me, and started to pastor me to assume the ministry.

Reminding me that “God has no grandchildren”, a classic evangelical proverb, Henry reaffirmed that salvation cannot be inherited, and must be personal. In this sense, his epiphany, a mix of direct divine interpellation and vicarious experience reestablished the singularity of his relationship with God. It came at the moment of the calling, not of conversion per se, so in this sense he never really questioned my statement that he was born born-again. Henry never prayed the sinner’s prayer, a curious fact also shared by Amorine. Nevertheless, the miraculous event that night introduced a self-authorizing event in Henry’s lifeline, which enabled him to recognize the importance of learning to his Christianity without deriving his transformative bond with God from it. It is telling that Henry also found through this event a new personal mentor. Was this epiphany a respectful break with his mother’s influence, a discontinuity with his inherited born-again past? If it was so, it was also an event that triggered a new realignment, as the experience also connected Henry to a new father in Christ. In following year, through the influence of pastor Lateney, he was moving to Anagakzo.

*The “Bible school call” student.* During my interviews, I realized that students coming to the school through bishop Dag’s “Bible schools calls” announced during his Healing Jesus Crusade tended to display the lowest level of spiritual development upon their arrival. This is not the case for all individuals coming through this path, and I interviewed a few of them who had been working as lay leaders and even pastor in smaller churches. Some had already been exposed to dreams, visions, and voices, both directly from God or through prophets, taking these experiences as signs of their calling. They therefore simply found in the bishop’s offering a providential “confirmation” that they were indeed called to become pastors. But to my surprise, a few others did set foot on the school extremely unripe, even more than Caleb or Emmanuel.

That was the case of Patricia Dawohonso, a 26 year-old Ewe student from Nkwantan, Volta Region. She became born-again in 2007, during one of bishop Dag’s crusades in her hometown. Patricia had just completed Senior High School and, in the same evening, decided to apply to Anagakzo, being later accepted, to her own surprise. All the basic ritual events that constitute a Pentecostal life, as baptism by immersion, the Holy ghost baptism, and the acquisition of spiritual gifts, and all the basic capacities a minister is supposed to be endowed with, as prayer, evangelism, preaching and teaching had been acquired or learned by Patricia at the school. Nevertheless, her dedication and fast pace spiritual development at the school allowed her to graduate in 2012, being now under probation as a LCI assistant pastor in her hometown.

In this section I highlighted through a typology of conversion careers how incoming students reach Anagakzo coming from diverse backgrounds, through specific pathways, and endowed with different levels of maturity and attachment to the denomination. For someone like Joshua, the decision of becoming a pastor came after much reflection, prayer, and exposition to dreams and prophecies. Albeit contentious, his calling sprung almost naturally from his maturation. But for Patricia and other “Bible school call” applicants things unfolded much faster and indeed hastier. This is an important fact, especially if we consider the much higher bar of piety displayed by

all the students at the moment of graduation. Regardless of the motivations, expectations, and the intensity of the zeal leading applicants to the school, they had been obviously normalized after submitting to its authoritative guidelines. The belated nature of spiritual maturation for some of the students' invites the problem of how they understand they have been actually called by God, a necessary component of the testimony of any minister who considers him or herself authentic. Although this issue emerged spontaneously here, I tackle it more methodically in the next section.

### 3.5. Desirous pupils: the varieties of the call of God in Anagkazo

In all cases reconstructed above, the call of God was first actualized as a promise, whose temporal economy is not quite so distinctive from the one I attributed to the sinner's prayer in chapter two. Outsourced through prophets, spiritual fathers, and evangelists or directly experienced through dreams, visions and inner feelings, the call of God can only happen as a potentiality waiting to be impregnated by the receiver's faith. As any other form of future-making device, the call of God has a close connection with energetic and propelling human forces, as the will and desire, which are at the heart of Anagkazo students' understanding of how the call of God has been impressed in their bodies and souls.

In the surveyed introduced above, I inquired: "What made you know you have been called to the ministry?" Having already been exposed to a variety of personal depictions of the calling in Ghana, I provided them with three options: (1) "dreams, visions or auditory revelations"; (2) "prophecy from men of god", and (3) "zeal or deep desire to serve". I also made clear that they could check more than one square and provided a space called "other", in which they could add information. The results were as follows: (3): 47,5%; (1+3): 14,8%; (2+3): 13,4%; (1+2+3): 12,3%; (1): 5%; (1+2) 5%; (2): 2%. Zeal and desire to serve were enough for almost half of the students to recognize themselves as legitimately called by God. Along with personal and/or prophetic revelations, as those experienced by Henry, zeal and desire are also part of other 40,5% of the callings at stake, thus accounting for 88% of the overall sample. It was also very common among those having multiple signs of the calling, as (1+2+3) and (1+3) or (2+3) to hierarchize these forms of interpellation in order to make prophecies, dreams, and vision simply forms of "confirmation" of desire or zeal as primary forms of veridiction.

These figures indicate that LCP's normative and democratized notion of the calling reproduced a few sections above has been successfully instilled amidst the church's offspring, being valid even for someone as Patricia, who was quite unripe when she arrived at the school, but had already gone through three radically transformative years before I interviewed her. In this sense, although I approach the calling here as an isolated event belonging to a period of the students' lives that preceded their arrival in Anagkazo, this phenomenon is better understood as a hinge articulating my chief concern in this chapter, the formal and informal networks producing input into Anagkazo, and the next chapter, centered on the school's pedagogy. As third and fourth year students, those responding my survey and interview questions had already been exposed to Anagkazo's specific teachings and scripts about the calling. In this sense, even if the calling, understood as an idiosyncratic revelation, happened in their lives before joining the school, it was likely to be reshaped, enriched or confirmed by learning at the school. In sum, similar to conversion, the calling is both an event and part of longer process of self-discovery that has retrospective effects. As an emerging phenomenon, it is also open to be ideologically inflected by the theological assumptions and relations responsible for shifting its status from virtuality to actuality.

Indeed, in Anagkazo's statement of purpose we find a clear articulation of this question, since it establishes that school's aims is not only to equip students who are called, but also to help

them realize and achieve commitment about the fact that they have been called, thus taking divine interpellation as the starting point of an encompassing process of self-fashioning:

We seek to graduate an integrated person - spiritually alive, intellectually alert and physically disciplined. Equipping end-time soldiers for Christ with the relevant practical experience and exposure is one of our core concerns. *God can use any vessel, as long as that vessel is willing and yielding. At Anagkazo Bible School, we seek to demystify the ministry so that you too can believe you are called by God* (my emphasis).

This conscious demystification of the calling, a general theological trait of LCI, is reproduced in Anagkazo through much more situated means, being reflected in the testimonies of students like Emmanuel and Amorine presented above. In our conversation, Emmanuel almost mocked what he called “mystical” understandings of the calling by telling me that the only voice he heard was that of his pastor and spiritual father on the phone:

Many people say “I’m called, I’m called”, and I didn’t really know if I was called or not. I had this mystical notion that you must have some experience! I had a dream! Somebody talked to me! I heard a voice! I never heard a voice. The only voice I heard was my pastor’s voice, who called me on the phone and asked: Emanuel, do you want to come to the Bible school? But some of them had a calling, they heard a voice and all that. Only after I came to the school I realized that god had put something in me, that I was really called. The zeal was there, but only now I can see.

Emmanuel account stressed how the call of God emerged in his life as part of a process, assuming different forms of expression in time. Starting with trust in his pastor’s guidelines, the call was accepted as a desire, probably a still feeble one, vulnerable to the irritation of doubt. With time, and after enduring year after year at the school, the call of God became zeal, a more intensified and sedimented version of desire. Zeal is part of the evangelistic habitus Emmanuel has cultivated, a spontaneous inner push and taste for church work. But this was not only a linear process, since he makes sure to acknowledge that zeal was always already “there”, even in the past, as a seed God had planted in him, which nevertheless achieved a much more visible expression after he yielded to the call.

Amorine took a similar demystifying path when she claimed that, although she has cultivated a much more intimate relationship with God after her arrival in Anagkazo, her major source of “visions” are still charismatic ministers. According to her, these forms of vicarious experience, based on trust, more than direct experience or embodiment, are not only legitimate, but can even transcend face-to-face relations and find expression through books and messages circulating in the public sphere:

I think I’m called, because the desire was there. It was not clear, like “I want to be trained”, but the desire was there. Today it’s really clear. I’m convicted I’m called. [Did you have any vision, dreams?] No, I use people’s eyes to see. Since I came to the school, revelations became very frequent, but most of the time, I see with the eyes of men of God. If you read Rick Joyner’s books [American minister] you are having a vision. You understand? He has written them to us. I didn’t have dreams and visions. But I’ve seen heaven in the Bible. And I’ve seen heaven in Rock Joyner’s books, and Hell too. I’ve been there, you know? I’m not very gifted in terms of vision and dreams, but I use the eyes of men of god.

One of the basic tenets of Anagkazo’s folk theology of the calling is that the ministerial vocation is not only for spiritual and ethical virtuosi. It is not that holiness and personal devotion are irrelevant, quite the contrary, but that as a virtuality looming upon the horizon of every born-again Christian, the call of god must be first embraced and accepted. Accepting the call is indeed the most

effective way of entering the path of sanctification and spiritual empowerment. In sum, the calling comes first, maybe even simultaneously to conversion and maturation, whereas the equipment required to fulfill the mission one has been called to will naturally unfold from the moment of recognizing oneself as chosen.

As a form of corroboration of this logic of anticipation, I found in the students' hostel the following message posted on a wall, probably withdrawn from the myriad of Christian sites and blogs found today in the Internet.

#### GOD CAN USE ANYONE

Sometimes do you ever wonder why God called you to do something for Him? There are many reasons why God shouldn't have called you, or me, or anyone else for that matter, but God doesn't wait until we are perfect to call us. Think of all those God used. You're in good company if you think you aren't ready for God to use.

- Abraham lied. Sarah laughed at God's promises.
- Moses stuttered. David's armor didn't fit.
- John Mark was rejected by Paul.
- Timothy had ulcers.
- Hosea's wife was a prostitute.
- Amos' only training was in the school of fig-tree pruning.
- Jacob was a liar.
- David had an affair.
- Solomon was too rich.
- Jesus was too poor.
- Abraham was too old.
- David was too young.
- Peter was afraid of death.
- Lazarus was dead.
- John was self-righteous.
- Naomi was a widow.
- Paul was a murderer.
- So was Moses.
- Jonah ran from God.
- Miriam was a gossip.
- Gideon and Thomas both doubted.
- Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal.
- Elijah was burned out.
- John the Baptist was a loudmouth.
- Martha was a worrywart.
- Mary may have been lazy.
- Samson had long hair.
- Noah got drunk.
- Did I mention Moses had a short fuse?
- So did Peter, Paul and lots of folks

But God doesn't hire and fire like most bosses because He's more like our Dad than a boss. He doesn't look at financial gain or loss. He's not prejudiced or partial, nor sassy and brassy, nor deaf to our cry. He's not blind to our faults. His gifts to us are free. We could do wonderful things for others and still not be wonderful ourselves. Satan says, "You're not worthy!" Jesus says, "So what? I AM." Satan looks back and sees our mistakes. God looks back and sees the Cross.

Author unknown



The piece articulates quite succinctly and corroborates the general ethos that drives LCI's apostolic project: the call of God is the first stage of a convert's personal transformation, thus not necessarily a final stage of maturation or fruit of an idiosyncratic election. Instead of pointing to the imitation of Biblical characters as an exemplum of piety, the text prefers to push potential readers to identify themselves with these characters in their moments of weakness, consequently acknowledging how stunning has been the work of free-given grace in their lives<sup>81</sup>. According to this perspective, David is not the divinely appointed, glorious and holy King, but the David who was too young, whose armor did not fit, who had an affair, but who nevertheless played a key providential role in the history of salvation. In sum, the calling is an expectant anticipation driven by faith in the healing, transforming, and ever-succeeding agency of God, whose transformative work requires nothing but submission.

Two other conclusions follow. First, as itself an act of faith, the call of God can only flourish in and through practice. During a class on "The Call of the Shepherd", heavily drawn from bishop Dag's books, Rev. Asso, the instructor, commented on how the voice of God can only be heard if the person is actively immersed in a church environment:

Christians who spend time at discos, parties and the like do not hear the voice of God. Even if they are called, they will not be able to hear it because the other distractions in their lives. Serious Christians, who spend a lot of time in church doing the work of the ministry, are likely to hear the call of God.

The passage stresses what we might understand as the generativity or the autopoiesis of the call of God. By stressing the importance of the environment one is immersed to the emergence of the call, the reverend is not arguing that the ministerial vocation is simply an effect of "works" or that God can be persuaded by our actions. Instead, he is pointing to the fact that one should attune oneself to hear God's voice whenever he interpellates, and that even when he wants to give, you might not be ready to receive. Moreover, it is telling that this process of self-attunement is not defined only as a matter of prayer, contemplation or self-examination. It is mostly about practical anticipation, or acting as a shepherd thus spreading the Word and caring for the sheep. In sum, it is amidst the practice of shepherding that the call of the shepherd is more likely to arise, and not through self-authorizing events as in the apostle Paul's paradigmatic case. This is a classic example of how LCI's apostolic mission becomes embodied as an apostolic ethos, a moral force orienting the behavior and self-recognition of the disciples. It does so especially by framing practices concerned with expanding and caring for the Kingdom of God as fundamental acts of faith and piety similar to prayer, fasting, and Bible reading.

In the same lecture, Rev. Asso exposed us to another pearl of LCI's apostolic wisdom:

Christians are backsliding everyday because they have no purpose for being in the church. People attend church, but after a while they drop out. They don't find any meaning in church life. But anyone who engages in soul winning will begin to discover the reason for his salvation. Soul winning increases the self-esteem of the Christian. It brings conviction. It helps our faith grow. Amen? [Students: Amen].

Instead of pointing to the generativity of personal piety, the instructor preferred to address

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<sup>81</sup> Another classic born-again theme with similar effects in terms of exhortation is in Matthew 21:1-5, a scene in which, before entering Jerusalem, Jesus tells the apostles that they will find a donkey tied somewhere, asking them to bring the animal to him. The providential role performed by the donkey in the story usually allows Christians to say that: "If Jesus can use a donkey, he can also use me". One of prophet Patrick's spiritual fathers, Prophet Diallo calls himself both God's CEO (emphasizing success) and Jesus' donkey (emphasizing humbleness and how his success was grace-based).

soul-winning as itself a religious practice and a valid expression of desire for God that brings personal conviction and maturation, that is, the retrospective establishment of the boundary between one's Christian and non-Christian identity. The result is almost paradoxical: the best way to mitigate negation and doubt about one's Christianity is moving forward and acting as a Christian leader, a spokesperson<sup>82</sup>. In this sense, when the instructor claims that acting like a shepherd "helps our faith grow", at least for me, "our faith" assumed the obvious double meaning of individual and qualitative Christian maturation and quantitative expansion of the denomination. In sum, by making LCI grow, individuals grow in their faith.

The second point is that, although democratized, the call of God is nevertheless predicated on another important process in Anagkazo: actually going through the four years at the school. Revered Asso himself has told me that attrition rates have reached 50% in the past. Student from the third year cohort, which today counts 130 students, told me that more than 60 students gave up, for reasons that go from low grades, breach of the school decorum, or simply realizing that they are not fit for the job. Joshua was clear about the selectivity of the school, comparing it to a military institution:

People who are not called by god just can't stand the training in this school. This place is spiritual military academy. They shape Christian soldiers. Everybody in this school, who has come this far, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> years, you have to salute them. A lot of people leave. What have you survived? That's what we asked to younger students who are complaining. When I came to the 1st year, we had 480, almost 500, now we're 104. People just kept dropping! People go out because of character issues, academic issues. Some people just open the books and say: I can't study these fat books.

It is one of Anagkazo's informal mottos that "If you graduated in Anagkazo, it means that you are called". In sum, one of the functions of the school is to authenticate the call of God. Amorine evoked a similar idea in order to stress that, although she recognized her calling as a desire, an "inner push" to do the work of God, desires are also tested, reshaped, and selected by the school's spiritual and moral disciplines:

If you are not called, that's what my father, the presiding bishop told us, you cannot stay here for 3 months. This is true. I think this school is one of the best in the world. Morally, spiritually, it transforms you. Because it's not easy, not easy... The Bible says "don't fornicate", you pray and ask God to not let you fornicate. But you still have your mind, and that must be changed with time. You need practical wisdom. And they give you this here. It's like "this is what the thing is", fornication is this, so do this and you'll not backslide. You know? It's not only "I have to pray, I'm being tempted". You may go and evangelize a man and the man has something else in his mind. How do you react? Here, they tell you all clearly, and show you how to behave. (...) Something that really affected me after I came in is that evangelism here is a habit. Wherever I go, I think: Is this person born again? Should I tell her about God? If an accident happens now, how many people will go to heaven in this place? It's a habit.

Amorine points to probably the most vital element of the calling in Anagkazo: the fact that it is tested and shaped by a much longer and intense process of subjectification in which the school's theological scripts, regimes of habituation, and disciplinary rules play the most central role. After being introduced to the everyday of the school, I came to realize that when LCI lowers the bar of piety in order to admit a high number of students to Anagkazo, it is not simply expressing its

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<sup>82</sup> Whereas perspectives centered on language and the public sphere as Harding's (2000) lead to the claim that "speaking is believing", putting an emphasis on the testimony, in LCI and especially in Anagkazo we could claim that "soul-winning is believing", that is, it is by placing oneself in a position of interpellator that one's Christianity becomes established and indeed evident as conviction. These activities include speech, but not only, as we revisited above.

quantitative bias of soul-winning industry. It is also expressing its confidence in the school's capacity to separate the wheat from the chaff after admission. In the next chapter I will reconstruct Anagkazo's pedagogical routines, thus how this process of selectivity unfolds. But before that I point to a few provisional conclusions about how authority unfolds in LCI's apostolic mission and the place of Anagkazo in it.

### 3.6. Apostolic power: charismatic authority and pastoral government in LCI

During my analysis of ICGC's discipleship program in chapter two, I stressed with Schluchter (1981) that what Weber calls charismatic authority is grounded on "the mission as a guiding principle" (121). This is especially relevant if we consider both the modern tendency to reduce charisma to an idiosyncratic personal endowment and my own project of expanding the social and spiritual functions of the Pentecostal man of god from a mere miracle maker, that is, an intercessory vessel, into a an emanating center of normativity, connectivity, and zeal. However, the place of charisma in Weber's typology of legitimate domination and developmental history is complex and eventually ambiguous. According to Weber, charismatic authority rests "on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him" (1978: 262). He does find in the quality of extraordinariness its defining trait: "Since it is 'extraordinary' charismatic authority is specifically irrational in the sense of being foreigner to all rules (...) It repudiates the past and is a specifically revolutionary force" (244). Whereas the mode of veridiction of traditional authority is oriented toward continuity with the past and personal loyalty to its upholders, and that of bureaucratic authority is oriented to a contractual order deemed rationally justified and bound, charisma is grounded on a set of personally revealed injunctions irreducible to both tradition and legality<sup>83</sup>.

But Weber is also explicit about how those three forms of authority "may appear together in the most diverse combinations" (1978: 1133). Nevertheless, the extraordinary nature of charisma lends to it a distinctive place in the Weber's chemistry of types of domination. As a revolutionary force, charisma "cannot remain stable, but becomes either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both" (Weber 1978: 246). Whereas the guiding principle of tradition and bureaucracy can still be accessed in their essential traces whenever they hybridize, the classic case being the mix of personal loyalty and legality found in patrimonial domination, charisma is qualitatively transfigured when it is coupled to other forms of authority. In sum, what Weber famously calls the "routinization of charisma" implies necessarily a qualitative loss in the vitality of charisma that finds a two-fold expression. Charisma can be *impersonalized* when it makes room to a revealed law, as exemplified by Moses' prophetic role in the unveiling of the Commandments. Charisma can also be *depersonalized* as office-charisma, as in the case of the Roman Catholic Pope, whose authority stems traditionally from Peter, the founder of the church directly (charismatically)

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<sup>83</sup> In this sense, charismatic authority has a close affinity with what Weber calls an "ethics of conviction" (1948: 77-128), a form of moral stance that assumes as axiomatic a coherent cosmos of values and judges individual behavior in terms of harmonization with them. Differently, what Weber calls "ethics of responsibility", pluralistic by nature, assumes the world as enmeshed in a polytheism of values and judges behavior in terms of the type of relation (often reflexive and dialogical) binding the ethical subject to it within given circumstances. In the latter case, coherence is no longer to be found in the cosmos, but in the individual's engagement with a state of affairs (Mommsen 1984: 415-53). Although those two ethical stances are considered by Weber "fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims" (1948: 120), he also shows how they might supplement each other, as when a mature responsible subject is pushed to the limits of deliberation and can only concede: "Here I stand, I can do no other" (127). As shown by his theory of ethics, Weber's ideal types methodology often works through distinctions that are initially settled before being contrasted with concrete developments in history and society. The same is valid for his typology of authority.

appointed by Christ, hence God himself. The fact that charisma lays in the office, not in the person, protects the perfectibility of this sacred institution from personal flaws or prophetic enthusiasm, thus inserting leadership in a broader structure of legality. The fact that this authority is revealed and not deduced from the ecclesia “from below” implies that the Roman Catholic model of leadership and representation is still irreducible to bureaucratic impersonality. As exemplified by the complex liturgical apparatus of consecration, by embracing a sacred office the person is herself transformed, although never becoming entirely consubstantial with the source of her authority (see Schmitt 1996).

The equation between routinization of charisma, loss, mediation, and decay can be understood as an effect of Weber reading history teleologically. He seems to find in charisma a necessary source of renewal from the claustrophobic dominance of instrumental reason in modernity, best exemplified by his allegory of the “iron cage” (Weber 2003: 181). As a result, “pure” charisma becomes in his writings almost synonym to creativity, newness, and even instability and transgression, being also highly evanescent: “In its pure form charismatic authority may be said to exist only in the process of originating” (1947: 364). Once charisma “happens” in history, this energetic revelation immediately starts being domesticated, thus leaning toward either rationalization or traditionalization. How does the dynamic of charismatic authority unfold in LCI as an institution in terms of allocation, justification, and transmission, and what is the place of Anagkazo in it?

Before jumping to conclusions, I believe it is important to avoid assuming that, because this church has been defined in both popular and scholarly circles as “charismatic”, it fits squarely into a single box of Weber’s typology. First, LCI can be defined as charismatic in a Weberian sense because it extracts its guiding principles from a set of revealed truths stemming from Christ, whose divinity makes him an extreme type of charismatic leader. This belief leads to a series of axiomatic convictions condensed in the denomination’s statement of faith as follows<sup>84</sup>:

Our beliefs:

- 1) That God Almighty is the one and only true God.
- 2) That He is three-in-one, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and Creator of all nature.
- 3) That Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary is the only begotten son of the Father.
- 4) That He is God manifested and dwelt among men.
- 5) That all men have sinned and need redemption from their sins in order to have everlasting life in Heaven as opposed to eternal death in Hell.
- 6) That Jesus Christ died for the sins of all mankind on the cross and that salvation is available through Him alone.
- 7) That a Christian is someone who has consciously and willingly accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- 8) That all activities in the lives of believers must be guided and directed by the Word of God, which is the Bible.
- 9) That the ministry and gifts of the Holy Spirit to believers, as experienced by the early Church, is for us today.
- 10) That in accordance with the Scriptures, Jesus Christ will come again to reign on Earth and at the final judgment will judge each man individually for what he has believed, done, said and thought.
- 11) LCI has a primary role of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ by any means which is not contrary to the laws of the country where any LCI church is located.

Of course, at this primary level, LCI does not differ from much of the establish forms of Christianity, and the longevity of most of the revealed truths enlisted above have allowed them to become solidified into a wide variety of traditional and bureaucratic forms of associations in history, some of them dissenting and rival.

Nevertheless, points 7) and 8) are more specific, and indicate the evangelical and Pentecostal nature of this church, as well as the second way that LCI is grounded on charismatic authority: its focus on individual and direct experience of God. By defining proper Christianity as having a personal relationship with Christ and the Holy Ghost, the institution democratizes access to

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.lighthousechapel.org/lci2/index.php/about-us/what-we-believe>

revelation as a promise that can be claimed by any born-again convert. Modeled according to the early Church, LCI's existence as a corporation is ideally that of a Pauline "mystical body", in which "the unity in difference that sustains the members of the human body is appealed to as the basis for the charismatic unity of the members of a Christian society where each exercises his talents on behalf of the others, and always as a gift of God instead of rather than his own property" (O'Neill 2004: 39). In this sense, members are expected to find their singular place within a larger corporation by receiving direct insight from God just like Moses did, with the intimacy of a "friend" (Exodus 33:11), a possibility allowed by the immanent presence of the Holy Ghost, which synchronizes the present with the Early Church at the level of religious experience.

Thomas Csordas (2001) has approached this focus on personal experience in the case of the Catholic charismatic movement in America as a reflex of a "religion of the Self" with marked areas of resonance with the post-modern epoch, which he finds, for instance, in glossolalia as a "simulacrum of language" (55), an overall emphasis on improvisation, and a fluid structure of authority, deemed acephalous and reticular. The intimacy and universality of charismatic experience also heightens its potential for global transposability as a "movement", that is, a type of associational form ultimately irreducible to Durkheim's communitarian model of a bounded church-society. According to Csordas, by spreading within the solid ecclesiological structure of Roman Catholicism, the charismatic movement is institutionalized not necessarily through a dull routinization of charisma, but mostly through an ongoing dialectics of ritualization and spontaneity animating the fire of God as it spreads.

Csordas' reflections on the idea of "movement" are definitely applicable to the work of boundary-making and crossing of global Pentecostalism and the challenge of building stable ecclesiastic structures within it. Nevertheless, I understand that beyond the dynamic of ritualization and spontaneity, which is his main analytical focus, the process of institutionalization of charismatic spirituality in the case of Pentecostalism also requires an engagement with how its horizontal dispersal is juxtaposed to its denominational condensation around strong charismatic leaders and the ecclesiastic bodies that grow around them, a third way in which LCI is charismatic, which indeed resonates more strongly with Weber's use of the terms to stress individual agency in history, thus the difference between innovators and followers.

Commenting on the social productivity of American evangelicalism, including its Pentecostal currents, Marsden acknowledges that, despite its remarkable level of coherence, "except at a congregational level, the organized church plays a relatively minor role in the movement", since "ultimately, individuals are sovereign and they can leave and join churches as they please" (1991: 81). Nevertheless, Marsden also recognizes that charisma, understood in this case as a direct relationship with God, is also concentrated around key leading figures, which any history of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism would have to account for: "Leading evangelists built up empires that became focal points of loyalty" (idem). Although these leaders advance a common cause and retain a general suspicion about denominationalism, they also endow this spirituality with distinctive styles, which may even become rivals. In Marsden's (1991:81) words, whereas the non-denominational, headless, and "centrifugal" axis of Pentecostalism is equalitarian and democratizing, its "centripetal" tendency to condense around ecclesiastical empires with a charismatic head is comparable to the feudal system of the Middle Ages, that is, a form of authority that can be traced to a plurality of vertical chains of loyalty which, taken in their singularity, cannot represent what the movement as whole is.

I would argue that the two tendencies above are not articulated in either/or terms, but unfold simultaneously through a logic that establishes the charismatic leader and his denomination as paradoxically ancillary and necessary to personal piety and charisma. This duality is indeed a trademark of bishop Dag's rhetoric. He frequently preaches about the dangers of overlapping church belonging and Christian citizenship, the visible and invisible bodies of Christ, too closely. In

the beginning of this chapter, we have seen him lambasting pastors who produce “large, selfish, and barren” churches by hindering their flock’s capacity to recognize that the call of God is for everyone. In November 2011, during one of his public exhortations for more church work, the bishop went even further, and addressed similar critique to the problem of becoming too attached to a denominational identity: “Do you think you’re born again just because you’re worshipping in a charismatic church? Do you think Jesus will ask you for your church ID before he writes your name in the Book of Life?” This is a radical shift of tone if compared to the scene reproduced in chapter two, where the bishop appeared assuring hundreds of people whose only attitude was to recite the sinner’s prayer after him that “You are a new creation now”, that is, they are saved. It is even more surprising that, when he stressed the ancillary status of church belonging to salvation, he is exactly trying to instill in his audience the necessity of doing more work for God through the institutional channels provided by LCI. It is clear that the flock must be fed according to their level of maturation. Recent converts receive promises and anticipation, whereas established church members are ready to receive methodic self-criticism.

I believe the double-bind of the Pentecostal denomination as an essential supplement of personal piety can only be solved if one articulates the attention Weber dedicates to individual innovation in his theory of charisma with Foucault’s (1997) attention to how the modality of power he calls “pastoral” is exercised by making of obedience itself a means of empowerment and subject-formation, “subjectification”, “a form of power that makes individual subjects” (329). In fact, I believe the questions of the origin (Weber) and procedures (Foucault) of power are not necessarily alien to each other. Foucault’s hypothesis that “power as such does not exist” (336), hence that power is coeval to “power relations”, does not completely renounce the problem of its origins, Weber’s major focus in his theory of charisma. Instead, he simply connects the problem of the origins of power with the problem of power reproduction pragmatically, arguing that the “what” of power can be grasped only if concretely accessed through its “how”, that is, as a question of government<sup>85</sup>. In Foucault’s sense, the reproduction of power is itself a form of energetic production, and the same can be applied to charisma.

Considering the case here at stake, it is first important to grant that bishop Dag is widely recognized among the Pentecostal community as a leader whose authority has extra-ordinary origins. As a true man of God, he received an authentic divine call. One of the ways he lends verifiability to his charismatic authority is by working as a miracle maker. He is widely known as a powerful healing evangelist and someone endowed with the “prosperity anointing”. However, considering the Ghanaian context, in which spectacular signs of grace have become more trivialized than routinized, I would say that the main evidence of his charisma is exactly the very success of the denomination he founded. Using his own perspective on how to recognize the hand of God immanently, bishop Dag has “borne fruits”, and those fruits index not only his hard work and organizational skills, but also his special place in the eyes of the God. This aspect gives an autopoietic dimension to his divinely appointed mission: the visible success of LCI is an index of the extraordinariness of its founder’s calling.

The fact that the mission LCI simultaneously advances and exemplifies is undertaken through highly rationalized means, as a true soul-winning “industry”, may indicate that the leader’s charisma has become routinized as a set of bureaucratic artifacts, procedures, and regulated associations that hold the denomination together, as a machine running in its own steam. Those procedures are indeed legion: binding documents, decision-making structures, stable forms of processing and accounting for tithes and offerings and keeping juridical control of church property,

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<sup>85</sup> “How?” not in the sense of ‘How does it manifest itself?’ but ‘How is it exercised?’ and ‘What happens when individuals exert (as we say) power over others?’ (Foucault 1997a: 337).

paper trails responsible for modeling and accounting for practices across-contexts, and a highly professionalized church labor force, even when undertaken by lay leaders. Are these necessarily signs of routinization?

In his analysis of the entwinement of charisma and bureaucracy in a much more modest Zambian Pentecostal church, Thomas Kirsch (2008) argues against the inevitable accommodation of charisma to routine by exploring how the Pauline notion of divinely appointed “offices” produce among the church leadership a “dispersion of charisma” (183-200) able to retain its extra-ordinary vitality through a division of labor. Moreover, Kirsch shows that the articulation of Spirit and Letter through the written formalization of church government can be a source of charismatic empowerment for both cadres and members (227-248). To be sure, Kirsch acknowledges that processes of formalization of charismatic authority may trigger tensions and conflicts, and that the same procedures can be used as much to disperse charisma as to exclude emerging claims about charismatic empowerment. Nevertheless, his ethnography is exemplary of what I am calling a study of the “how” of charismatic authority, its forms of production, stabilization, and transmission, and leads to conclusions that overflow the Weberian opposition between “pure” and “routinized”.

The same is valid for LCI. It is clear that the denomination’s quantitative machinery of soul-winning and soul-caring is understood by those operating it as a means to the fulfillment of its charismatic mission: to expand the Kingdom of God. As a result, bureaucratic and economic values as impersonality, maximization, and entrepreneurship are justified by and submitted to a broader teleology of faith and conviction. The problem here is how to embrace rationalization while retaining and indeed prompting the vitality of charisma, in the double-sense of personal experience and revealed mission reaching the church body through its leader. I want to claim that LCI’s version of the mystical body is a zeal machinery fueled on a specific form of pastoral power, both charismatically headed and disciplinarily headless.

It is widely known that Michel Foucault found in the figure of the shepherd the possibility of cutting off the King’s head in political theory. Different from sovereign power and other forms of leader-centered power, pastoral power is salvation-oriented, oblativ, individualizing, coextensive with life, and linked to the production of truth, “the truth of the individual self” (Foucault 1997a: 333). Pastoral power is one of the tools Foucault uses to tackle the problem of governmentality, defined in a later essay as the meeting point between two forms of practical reason: a) technologies of domination (in the Weberian sense of legitimate power), “which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject”, and b) technologies of the Self, “which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of other, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thought, conduct, and a way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality” (225). Foucault’s late work (Foucault 2005, 2009), centered on ethics and the overlapping and dissociation in history between knowledge of the self and care for the self, is admittedly more interested on b), which he also calls “technologies of individual domination” (Foucault 1997a: 225).

The perspective that Pentecostalism is an ethical system or a technology of individual domination composed primarily by a series of spiritual exercises, as prayer and Bible reading, and modes of self-publication, self-examination, and self-regulation, as the testimony and holiness, has been a fruitful way of approaching the flourishing of this spirituality in environments characterized by a general crisis of authority and relative anomie (Robbins 2004b, Marshall 2009). But whereas this perspective is extremely helpful in accounting for the centrifugal axis of Pentecostalism as a movement, it is not equally effective when it comes to understanding its centripetal condensation around charismatic leaders. I believe that Pentecostalism’s two-fold nature of spiritual movement and institutionalized religion is best understood if mapped out to an oscillation between



technologies of the Self and technologies of power, that is, ethics and pastoral power producing specific styles of piety and ecclesiologies.

As a form of self-government, Pentecostalism dispenses with an organized church, and associations are best understood as “fellowships”, episodic bodies assembled through the mutual tuning-in of individuals as part of ritual co-performance or informal settings for the transmission of practical knowledge. Being this loose format basilar, denominations cannot simply assume their necessity, and must establish their relevance pragmatically. This happens first through the intercessory, caring, and teaching role of charismatic leaders, individuals who exercise a great evangelistic appeal. To be sure, as argued bishop Dag himself, charismatic leaders can produce negative feedback into personal piety and transform intercession in a source of immature dependence and the decay of spontaneous “fellowshipping” into a ritualized leader-center activity. Of course, his critique of large and barren churches is not a celebration of smaller and more intimate Christina settings, but a defense of his own pastoral project, base on the axiom that the best means for church growth and reproduction is exactly the empowerment of members.

Considering that one can only embrace an ethical equipment through learning, as a “baby”, to remain with my interlocutors, the denomination establishes its relevance by facilitating the individual entrance into the Pentecostal arts of self-government and providing converts with the relational ground for transmission, emulation, practice, and nurturance. The conversion careers reproduced above show powerfully the generative influence of Pentecostal networking into Pentecostal piety. We have seen that LCI governs over a deterritorialized flock by embracing converts as a family, in fact, a family of situated families that have bishop Dag as a “meta-father”. This is not a self-contained entity, as it overflows both ways: the bishop has his own father’s and allies and his school also attracts pupils from other denominations. I believe the figure of the mentor, father, ethical and spiritual guide is a vital hinge connecting charismatic leadership and pastoral power in LCI. I would like to address this cohabitation of power as origin and method, leader and apparatus as an apostolic power, remaining with my interlocutors’ emic theory of authority. Apostolic is both headed and headless, and it leads and cares for a flock by, among other things, by treating them as potential leaders and pastors. The apostle is a shepherd of shepherds.

I will elaborate on LCI’s apostolic union of personal charisma and the dispersal of technologies of the Self in my conclusion. Before, I would like to dive deeper in the next two chapters into this zeal machinery by taking a closer look at the pedagogy of Anagkazo, one of the key engines allowing the successful and orderly transnational reproduction of the church.

Chapter 4 - The pedagogy of Anagkazo Bible School: unpacking the disciplines of the ministerial way of life

In the previous chapter, I was able to convey some introductory information about Anagkazo Bible School. We learned that the school accepts incoming students from diverse sources, being officially inter-denominational and interested in spreading Lighthouse Chapel International's (LCI) influence over broader sections of the Pentecostal movement. In this sense, it is quite similar to global Pentecostal Bible schools as Kenneth Haggin's Rhema Bible College in the U.S.A. or Benson Idahosa's Nation for Christ Bible Institute, in Nigeria. Nevertheless, at least in its current state of development, Anagkazo's major role is to train the denomination's future leaders, as shown by the two main sources of recruitment it recurs to: i) LCI's broader discipleship apparatus, dedicated to facilitating church labor formally and informally, lay and fulltime; and ii) bishop Dag's evangelistic crusades, whose applicants end up being adopted by the denomination during their time at the school. We have seen that, in order to accomplish its apostolic mission, Anagkazo's decision-makers strategically lower the bar of piety at the context of admission, which I considered a sign not only of LCI's quantitative interest in expansion, but also of its trust in the school's capacity to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Having embraced the challenge of testing and normalizing a posteriori the spirituality and motivations of students with radically distinctive levels of spiritual maturation, LCI opted for having as its major center for pastoral training a "total institution", defined by Goffman as "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life (1961: 11). Goffman stresses how these institutions erase the conventional boundaries of everyday life, specially spatialized distinctions between private and public, as they immerse members in a holistic environment governed by clear authoritative guidelines. Different from other types of total institutions, as asylums and prisons, applicants join Anagkazo voluntarily and in a quest for knowledge acquisition, capacitation, and training. Different from a boarding school though, Anagkazo adds to capacitation and professionalization the religious mission of facilitating ethical and spiritual development and self-mastery. In this sense, the school guides students through their individual cultivation of what Hadot (1995) in his work on the ancient philosophy schools calls a "way of life", a life that disallows a sharp distinction between the authentic subject and her practical expression. Similar to MacIntyre's (1984: 205) notion of the ethical life as a unitary life, a "way of life" is a teleological project, a constant quest in which hindrances and contingencies happen and must be tackled with perseverance and method. I will call the normative *telos* reproduced facilitated by Anagkazo's pedagogy the ministerial way of life, the life of a Christian leader who is also a disciple.

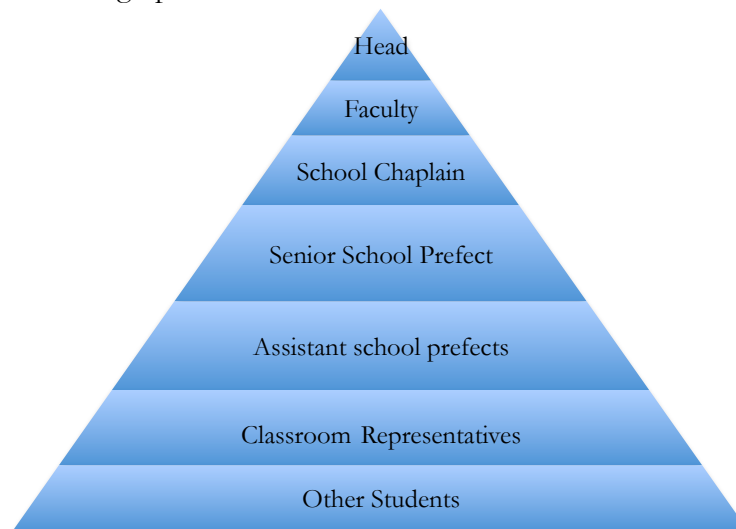
In many ways, the pedagogies of Anagkazo are those of a monastery, especially if one has in mind monastic orders characterized by both seclusion and incursions into "the world", as the Franciscans. As I showed in chapter three, students flock periodically into Accra's landscape in groups, entering buses, knocking at people's doors, and preaching in public spaces. They also perform "visitations", assist LCI's Bible reading groups, help in the church's charity projects, and provide labor and prayer force to bishop Nterful's evangelistic crusades in Accra. But the comings and goings of Anagkazo students are temporary, part of the apprenticeship, and the school is an intense self-transformative period whose final aim is to "send out" pastors into the world in order to fulfill Christ's Great Commission: spreading the gospel to the last confines of the Earth until Jesus returns. The school therefore articulates the basic principle of monasticism, as Agamben aptly puts, "to construct a form-of-life, that is to say, a life that is linked so closely to its form that it proves to be inseparable from it" (2013: xi), with the evangelistic impulse to convert and attract others to its

fold, a church labor ethics. In this sense, and in tune with the militaristic trope explicitly adopted by LCI, Anagkazo is to the mission field what a military academy is to its final end, the war effort, in this case, the systematic advance of the “army of Christ” into the enemy’s territory.

The pedagogy of Anagkazo is not monolithic. It is best understood as a systematic articulation of a series of disciplines, whose declared purpose, according to the school’s profile is to equip end-time soldiers by approaching them as “an integrated person - spiritually alive, intellectually alert and physically disciplined”. Foucault defines disciplines as “blocks of capacity-communication-power” in which “the deployment of technical capacities, the game of communication, and the relationships of power are adjusted to one another according to considered formulae”(2000c: 338). Their finality is to transmit skills, aptitudes, ways of speaking, modes of self-knowledge and self-recognition. My objective in the next two chapters is to reconstruct the diverse disciplinary trends unified by Anagkazo’s pedagogy, which I will sub-divide into 1) institutional disciplines; 2) academic disciplines, 3) the disciples of apprenticeship; and 4) spiritual disciplines or spiritual exercises. In the current chapter I will tackle items 1) to 3), dedicating chapter five to item 4).

#### 4.1. Institutional disciplines: excellence, loyalty, and humbleness

In tune with its militaristic vein, Anagkazo demands from the students submission to a rigid calendar of activities, which requires from them waking up at 5am, sleeping no more than 5 hours a day, working on the maintenance of the facilities, holding administrative roles, following a demanding schedule of lectures and Bible studies, and sustaining an intense and methodic devotional life, in which one prays, fasts, reads, meditates, preaches, and does evangelism according to specific moments and functions assigned by the school direction. Students are therefore governed through a methodic management of their time, and obedience is regulated by an effective structure of authority summarized in the graphic below.



Anagkazo’s structure of authority

At the head of the school we find two key figures: Rev. Asso (a nickname for Assoman), the school director, and Bishop Nterful, Anagkazo’s bishop and resident pastor. I would like to rapidly revisit their religious trajectories, as they help consolidating some of the mechanism of realignment I reconstructed in the previous chapter and reiterate the processes that led many of Anagkazo students to the school. These commonalities make of the high ranks of LCI a token that allows students to anticipate their own future. Both leaders spend most of the day at the school-church

facilities. As bishop Dag, both are former medical doctors who became born again and received the Holy Ghost through the Scripture Union. In Rev. Asso's case, it happened in the late 1980s, in Bishop Nterful's in the late 1970s. Since then, they have been active Christians involved with diverse churches and fellowships, first as lay leaders and eventually as fulltime pastors. Reverend Asso became a member of Duncan-William's Action Chapel International (by then Christian Action Faith Ministry) while doing remedial courses to improve his grades before applying to the University of Ghana's Medical School, being eventually accepted. During his 7 years at the Legon campus, he acted as the secretary of Ghana Fellowship of Evangelical Students (GHAFES) and the Christian Medical Fellowship, and visited LCI only sporadically, which was at that time still an emerging albeit already energetic and polemic church. After completing his degree, Asso moved to England for 2 years to specialize in gynecology. In Europe, he found unprecedented pressure to opt between his secular and religious life, eventually diving deeper into the latter, and through LCI:

When I move to England, I was in another church, more orthodox. It was Christian alright, but I didn't feel the fire in the church and in myself. I felt I was slowly dying. (...) I visited LCI's branch there with my wife. We were impressed. As we were leaving the church, for the first time, in 2001, I told her: "We're in danger! Fossilized!" I became a full member and started having a more active relationship with the Lord and life gradually came back. I must say I remained a Christian morally and everything throughout my studies as an undergraduate and post-graduate, but as for the work of the ministry, it was when I joined LCI.

After he passed the exam of the Royal College of Gynecologists, Asso finally reckoned with his call. Despite having heard numerous prophecies about his call, Asso rather define it as a desire that has followed him since conversion, but that was eventually catalyzed by LCI to the point that he "could not contain": "I was supposed to have achieved something, but I didn't feel that fulfilled. I was talking to my wife once and said: 'We should start a church'. She was what? Where is this coming from? That was the beginning of a long journey. Kweku. E. Amponsah [today LCI's reverend in Switzerland, at that time resident pastor in London], apostolic man of god, nurtured me." He was trained through apprenticeship abroad and had an intense but indirect influence from bishop Dag through his books and tapes. Asso soon became a shepherd at the London branch, and was ordained a pastor in 2003. In 2004, he returned to Ghana and became a pastor of LCI's Kaneshi branch, which was eventually absorbed by the Qodesh. In the same year, he was ordained a reverend minister by the bishop, after going through a series of exams. Rev. Asso ran one of the Qodesh's chapels for one year, and joined Anagkazo's faculty in 2006. In 2010 he was promoted to school director.

Bishop Nterful's trajectory was quite similar, although, more reserved, he preferred not to release many details. A few years after becoming an active born again Spirit-filled Christian through SU, he was awarded a scholarship to study medicine in the former USSR, where he continued his spiritual growth through involvement with the International Christian Fellowship, which had a chapter at the school. "There was a lot of international students where I were, so we met for Bible studies, prayer, evangelism. In this period I felt a great shift in my growth." Back to Ghana, in 1991 he became a LCI member, and in one year was appointed a leader, and started pastoral training through camp meetings. In 1994, he was ordained a pastor, and in 1998 a reverend minister. In 2006, he became the resident pastor of Light of World Cathedral, and in 2010 he was consecrated a bishop. His training was also informal and through apprenticeship, which included camps directly led by bishop Dag. "It was the same thing but not structured in the same way. What we did was what we continue to do. We both studied materials and sat at the feet of seasoned ministers, and received knowledge and impartation".

Below the school head, there is the faculty body, composed of around 6 lecturers who come and go according to the schedule of classes, although they also have offices in the 5<sup>th</sup> floor. All of them are reverends from LCI. Here I rapidly introduce the conversion career of two very active faculty members, who teach various subjects in Anagkazo and are deeply admired by the students. Rev. Hamish, became born again in 1979 through SU, and became a LCI member in 1987, when it was still a fellowship-church. He was also a medical student, which testifies to the powerful appeal of the project among its immediate audience in the early days. He described bishop Dag's influence among his peers in terms of exemplarity, using the popular motif of nurturance: "You cannot overlook: you bring food after your kind. He showed that we could be medical students, intelligent, hardworking, critical, and still be serious Christians". Brother Hamish rapidly became a shepherd, until he graduated and was sent on residency to a town in the Western Region. After two years he returned to Accra and decided to dedicate his life fully to the ministry. His training was mostly informal and facilitated by LCI apostolic structures:

I had the privilege of being trained directly by the presiding bishop and founder. Even when I was living somewhere else, I used to come to Accra to what we used to call "Night Schools" and "Informal Pastoral Training Programs". We used to go for camps too. 12hrs, 16hrs of teaching in a day! It'd give you a lot of credits in a school [laughter]. I also attended shepherds congresses and shepherds camps.

Today, Rev. Hamish is the resident pastor of LCI's branch in the neighborhood of Abeka. During my fieldwork in Anagkazo, he taught Pastoral Ministry, Basic Theology, and Church History.

Rev. Kinsley is the grandson of a famous Ga "fetish priest" and spent his childhood oscillating between his grandfather's shrine and a Catholic education. "I went to the shrine sometimes, and to church on Sunday because it was a requirement of the school". He became born again at the secondary school through SU, and joined LCI at its very begging, around 23 years ago: "They had moved from Korle-Bu hospital canteen to the School of Hygiene, as a result of some persecution. From the canteen we moved here, where we are. It was a little structure at that time and it started growing". He soon became a shepherd, helping members to foster their ability to teach. As it tends to be in LCI, brother Kingsley was progressively invested by the church with more responsibilities as he developed in terms of zeal, spiritually, and pastoral skills while straightening his personal allegiance to the church's mission, eventually quitting his job as a clerk and becoming a fulltime pastor

We got together, and the bishop used to teach us directly. We didn't have the books we have today. The teachings were very similar, but we didn't have books. With time, we decided to have branches. I happened to be in one of the first groups the bishop sent out within the city to start branches. The branch system in Accra began in early 1994. He sent out 4, 5 groups, and we went out in pairs. We explored the areas and by the grace of god, I worked under another shepherd at that time. I was assisting him. The area was called Techi, to the east of Accra. We started the church there in 1994. In that same year 1994, I was appointed as a pastor. I was a lay pastor, and worked at the Environment Protection Agency. I was a lay pastor for 8 years or so, 9 years, and I've been in full time ministry now for about...9 years as well.

Similar to Rev. Asso, whenever asked about his calling, Rev. Kinsley rendered explicit his status of leader-disciple, and reiterated almost verbatim LCI's template explored in chapter three, which articulates personal revelations and the confirmation provide by pastors around intimate desire, considered the calling's ultimate principle of reality, one that is both cultivated and supernaturally revealed:

One of the things the bishop has written is that sometimes the calling to ministry comes as a result of diving into the work of God. You realized it while you're doing the work. I'd say that in term of my calling, first, personal conviction. I had a series of dreams that I narrated to my spiritual fathers and they confirmed the calling. What concretized my conviction was when I met bishop Dag Heward-Mills a year or 2 after I rededicated my life to Christ and he actually opened my eyes to what the call is, and that brought me to the work of the ministry.

Today, Rev. Kinsley's primary function is to teach a great number of subjects at the Bible school, where he spends most of his time. He is still the resident pastor of the church branch he helped founding, in Tech, also acting in LCI's general and deputies councils and training lay leaders and pastors through camp meetings and workshops.

Between the administrators and instructors of Anagkazo and the student body, we have the school's chaplain, whose main task is to mediate the relation between those two parts and monitor the routines and rules of decorum of the school. This function was by then performed by pastor Erick, who had graduated from Anagkazo 4 years ago and became one of bishop Nterful's assistant pastors in the Light of the World Cathedral. He lives in the church compounds.

We notice that the organization of Anagkazo is marked by a large discrepancy between a small number of professional actors- head, faculty, school chaplain, and no more than four office workers - and a large number of students. This means that the school is basically self-organized by the students. In order to keep some degree of control over this process, authority is distributed within the student body through a variety of offices. Student leaders are also centralized, having as their head the senior school prefect. The office holder is appointed by the school direction, and selected among the fourth year students after surveying their behavior, level of dedication, and grades. Joshua Darko performed this function in 2011.

According to Joshua, his main task as the school prefect was "to make sure that everything that the lecturers and other people in charge want to be done be done. Most of the times they are not around to be issuing orders, to make sure things are done properly, so there's a representative, who's the senior school prefect. If something goes wrong, I'll be also held responsible". In order to perform his functions, Joshua presides over a series of specialized assistant prefects also appointed by the school direction. Those are the school chaplain (responsible for monitoring the performance of spiritual routines), the library prefect (who opens, closes, and controls the use of the library), the "prep" prefect (who monitors the time students dedicate to their academic responsibilities, as preparing for exams and quizzes, also making sure there is enough quietness and peace for study), the social activity prefect (who manages and organizes entertainment programs), the health prefect (to whom students go when they feel sick), and the compound overseers (responsible for keeping the hostel and school facilities clean). Some of them have their own assistants. According to Joshua:

I'm the head of all these people [other prefects]. They report to me what is going on. If there's a message from the administrators, I send it across. I rectify, correct, make sure things are done. Basically, it has been tiresome and challenging, but I believe as an upcoming minister, looking to what is going to happen out there, having church members from all areas and backgrounds, it's an experience. It's not easy pastoring people, and my work here is pastoring. People come with all sort of problems: economic, family, health, financial, and you have to deal with this. People think you should be able to solve all this. People come: "I'm broke", "I need to do this and that". And you have to find a way! Sometimes I think: these people also think about me? The things I go through? We have busy schedules, now it's time for exams and we have a lot to do. We have targets, scopes to cover to be able to pass.

Similar to the school chaplain, the senior school prefect relates to the school authorities in terms of representation and delegation. Joshua addressed his representative role through the notion of "sending a messages across". The student body is eventually assembled for announcements

uttered directly by Rev. Asso or bishop Nterful, but it is more likely to receive decisions, changes of schedule, and warnings through the school prefect. Joshua also highlighted how the senior school prefect tends to spontaneously become a sort of school shepherd, engaging in counseling, conflict resolution, and the management of personal problems. He was always very stressed trying to solve small feuds and personal problems without involving the school direction. Albeit extremely demanding, the office of senior school prefect is deemed prestigious and is disputed, the same happening with all other student leader roles.

As a proxy of the school authorities, Joshua acts first as their eyes, an agent of surveillance infiltrated amidst the students, and second as someone authorized to rectify, criticize, and guide. Whenever these are not enough, students are reported to the school direction. It is a basic rule of decorum in Anagkazo that you do not try to deliberate or dissuade those endowed with authority, which includes the school direction as well as its student proxies. Even if their sanctions are considered unfair, students must comply passively, otherwise they receive worse sanctions. Students can receive three warning from the school during the four years they spend there. After that, he or she might be banished or have to repeat a whole academic year. A similar hierarchical frame characterizes the relations among students of different years, senior students having legitimate authority over juniors, regardless of their age. Additionally, each of the yearly groups has a representative, responsible among other things for checking attendance through periodic roll calls after lectures and practical activities, reporting absentees to the school direction, and having power of command. In sum, all must obey in Anagkazo, but all also exercise authority at some context and level of intensity. The overlapping of equalitarianism and rank within an impersonal social environment pushes even further the analogy with military organizations. By oscillating between obedience and command, students are being exposed to what will be their lifelong mission as soldiers of Christ within a denomination in which active leadership is both encouraged and controlled by hierarchical structures.

Pointing to the non-deliberative nature of Anagkazo's hierarchies, Alexander, a fourth year student, described how his strict upbringing has helped him reckon with the school routines:

Yes. The rules... I came with a friend from Techima who couldn't follow the rules. Now he's back and I'm still here. He was wondering how I survived. He knew my parents, how I've struggled in life. He told me he was too free. He's spirited. His father would not tell him: do this, do that. He does think in the house the way he wants, and he comes here and a small boy like me can tell him: "Sit here brother, don't move". He could not stand it. In my beginnings it was a bit like this, some accusations. I didn't really have time to spend with my parents, with love, so as I came here, I realized that the discipline, in one way or the other, had been taken care by the Lord during my early days. I've walked through this discipline, even though I had not noticed that. I had to work seriously. I've carried load! This background, by the grace, helped me to be in this school up to today. But I don't hide that at time I also thought about abandoning the school.

Alexander intuitively stressed the continuities between the hierarchies of Anagkazo and those of his household. By divine providence or accident, his past provided him with a behavioral foundation to "survive" Anagkazo, which lacked in his friend's case. But it is also important to note that when Alexander mentioned that his friend could not stand having "a small boy like him" telling him what to do, he was not referring to a matter of age, but to his more humble background, thus stressing how the school does insert a strong discontinuity with markers of status and deference valid in the secular world. What I am arguing is that the institutional disciplines of Anagkazo cannot be resumed to an opposition between equality and hierarchy. In fact, as it tends to be in total institutions, the school both suspends old and imposes new hierarchies, in this case based on seniority and rank.



Olivia and Caleb's testimonies revealed a similar dynamic, this time concerning not wealth, but age and race. Olivia was already in her forties when she joined the school, and also had a hard time adapting to the new system:

Because I grew as a Christian without mentorship, I was used to do things as I like, the way I like, the time I like. When I just came here, they came with "get up", "do this", "do that". I said: "Hey! A small boy like this telling me these things!" I didn't tell them, but I'd be wondering... "I don't care who you are!" [She had the school prefects in mind, often younger than her]. I was able to cope, but I didn't like it. I'd say: "Let's find a way to do this" [trying to negotiate]. And they would be: "There's no argument mommy!" Those are the rules!

In Olivia's case, the use of the popular expression "small boys" did refer to age, and to how the idea of having someone much younger than you telling you what to do in such authoritative manner in Ghana is quite surreal under normal conditions. The students did show respect for her age status by calling her "mother", and she told me that especially the female students sought counseling with her and treated her as a motherly figure. But this particular marker of authority inherited from her experience outside of the school had been at least submitted to a new logic, and with no leeway for negotiation. Curiously, this includes even markers of Christian hierarchy, as "age in Christ", or the length of one's walk with Christ and level of spiritual maturity. Olivia became born again in the 1980s, which should confer her some degree of command. But not in Anagkazo, since the disciplines of the school treat this heterogeneous group of students as a blank slate submitted to a set of impersonal rules.

Caleb exemplifies the same process of discontinuity when it comes to race. White people are treated in Ghana with extreme hospitality and eventually even with a deference that can be embarrassing for those with a more equalitarian ethos. Caleb's experience at the school was quite the opposite. He told me he was treated with special kindness the first time he came to Accra in his grandfather's company. But once he set foot at the school, he became the "white foolish boy", especially for his lack of skills when it came to performing the menial jobs he was assigned to. As he grew older and more mature in the school, things changed.

The strategy of pulverizing authority amidst the students is very effective in terms of government of a large body of individuals, but it can also produce mutual suspicion, competition, and conflicts, especially when this process of delegation includes mutual-surveillance. But although conflicts did eventually emerge, Anagkazo's highly disciplinary environment was still surprisingly light, pervaded by laughter, joy, and informality, even between students and the school head. It became obvious to me that the institutional disciplines of the school are irreducible to a method of managing students, and are recognized by those they subject as an inherent part of their ministerial training. In this sense, institutional disciplines are best understood as the basic form from which a form-of-life is supposed to emerge in close consonance. This pedagogical component can be traced to three orienting values and virtues that make submission to the school's disciplinary regime not only legitimate, but also desirable: excellence, loyalty, and humbleness.

First, many of the qualities cultivated through these impersonal routines and systems of surveillance of Anagkazo, as punctuality, self-restraint, and orderliness, can be thought as ways of introducing the students into what I called this denomination's "quantitative" *modus operandi*. In sum, they are qualities required by any "soul-winning industry", and were often referred by my interlocutors through the value of *excellence*. LCI does things with entrepreneurial passion, zeal, and the spontaneous guidance of the Spirit, but with "excellence", as observed in the standardized nature of liturgies, weekly schedules, preaching themes, and even decorations across the vast denominational network. The time and length of church services are precise, a sign that LCI is averse to what is commonly known as "Ghanaian time", marked by unpredictability and delay. This

unsystematic use of time in Ghana is not only a sign of lack of care. It can also be an expression of hierarchy, implying that “big” people are those who let you waiting. The strict and impersonal temporal disciplines of Anagkazo are aimed at countering this secular ethos, pointing to a complementary quality attributed by directors, faculty and students alike to the school: Anagkazo is an “international” Bible school, just like LCI is an international church, thus being governed by a different temporality.

Another institutional discipline related to the cultivation of excellence concerns self-presentation, which must be always neat and in accordance to the school’s mandatory dressing code. Male students must wear suit, white shirt, tie, black shoes, shave periodically, and keep their hair short. Female students must wear black dress, white shirt, black coat, black shoes, braided hair or wig. Whereas LCI’s lower rank pastors dress just like Anagkazo students, senior pastors, reverends, and bishops dress elegantly but much more informally, usually with African wear. In this sense, Anagkazo’s sartorial code both homogenizes the student body and indexes rank. This sartorial dimension was also pragmatically related to the work of evangelism, and a good self-presentation was deemed a necessary aid to a minister’s capacity to persuade unbelievers. According to Joshua:

We're being trained also to be able to relate to all walks of life. When you're out, you'll deal with different people. As Christians, we're called to witness to the world. We must be able to relate to the great, the poor, the needy, everybody in society. As a minister, if you don't present yourself properly they'll not receive you.

A tidy self-presentation conveys trust and confers legitimacy to the minister’s words. On a similar vein, Mohammed granted that Christianity is a matter of “heart”, intentions, devotion, and zeal, but that appearance is critical for the work of God, especially because “God looks to the inside, but men look to the outside. Even though God is looking to your heart, if you want to bring people to Christ, you have to care about how you look on the outside”. In this sense, the project of Christian sanctification or holiness does not imply a general disregard for materiality and appearances, especially because the duty to evangelize requires from ministers an effort to make their body reflect God’s saving grace and influence others. Henry ratified this perspective through an interesting interpretation of a passage of 2 Samuel:

Prophet Samuel was sent to go and anoint a king for Israel. When he went to the house, David's father brought all his children out for Samuel to anoint the one God has sent him to, and when Samuel saw the older one, he thought that's obviously the one God has send me to anoint. Why? The first-born looked presentable, his stature, his body, and Samuel judged according to what he saw, even though the last born, David, was the anointed one. God made a statement: men judge things with their eyes, but God looks at the heart. That scripture should help you understand that every human being looks at appearance. We, as pastors, before our preaching affects someone, you have to be accepted. It's very important to be accepted, because if the person does not accept you, they'll not listen to you in the first place. I wore basically African wear. I was a bit used to trousers and long sleeves, because I was brought up in a church environment, and normally the choir is like this. I grew up with a choir uniform: trousers, long sleeves, white or any other color, but the jacket and the tie I learned here. And I'm keeping it, because I love it [laughter].

In a Ghanaian context, the school’s sober mandatory attire is also a marker of distinction from ostentatious popular Pentecostal preachers, who can be seen in the streets wearing white suits, green ties, and pointy shoes. The imaginary figure of the “village pastor” was often opposed by the students to those like them, apprentice pastors whose self-presentation is oriented toward excellence. To most African students, Anagkazo’s uniform was embraced positively, as a sign of progress and prosperity. Mohammed stated proudly that a friend from the Northern region commented on one of his Facebook pictures in which he appears wearing suit and tie that “I see that God has been working on you”. Conversely, Caleb found in the school uniform a constant

nuisance, and had already received two notes of warning from the direction for not following the rules. When we talked about this subject, Caleb complained about how inadaptable to the local weather the uniform was, and defended a solely interiorized version of faith: “I believe it's totally about what's in the inside. I don't believe people will look and say: ‘He's wearing a hat, snickers, and short pants, what kind of a preacher is this?’ It's not what you wear. It's what you have to offer. You don't want to eat the outside of the coconut, you know?” As I showed in the previous chapter, Caleb is not going to be a LCI pastor, which allows him to draw from his experience in Anagkazo selectively. Nevertheless, willfully or not, he had to abide to the school rules.

Second, submitting to Anagkazo's impersonal rules does not mean engaging in impersonal relations, and one of the basic principles responsible for infusing the school machinery with life is the cherished value and virtue of *loyalty*. Bishop Nterful commented on the aggregating power of loyalty as follows:

We believe strongly in 1 Corinthians 2: loyalty and faithfulness. You have to be faithful to God, the call of God, the Word, and also be faithful to the people who are above you, your seniors in ministry. You must ask for instructions and accept the rules. You must be faithful to your congregation, because when you gather people, you must have a commitment towards them. When people are not faithful they become rebellious, what leads to disloyalty, chaos, church splits, churches that cannot grow and function well because of so much quarreling. The Spirit of loyalty gives you homogeneity and allows you to expand. If you take Lighthouse: a network of 1200 churches in 60 countries... You don't see the head of the denomination everywhere rushing to see how are things. The pastors are trained to be faithful and just flow in the spirit of the house (...) That's what gives the denomination its identity, but we also give a lot of space to allow the flow of the Holy Spirit, to guide you on what to teach at a particular time, how to minister and all that.

The bishop stated clearly that LCI's success relies on its capacity to coordinate the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit - thus the important of “being led” and “flowing”- with order and decorum. Central to this process is the cultivation of loyalty as a relational Christian virtue, a ubiquitous theme of bishop Dag's preaching and writing. Nonetheless, loyalty never appears to instructors and students as a prescription of the leader or the denomination, since the bishop is simply glossing the Bible. This process is made clear in bishop Nterful's comments. Although 1 Cor 2 has no mention of “loyalty”, this notion is derived from Paul's use of “faithfulness”. It is telling that faithfulness is one of the items of Paul's list of virtues known as the “fruits of the Spirit” (Gal 5: 22-23): “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control”. By analogy, faithfulness to God is converted by bishop Dag into loyalty to the fathers, the importance of being “faithful to the people who are above you”. By converting faithfulness into a relational virtue, bishop Nterful locates the sources of LCI's identity and orderliness in the “Spirit of loyalty”, which pervades the institution despite its highly deterritorialized nature.

What is known in Anagkazo as “the doctrine of loyalty” allows obedience to index personal faith and, by refraction, loyalty to the fathers. Complementarily, disobedience is synonym to lack of faith and disloyalty, which is applied not only to the head, faculty members or school chaplain, but also to all endowed with authority, including student leaders and senior students. To break the school rules is itself an act of disloyalty with those giving you the opportunity to grow in your faith. Loyalty therefore personalizes the school's impersonal system of rules without jeopardizing its impersonality, since personal relations do not emerge as “exceptions” to the system. Moreover, relations of loyalty are themselves encoded meta-pragmatically as relations of spiritual kinship, being both personal and spiritualized. In this sense, lecturers and the school head represent either a new set of spiritual fathers added to the student's earlier repertoire or new points of connectivity allowing their entrance by adoption in the Lighthouse family. “People above you” are not merely cold instructors, but fathers in Christ, a figure that, as I argued before, has the powerful capacity to

articulate social allegiances with individual piety. This invites the problem of how Anagkazo's institutional disciplines are taken as a necessary component of the students' spiritual development, that is, the problem of how obedience to the school rules is considered a path toward *humbleness*, another Christian virtue required to spiritual growth.

According to Rev. Asso, the strict institutional disciplines of the school have primarily an ethical and spiritual aim, that of "humbling" the students, "breaking them down", "emptying them of any sign of pride, so the Word and the Spirit can fill them and take them to a higher level in ministry". In sum docility is not submission to a worldly institution, but an inherent component of an ethical and spiritual equipment (Asad 1993: 125-170, Mahmood 2005, Hirschkind 2006). This is not simply an official account, since its efficacy was confirmed by the students' personal experiences. Students' narratives concerning especially their first year at the school were characterized by the ubiquitous reference to a process tackled by Foucault (2005: 95) in his study of the pedagogy of the Cynics as *dediscere*, or unlearning. Humbleness is a vital tool of unlearning. The Cynic maxim that "learning virtues is unlearning vices" (*Virtutes discere vitia dediscere est*) implies that the process of becoming an ethical subject entails both a generative and a dissipative or subtractive dimension, expressed by the need to strip oneself from previous education, habits, and influences<sup>86</sup>. Anagkazo's institutional disciplines provide a true method of unlearning, which not only governs students as if they were blank slates, but literally "empties" them from their behavioral baggage, to stay with Rev. Asso's comment. A similar imagery was evoked by the students, as 36 years old Ebenezer, from the Easter region of Ghana:

The first time I came to this school, I saw that there were seniors who were younger than me, so I thought I could just command it. But they taught me here how to humble myself, how to leave everything behind: knowledge, age, all that. You can never compare the wisdom of the world to the anointing of God. And before God gives you the anointing, God wants to take everything from you, humble you, empty you, so you're filled with the anointing.

One of the effects of embracing discipline as a source of ethical unlearning is an unintuitive discourse that responds disciplinary harshness with love and gratitude. During our interview, Olivia also testified to how the school provided her with both new disciplinary regimes and a new way of recognizing the very work of discipline. Although she was first offended by having "small boys" telling her what to do, with time she started seeing in the same kind of attitude "the love of God flowing":

One problem I had before coming here was that I could not find a real father, or mentor, to assist me: do it like this or that. I worked hard for churches, but I could not get anyone to give me directions, stand by me. I was more like led. I also realized that although I was preaching I was bitter... It's temperament, you know? Many people have mistreated me, even pastors! I had to build my way through prayer. So I also became proud, self-righteous. Proud of how much church work I did, of how long I prayed. I didn't take advice. But after I came here, I was able to sit under the feet of spiritual fathers, and God has given me the grace to forgive everybody. The disciplines - do this, do that - they helped humbling me. That's something I really thank God for. I kept on praying anyway, and I realized that many things have improved. Young people, they get power in their hands, so sometimes they get too excited about it. But now I see the love of God flowing. The bishop's preaching has helped too. And especially prayer! The Holy Spirit brings things to memory. I've seen much more love. I noticed that's how the house works, people are broken down slowly

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<sup>86</sup> As we have seen, unlearning is a key component of evangelical and Pentecostal dominant genre of self-publication, the testimony, guided by a rhetoric of "I was lost but now I'm found" that, as most of this spirituality, thrives on a dialectics of miraculous intervention and process. Ethical unlearning can start spontaneously, as in the case of life crisis that lead to conversion, when accidents, sickness, death, and disappointments "break you down" and prepare the subject to submit to the work of grace.

Olivia acknowledged that her intense but non-mentored zeal pushed her from virtue to the vice of self-righteousness while making her proud of her achievements and averse to authority relations. By “humbling” Olivia, Anagkazo provided her with an environment she had never found before in her long walk with Christ, a fresh beginning, almost a new spiritual rebirth, in which the threat of pride was kept at bay.

Anagkazo’s instructors frequently condemned pride as a major hindrance preventing the establishment of healthy and thriving churches: pride of one’s spiritual gifts, of one’s powerful preaching, of one’s intense church work. This erroneous attitude produces Christians unable to submit to church authority, work as assistant pastors and lay leaders, and realize that the ecclesia is about a common mission. In this sense, pride is the main enemy of loyalty, as it encourages a dangerous feeling of self-sufficiency, of forgetting that one was only able to mature in the faith and become spiritually empowered by engaging with others who brought you up as such. Even more seriously, pride is also the main enemy of humbleness, as it implies that the believer is unable to recognize in her works the unmerited work of grace. In this sense, it might even jeopardize one’s salvation.

The best remedy to pride is to break the will methodically, a process that tends to be painful at first, as argued Jonas Boasinge, a third year student from the Volta region. During one of our conversations, Jonas told me about his recent preaching exam, in which he decided to exhort the new students to endure the school disciplines by delivering a message based on Paul’s use of the allegory of the potter and the clay:

I preached that before a vessel can contain an object or a liquid, it has to be prepared for it. For instance, if the potter is trying to mold the clay, he has on his mind what purpose that vessel is for. Especially if the person will be used for a greater purpose, even the durability must be different. The bishop has been a great vessel in the work of evangelism, ministry, the training of pastors. It’s because he has become a certain vessel for God. So if I want to be a good vessel for the Lord, my person has to be changed, to suit what I’m going to contain. In Romans 9: 21, Paul describes the vessel saying to the potter: Why are you molding me like this? Why are you doing this to me? During the time of vessel-change, you’ll go through some pains. When a tree has branches that do not correspond, they are trimmed. During this time of cutting unwanted branches, you’ll feel pain. That’s what is happening in the school.

Pain is therefore a required stage in the process of ethical and spiritual unlearning, and must be embraced with thankfulness. The period of “vessel-change”, to use Jonas’ expression, was especially traumatic for Caleb, who described with some graphic details the impact that life at the schools had on his previous dispositions, including his racialized bias when he arrived at the school. That was only one of the many aspects of his behavioral baggage undermined by the disciplines of Anagkazo:

Spiritually, I’ve changed more than astronomically. If you had known me before, I’d be someone you’d like to avoid, you know? I didn’t like people. I was always sending people away, even with my way of looking at them. God has really worked on me through this school. The discipline, working on my spirit, I’ve been humbled in ways that you can’t imagine. I had to clean toilets, you know? I’m the only white person in this school, and they were like: you’re going to clean the toilets, ok? The first time I did, I threw up. It was really bad. I had to clean the toilet and my vomit. I’ve been humbled in ways that you hardly can imagine Bruno. There’s a lot of grace here.

Caleb justified his allegiance to the school and loyalty to the fathers by referring to their roles as facilitators and catalyzers of his personal relationship with God. As a result, Anagkazo is deemed to transpire grace even in its militaristic disciplines, since their aim is to instill the desirable virtue of

humbleness, indeed a “meta-virtue”, since the docility produced through disciplined unlearning is a precondition to the embodiment of new ethical and spiritual capacities. At the end of the day, what Caleb is arguing is that similar to prayer, fasting, or Bible reading, cleaning a toiled, of course, whenever performed with the right disposition, can be thought as a spiritual exercise. This perspective indeed shows how my own differentiation between “institutional” and “spiritual” disciplines is artificial from the start, since, as I argued in chapter three, the vitality of LCI and Anagkazo’s apostolic power is exactly in its capacity to explore the affinities between institutional allegiance, spiritual parenthood, and personal piety. Having introduced in this section the methods whereby Anagkazo students are “emptied” upon their arrival, in the next section, I point to one of the ways they start being “filled” by the school: through its academic disciplines.

#### 4.2. Academic disciplines: manuals, citations, glosses, and testimonies

The first substantive set of practices responsible for complementing disciplinary unlearning in Anagkazo are lectures. Social scientific studies of education have long presented us to a version of the school classroom irreducible to mere context of knowledge transmission between disembodied minds, exploring it instead as an encompassing social phenomenon suffused by power relations (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977, Apple 1979). Those appear more clearly at the level of the curriculum, whose emphasis and silences reveal the work of history, values, and ideology in terms of reproduction and concealment, allowing the analyst to trace their transfiguration into an embodied and taken for granted hegemony. Moreover, knowledge transmission is itself regimented in the classroom setting according to authoritative rules of decorum and interaction that inhere the pedagogies of schooling (Mertz 1998). It is therefore valid to consider this social space a disciplinary configuration in Foucault’s (2000c) sense of a block of capacities-communication-power involved in subject-formation, one in which language is obviously central, but which does not resume what knowledge transmission in these settings can be.

In Anagkazo, lectures last from one and a half to two hours, and happen in four or five sections a day, depending on the year. They range from 8am to 6pm and have various intervals and other types of activities in between. All courses are mandatory, hence yearly groups develop together, at least those who remain in the school and are approved after yearly exams. First year courses are: Basic Theology: Fundamentals of Christian Faith; The Ministry and Loyalty; Principles of Holiness, Principles of Leadership; School of Solid Foundation; School of Evangelism; School of Victorious Living; Principles of Spiritual Development. Second year courses are: Church Administration, Basic Theology: New Testament Literature, Old Testament Literature, School of the Word, Church History, Principles and Practices of Pastoral Ministry, Principles of Leadership, Pastoral Ministry: Principles of Church Growth, and Law. Third year students do not attend lectures and are often out on “rotations”, part of the disciplines of apprenticeship I will describe next. Fourth Year courses are New Testament Literature, Old Testament Literature, Anointing and the Ministry, Fundamentals of Church Growth, School of Apologetics, Demonology, Church History, West African Church History, Principles of Leadership, Marriage Counseling, Ministry and Loyalty, Accounting, and weekly informal meetings with bishop Nterful called Time with the Bishop.

Similar to any conventional school setting, most lectures are based on written materials and instructors eventually use the blackboard to indicate Biblical quotations or facilitate their arguments through concept mapping. Classes on Law, Accounting, and West African Church History use photocopies of diverse sources, usually very simple and schematic. Church history classes follow the American Pentecostal minister Roberts Liardon’s series of books *God's Generals: Why They Succeeded and Why Some Failed*. All other classes are based on five thick textbooks written by bishop Dag

Heward-Mills, which are compilations of his various publications: Basic Theology, Evangelism and Mission, Church Administration and Management, Pastoral Ministry, and Model Marriage.

Basic Theology (Heward-Mills 2007a) is divided into seven sections. Bibliology establishes the perfectibility of the Bible as the Word of God, the history of salvation as a variety of “covenants” between God and man, and equips the students with various Bible study methods. The doctrine of regeneration deals with “the concept of the New Birth”, its significance and promises. The doctrines of prayer and faith deal with what is prayer, how to have prayer answered, how to pray effectively, what is faith, its types and levels of intensity, how to improve one’s faith in practice, also presenting the Word of Faith theme of “positive confessions”, or how to claim miracles and Biblical promises daily and “live by faith”. A section on the doctrine of holiness presents to students a list of sins, and equips them to counter these and strive for Christ-likeness. A section called successful Christian living describes how to develop a personal relationship with Christ and contains a detailed “Biblical study of backsliding”, which explores its psychology and the conditions that lead to apostasy. A section on the doctrine of success and prosperity establishes three Biblical “paradigms”, all drawn from the Old Testament: the Abrahamic, Davidic, and Solomonic success paradigms. The final section is on demonology and scrutinizes the attributes and names of Satan, signs of demonic activity, the nature and strategies of demons, and how to “break down strongholds”.

The book on Evangelism and Mission (Heward-Mills 2007b) expresses LCP’s evangelistic vein, and is based on the assumption that spreading the gospel is the supreme task of the church. It presents students with highly rationalized strategies for effective evangelism, stressing their vital role in church growth and planting. Causes of church “bareness” are also examined. The missionary ethos is defined as one of self-sacrifice and diligent fruitfulness. Evangelism is not only a matter of heart, effort, and excellence though, since its success is predicated on spiritual empowerment and the supporting evidence of miracles. A large section deals with the works of the Holy Spirit, with a focus on one of the major catalyzers of successful evangelism, the gift of healing, being illustrated by a series of incursions into Heward-Mill’s experiences “on the road” during his Healing Jesus Crusade.

The book Church Administration and Management (Heward-Mills 2007c) tackles explicitly the basic principles we have already seen in practice in LCP’s hybrid church-family-industry organization. Three units are dedicated to the doctrine of loyalty and are called “basic doctrine of loyalty”, “loyalty and anarchism”, and “advanced doctrine of loyalty”. They present systematic templates to understand the influence of loyalty and disloyalty among pastors, congregants, and between those, which are illustrated with a vast number of personal testimonies and citations from other books. Loyalty and disloyalty appear organized in degrees, types, and dissected in their signs. The doctrine of loyalty is complemented by the doctrine of remembrance, which assumes that disloyalty is mostly common among those unable to remember, in the sense of recognizing their pre-Christian hardships, the importance of fathers for their Christian maturation, and the purpose of their calling. Remembrance is basically the capacity to recognize one’s indebtedness to God and mentors, deemed vital to both the personal walk with Christ and the ministerial ethics. Bishop Dag is harsh on disloyal ministers: “Amongst the people you will work with are men who do not have the ability to remember. Men without remembrance are a most deadly group. They are the brewing conspirators of your ministry” (2007c: 185). The book is completed by units on Christian leadership, rules for full-time ministry, work ethics in ministry, and principles for effective church management, as establishing a membership base, organizational finance, how to craft a church constitution, how to manage a network of churches, and the principle of frugality or “the careful and wise use of money, resources, and opportunity” (484).



The textbook *Pastoral Ministry* (Heward-Mills 2007d) starts with “basic pastoral ministry”, another name for lay leadership. The bishop presents his desire-centered view of the call of God, how to nurture lay pastors, and their fundamental role in a flourishing church. Moving to “advanced”, or full-time ministry, the book introduces the main skills required by any pastor. Prayer is defined as one of the driving force making a church grow. Ministers should intercede in prayer for their own churches and claim more members on a daily basis. They should also pray against demonic opposition to their churches. Other basic skills are teaching, preaching, visitation and interaction. Fourteen “principle of church growth” are introduced. I mention a few of them below, especially because they help clarifying LCI’s own power strategies revisited in the previous chapter.

The principle of the “multiplied senior pastor” defends the importance of delegating authority to assistant pastors. “I have been hurt by some people, but I have decided to still trust others to help me” (207). The principle of “maximized Sunday usage” assumes that since most people dedicate only their Sundays to go to church, this day must be full working day for pastors, from dusk to dawn, as it is in the Qodesh. The principle of “smaller division” argues that to break the church organization down into smaller associations facilitates intimacy, the pastoral care, and the spiritual maturation of the flock. The principle of “catering for group A and group B member” means that the flock is always divided into two groups. Group A is reliable, attends church more than once a week, and engages in church work. Group B are the “once-a-weekers, non-small groups members, early service lovers, short sermon lovers, mind drifters, day dreamers, Bible forgetters, non note-takers, non-tithe payers, clock-watchers and the church-near-me attendees” (2007d: 209). In sum, group B is what I have called “immature Christians”. They are far from the ideal, but will fatally flood any church as it grows. The bishop prescribes accepting them as brothers and sisters and trying both to accommodate to their needs and slowly feed them into group A, presenting a few strategies to do so. The principle of multiple services, dynamic church services, and using technology and research are self-explanatory. The “80-20 principle” establishes that eighty percent of a church’s growth will be undertaken through twenty percent of the congregation, again emphasizing lay leadership and the fact that a thriving church is necessarily self-reproductive.

The book continues with a unit on the pastor and the voice of God, how to hear God, discern the voices of the mind, the flesh, the devil, and the Holy Spirit, how to use dreams for direction, and how to “avoid mistakes when being led”. A section on spiritual fathers and the doctrine of the “anointing”, or the ministerial grace, follows. Those are central topics, and I will address them lengthily in the next chapter. The book is concluded by a summary of pastoral ethics: ethics for the head, for relationships, financial ethics and privacy, how pastors should manage their public appearances and relate to politics. Pastors must acknowledge that their popularity will necessary make them political beings that can influence society at large. In this case, it is important they remain neutral vis-à-vis party politics, “especially in a developing democracy” (451). Christian leaders should not release their vote publicly, display political paraphernalia in their churches, or sit in political platforms. Pastors and Christians in general should nevertheless “pray for the King” (1 Timothy 2:1-2), and intercede through prayer for the good management of public affairs, regardless of the party.

The almost complete dominance of bishop Dag Heward-Mills’ writings in Anagkazo reveals the importance of texts for the transmission of the church’s normative vision concerning what Pentecostal Christians, churches, and ministers are and should be. This vision is never reducible to LCI, but it is undeniable that this denomination’s pastors and ecclesiastic structures (including Anagkazo itself) are the first and major visible example of the efficacy of the “doctrines” laid down systematically by their founder’s writings. Bishop Dag’s textbooks “entextualize” (Silverstein and Urban 1996) his many years of experience as a pastor, enabling the circulation and reproduction of a specific ministerial style both within and without the denomination. Transcending the opposition

between the text, understood as an abstract structure and meaning, and context, taken as an a posterior process of situating this previous entity in space and time, the notion of entextualization approaches texts as a meta-discursive tool used by concrete agents to objectify and totalize the field of practices and discourses. In sum, entextualization is a situated process that produces non-situated artifacts<sup>87</sup>. As richly explored by Urban (1996, 2001), the study of entextualization, considered as “the process of rendering a given instance of discourse a text”, is entwined with the problem of the authoritative transmission of culture and, in my case, a way of life and a style of Pentecostal ministry, across time and space. Below I examine a few internal components of these narratives before observing their role in classroom interactions.

Bishop Dag’s books are openly inter-textual and heteroglossic (Bakhtin 1981). His authorial voice orchestrates a variety of others voices, drawing heavily on citation, commentary, and gloss. These books also include a variety of conventional paratextual devices, as footnotes and bibliography, which include especially other Pentecostal writers, but also secular authors from the fields of administration, business, history, and even psychology<sup>88</sup>. Although heteroglossic, these text-worlds are not pluralistic, as Bakhtin’s novel, since each of their points is ultimately oriented to the Bible as a defining source of narrative authority. Moreover, although I am talking about an aggregate of almost 2,500 pages that make use of a variety of rhetorical devices, it is valid to claim that the bishop’s narratives lean toward an encompassing and easily discernable literary genre: the manual.

Anagkazo textbooks are ultimately manuals for the ministerial vocation and personal piety, that is, guides, blueprints, or scripts for conduct that establish exemplary procedures (often through a step-by-step dynamics) and anticipate outcomes: “If you do this, and this, and this, you will achieve this desirable result at short or long term”. This genre invites the problem of how the bishop’s voice echoes authoritative through the pages of his books as he lays down, one by one, a series of commands to be followed or iterated by his readers. Let us examine the short passage below:

#### ETHICS FOR PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Develop certain high standards of behavior in relation to your physical and outward appearance:

- Develop the art of dressing decently and formally, even when casual.

Thus, you will never be out of place when called on for official duty without notice. “Be instant in season, out of season” (2 Timothy 4: 2).

- Do not appear extravagant or ostentatious. The hallmark of greatness is simplicity.
- When preaching on Sundays, you should be formally dressed, and not casually.

“The priest, whom he shall anoint...shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments” (Leviticus 16: 32) (Heard-Mills 2007: 450)

The passage interpellates its readers with a series of imperatives, probably the most explicit modality of performative utterances (Austin 1975). As most of the bishop’s textbooks, it presents basically a list of injunctions: “develop”, “do not appear” or “you should be”. They are explicitly concerned in producing a felicitous effect in the world, which does not mean that truth or falsity are

<sup>87</sup> This includes anthropologists, who act both as writers and observers of “cultural texts”, supposed to be found in the world, according to the Geertzian tradition.

<sup>88</sup> He uses psychology to support his argument in the book on Christian marriage and studies of backsliding.

completely disregarded, quite the contrary. Their veracity is a necessary part of their authority, which is justified through a non-contradictory appeal to effectiveness, goodness, and truth. For instance, the injunction to dress decently is justified by expediency: “thus you will never be out of place when called on for official duty without notice”. The injunction to not dress extravagantly is justified by the virtue it embodies: “The hallmark of greatness is simplicity”. Finally, both commands must be embraced simply because they are in accordance with the will of God, and the bishop’s summons the authority of 2 Timothy 4: 2 and Leviticus 16: 32.

I believe the rhetorical structure above exemplifies well a broader tendency of charismatic discourse to articulate pragmatically results (better life), ethics (good life), and Biblical literalism. In some sense, a pragmatist genre as the manual is the best description to what is the Bible to mature Pentecostals. During one of our Bible lessons, my personal friend Evangelism Agyeman talked passionately about his relationship with the Bible by first, granting that these texts are the true Word of God, and then arguing that the Bible is his manual: “The Bible is a manual. When you buy a gadget, a cellphone, it comes with a manual right? If you have any question about how to use this gadget, you go to the manual, it’s all there, because this people in America, in China, they produced this gadget, you understand? So they know everything about it”. Agyeman’s allegory captured well how the many hours he spent reading the Bible daily were not mainly for knowledge acquisition. Of course, his motivations as a Bible reader were not monolithic, and the practice itself probably stretched his intentions beyond their initial configuration. Agyeman was probably entertained, thrilled, inspired, exhorted, warned, and scared by the Biblical text, even when he did not seek these emotions. But he preferred to define the sacred book as a source of behavioral guidelines, a manual, whose commands are sometimes emitted directly, through clear performatives similar to those of bishop Dag’s books, but also indirectly, through implicit prescriptions to be found in the lives and experiences of Biblical characters. Different from the cellphone example though, his engagement with his manual was ongoing and teleological, because since The Fall, man’s “gadget” has been broken. In this sense, this special equipment cannot be governed by simply reckoning with its true and deep nature. The gadget’s nature is its brokenness, and the manual’s role is to constantly remediate it, a work that is useless without the aid of grace and the Spirit of God.

Anagkazo students consider bishop Dag’s writings fundamentally “Biblical”. It is clear that his texts are not the product of a conventional author, someone who is personally accountable for his words, including their force of command and potential effects. But the bishop is also not a pure “animator” (Goffman 1981), a carrier of words he does not ultimately own and hence should not be accounted for. His vast number of “doctrines” are best understood as commentaries and glosses on the Bible, that is, forms of iteration of Biblical truth through citation, interpretation, and exemplification that inflect the original without claiming a clear authorial point. Moreover, as in the case reproduced above, it is common to see Biblical citations emerging not before, but after his personal comments, what Pentecostals call “backing” one’s statements with scriptures. This logic renders even more explicit a more enduring trait of bishop Dag’s narrative style: an ongoing oscillation between the pragmatism of a discourse interested in being useful or solving concrete problems and the eternity of sacred truth. In this sense, the bishop’s plurality of “doctrines” ends up being nothing but a web of concrete cases, citations, commentaries, and glosses that not necessarily cohere as a “theology”. They do cohere implicitly, as evidenced by the success of his ministry and denomination, built upon the same principles entextualized in his books.

Another important source of authority for bishop Dag’s written performative injunctions is his personal experience, taken in a twofold meaning. On the one hand, experience is mobilized in these texts as practical wisdom acquired through their author’s long exposure to the ministerial life, his “age in Christ”, a form of Christian experience akin to what Walter Benjamin (1968: 155-200) calls *Erfahrung*, learned experience. On the other hand, as it tends to be among charismatics,

experience is also articulated in a sense closer to what Benjamin call *Erlebnis*, direct, spontaneous, and personal experience of God. Curiously though, those two notions of experience are articulated by bishop Dag in mutually confirming ways, thus not through a marked opposition, which is Benjamin's diagnostics about the status of experience in modernity. The passage below exemplifies well this hybrid rhetoric of experience:

Why teach on the subject of "Loyalty and Disloyalty"? I believe the Lord has laid on my heart this practical subject for various reasons. First of all, I have seen the relevance of this subject in the Word of God. The Scriptures are replete with accounts of faithful and treacherous people. There is a lot to learn from these accounts in the Bible. My few years in the ministry have also made me very aware of loyal and disloyal people. I have noticed the impact it has on churches and ministries (Heward-Mills 2007: 1)

The introductory comments reproduced above establish three motivations underpinning their author's dive into the theme of loyalty and disloyalty. First, he has been "led" to it by God, who planted in his heart the desire to scrutinize this subject. Second, the theme is both predicted in the Biblical text and finds solutions within it. It is only a matter of highlighting and glossing the right passages. Finally, his life experiences have endowed him with a keen awareness about the importance of this subject for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, and also with the necessary legitimacy to tackle it in the book form.

Mystical experiences also figure in the bishop's book ubiquitously, supporting his commands with moments of self-publication according to the experiential genre of the testimony. In a subsection of unit IV of the textbook on Pastoral Ministry, dedicated to "Pastors and the Voice of God", the bishop states that "2. A minister must obey the voice of god to avoid being displaced and replaced", this time "backing" his authoritative command with the following narrative:

One day I had a strange vision. In this vision, I saw a big man being lifted from his chair by the collar of his neck. I did not see who the man was. Suddenly, I found myself being lifted by the collar of my neck and being placed in his chair. After that the Lord told me that I was replacing someone in ministry. Dear friend, I tell you, I was frightened! I was not frightened about replacing someone but rather because the reality that I could also be replaced one day, became very real to me! This vision was very biblical because it happened many times on the Scriptures. Samuel replaced Eli! David replaced Saul! Elisha replaced Elijah! (Heward-Mills 2007b: 222)

The passage circumvents a strong opposition between Biblical literalism and experience, which is a framework that characterizes American Fundamentalists, but curiously also a large group of anthropologists (Crapanzano 2000). Instead, Pentecostals often recur to a rhetorical pattern that, as exemplified by bishop Dag above, legitimizes personal and spontaneous experiences by stressing their "Biblical" nature. In sum, the fact that Biblical experiences are intimate does not entail that they are idiosyncratic. They can be iterations of Biblical types, thus becoming generalizable as models for ethical and spiritual discernment. In fact, by presenting his vision as an embodied citation of Biblical types through analogy - mysterious pastor: bishop Dag :: Eli : Samuel :: Elijah : Elijah - Heward-Mills is implicitly transmitting to his readers another principle of Anagkazo's teachings: that revelations find in the Bible a major source of "confirmation", and that God and the Holy Spirit often "talk back" to the Bible, in an organic synthesis of experience and text<sup>89</sup>.

So far we have explored the stylistics that constitute Anagkazo's textbooks. But how are these textual artifacts contextualized in the classroom setting? To be sure, similarly to speech, texts

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<sup>89</sup> Complementarily, the bishop also cites personal experiences from other pastors, especially lengthy descriptions of Kenneth Hagin's revelations extracted from his books.

are inherently persuasive, and that is one of the roles of the rhetorical operations I was able to discern. The bishop's writings are highly personal and compelling, inviting the reader to enter his text-world by eventually addressing him or her as "my friend", "beloved", "son", "daughter", "brother" and "sister". He even utters written "declarations" through these pages, speaking words of faith into the reader. For instance, after teaching about "the anointed ones", he closes the chapter with: "May you become an anointed servant of the Lord and may somebody call you 'the Lord's anointed'" (Heward-Mills 2007c: 345). And after a section on Temptation and Sin of Women, he exhorts his female readers as follows: "Daughter, you can make it! His grace will see you through" (2007d: 388). Despite these attempts to control the reception of his messages through the "internal politics of style" (Bakhtin 1981: 284), the impersonal circulation of his commands through commodities as books implies that their dissemination will inevitably escape his not-so-authorial intention. This is certainly not a problem when it comes to his readers at large, but it is not enough when it comes to his spiritual offspring. In order to counter this tendency, Anagkazo finds in the classrooms setting an opportunity to straighten their control over the transmission and reception of the bishop's messages. Let us examine a short classroom interaction, which lasted about 14 minutes:

April 13, 2011. Lecturer: Rev. Kingsley. Discipline: Demonology (4<sup>th</sup> year). On chapter 33 of Heward-Mill's Basic Theology, entitled: "The Strategy of Demons"

Lecturer: Ok, we are trying to understand demons and how to deal with them. Amen?

Students: Amen.

Lecturer: Let's look at 2 Cor10: 4-5.

[Quotes from bishop Dag's book and continues reading it out loud]: "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ'. When Jesus was attacked by Satan in the wilderness, he had to defend himself against clever suggestions. The suggestion of demons come in three categories; three categories of common satanic attack: Type 1 suggestion: the suggestion to yield to fleshly desires. 'And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread' (Luke 4:3)" [End quote]

The main way demons influence us is through what we call imaginations and thoughts. Often...not often...always, Satan will not appear in person. If he comes to you in person: "I came to tempt you" [Students: laughter], you will not yield to him [laughter], so he has to use thoughts, imaginations, to tempt you. We want to use the ministry of Jesus to understand how he operates. Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights, so naturally he was hungry. He was about to break the fast. That's the best time [laughter] ... When you're breaking the fast, even plain garri [cassava flour] tastes sooo good! [laughter]. Satan said: You're hungry. You don't need to walk all the way home to get your bread. You're in the wilderness. You can chose. Transform this stone into bread and eat it! When I look at this sister... It's an imagination. Her pretty face... [Students: Hey!] It's an imagination. The work of the devil is to make me think that a beautiful face means a good wife, which is not true. Imaginations... The way she looks beautiful, that's an imagination...

[Quotes the bishop]: "We are constantly urged by the voice of Satan to succumb to our flesh" [End quote].

Satan will tempt you in the areas of your fleshly desires. He will tempt you where you're already weak. Jesus was weak in the area of hunger. That's why Satan will never suggest you to do things you're not familiar with. So you used to be a fornicator, a serious fornicator before you became born again? Be very careful. That's the area you're familiar with. Anybody here who has smoked before you became born-again, I assure you, you'll never smoke again, for the rest of your life. In Jesus name! [Students: Hallelujah!]. But that's an area the devil will use. If you're a drinker... One day, as you're ministering communion, you will lift the cup, and a suggestion will come. You're a pastor, so you can drink a little bit more of the blood [general laughter]. Before you realize, you will be pouring a whole bottle. [Hey! Laughter, clapping]. Because you're used to that area. You'll have communion service every day! Can I have more of the blood? [General laughter]. The flesh is the first point of entry of demons in your life.

[Quotes the bishop] "The voice that urges you to sleep on, to break your fast and to do immoral things is the voice of Satan" [end quote].

You must remember something about your flesh. The Bible calls your body “the old man”, which means, if you take your spirit, your soul, and your body, the body is the oldest among the three [laughter]. It’s true! The body was created first. The older always wants to be dominated. If you want to be the president of Ghana, you must be at least 35. Some of you just became born again, 5 years ago. Your soul is 5 years old, your Spirit is 5 years old, your body is 25, 26, 35, 40. [Students: hey! It’s a message!]. Don’t doubt. It’s working. You’re getting prepared here. It’s working. By the grace. Alright? Powerful. But your flesh has a lot of things you think you dominate. So when Satan comes, just tell him: You’re a small boy in the system. Just step out. Let’ move to point 2.

[Quotes the bishop]. “Type 2 suggestion: the suggestion to worship and serve something other than God” [End quote].

See? Satan is also in the computer age. In Ghana, there was a lot of idol worship when I was a child. It was very common. In almost every town there was a Tigare shrine. If the one in your town was more powerful than the one on the next town, you’re powerful. These fetish priests were the most powerful people. Idol worship was glorified. All this is gone. So Satan has to find something else, other than small gods.

[Quotes the bishop] “This is also a suggestion to choose the quick and easy route to your goal. ‘And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine’ (Luke 4:6-7). Countless Christians are urged to live for money and other earthly achievements. It is the voice of no other than Satan which urges you to spend your life, your time, your energy and your money on everything but God’s work. Some people think that what I am saying is too strong. But Satan hides in the darkness and uses Christians and righteous looking people to do his work” [end quote].

Ok. See? So Satan can make you worship something else: worship your children, your wife, your job, your football team. The object of your desire is what you worship. When it comes to choose between your children and God, you chose your children, job, money, wife, marriage. One day [Students repeat: One day]: I was still in the public service. I saw a job add for an American company. They paid very well. Good work conditions. When I went to the interview, they told me they’d give me a salary that was three times larger than mine. They had a social security system, the same they have for their American staff. They would give me health insurance, accommodation, a car, many things. It was a very competitive interview, but I finally got the job. I went to see them, so I knew more about the nature of the work. We sat down for a lengthily discussion and I was told I’d have to go on frequent trips, work outside Accra for at least 2 weeks every month. My pastoral ministry would come to an end. [Some students say: “oh”, sadly]. I even met a Christian brother who told me: “Pastor, it doesn’t really matter. Wherever you go, you attend church. Take the job”. I was not attending church. God has given me a congregation and I had to give my life to the work of the Lord, and now there was money on the side. What would you chose? [One of the students: America! laughter]. This job was a hope. It’ll help my family. The suggestion was very strong. But I told them: “I’m sorry, I cannot take the job”. The lady said: “Many Ghanaians want this job sir”. I told her: “Sister, I’m not even explaining because you’d don’t understand”. [Students: laughter and hallelujahs]. But the Lord will see you through! [Students: Amen!] Today, all that this job had offered me, I have found through the church. [Students: wow!]. They wanted to give me a car? I bough a car for myself. They’d give accommodation? I built my house. The lord will take care of you. Amen? [Students: Amen]

We realize that Anagkazo’s lectures transcend what is expected from a more conventional notion of classroom interaction. At its heart, we have bishop Dag’s texts, whose citations, commentaries, glosses and testimonies are animated verbatim by the lecturers, which is not a particularity of Rev. Kinsley classes. They are scripts closely reiterated by most of Anagkazo’s academic disciplines. But instructors not only bring these texts into life by infusing them with their breath, they also give continuity to its discursive logic during classroom interactions. In this sense, instructors embody the bishop’s voice as well as his very rhetorical style, which is indeed LCI’s style. New content is rarely added, and yet the textbooks are further corroborated by the instructors through more Biblical citations, commentaries and glosses, and especially personal testimonies and stories about their ministerial experience. As we see, classes include a lot of storytelling, narratives that work as what pastors call “windows”, that is, illustrations from everyday life that render an initially abstract point more lively, persuasive, and real for any listener.

Although the participant roles of “lecturers” and “students” remain relatively stable, in order to fulfill their aims of teaching and learning, speakers and listeners go through a dazzling variety of shifts in footing, defined by Goffman as “the alignment we take up to ourselves and others present as expressed in the way we manage the production and reception of an utterance” (1981: 121). In Anagkazo’s classrooms, this dynamics is advanced and marked in the flow of speech through additional forms of reported speech, interjections, repetitions, emphasis, and changes in discourse frames. For instance, Rev. Kinsley started the lecture by quoting the bishop’s general description of how the devil works (“through suggestion”) as well as the Biblical scene he cites in order to “back” his argument, which in this case involves nobody but Jesus himself being tempted by Satan (who else will not be?). The reverend then returned to a more authorial register and provided a series of “windows” by evoking the figures of the ex-fornicator and ex-smoker as hypothetical cases of Christians who will be tempted through “familiar” suggestions. He shifted the footing governing the interaction from lecturer-student to preacher-flock through a change in intonation and a much more situated “you”, addressed to a fraction of his audience who might identify with the ex-smoker type. To those, he uttered a declaration and consecrated his words with “the name of Jesus”, a marker of spiritual authority and power: “Anybody here who has smoked before you became born-again, I assure you, you’ll never smoke again, for the rest of your life. In Jesus name!” Students responded with an excited “Hallelujah”, indicating that they have embraced the position of congregation momentarily. The reverend then cooled down the interaction and returned to a more sober teaching mode with an additional warning: “But that’s an area the devil will use”, subsequently moving to another hypothetical type of suggestible Christian: the ex-drinker. The “window” he used in this case was a joke about the devil using the communion wine to release his dangerous suggestions. The response was general laughter, including from myself, and the communication channel was interrupted for a few seconds.

It is probably obvious by now that informality is a trademark of classroom dynamics in Anagkazo, eliciting a plurality of jokes, which are not the monopoly of instructors, as exposed by another scene transcribed above. Rev. Hamish has finished his dramatic testimony about having to choose between a prosperous job and the call of God. In order to facilitate the empathy between his past “I” and the present “I” of the students, he addressed the classroom with a question: “What would you chose?” The interrogation was obviously rhetorical, considering that we are in a Bible school. In terms of its subtext, it was not even a question per se, and could be legitimately interpreted as an affirmation like: “This might also happen to you, be ready to know how to react”. Even silence would be accepted as meaning “Of course, the call of God reverend!” or more implicitly “Yes, we understand the message”. And yet, one of the students could not miss the chance to answer out loud, “America”, that is, the job in the American company, thus disrupting the thick ambiance carefully built up by the reverend while inviting another round of laughter. Even in a conventionally informal classroom setting, the student’s intervention might have been taken as excessive. After all, it was not only a joke. It was a joke that appeared as such by playing with the very metapragmatic conditions the lecturer had established, thus challenging his control over the interaction. And yet, the reverend not only accepted it with neutrality, but also laughed along, eventually continuing with his exposition.

As argues Marcel Mauss (2013), jokes and informality have their own rules of decorum, not substantially different from those governing respectful and deferential relations. Mauss’ pioneer essay is more interested on the oscillation between seriousness and play as characterizing different moments of social practice. But what I found in Anagkazo’s classrooms was an ongoing juxtaposition between seriousness, sacrality and humorous informality, making the overall environment extremely light and even entertaining from my point of view. I believe the informality,



playfulness, and almost profane humor of Anagkazo's classroom has a variety of layers of meaning, also indexing particular ideological traits being transmitted in the classroom context.

First, this informal ethos expresses the overall interest of the school in "demystifying" Christianity. Christianity itself is light, appealing, rewarding, fun, which does not mean that the Christian life is a smooth path. In some way, it is exactly because the Christian life is an ongoing struggle that it can never dissipate the comic. Holiness is an activity, not a state. It is making the right choices when temptations arise (and they necessarily will), thus not a deeply ingrained quality of the Christian subject, necessarily reflected in an overall sobriety of body and soul. In this sense, the everyday of born-again Christianity is more likely to appear during classroom testimonies and storytelling not through a condemnatory rhetoric or a prescription of stoic endurance, but as a necessary reckoning with the contingent nature of life in general as a comedy of errors. For instance, as exemplified by the reverend himself above, sex talk is extremely common in the school, and the mission of encouraging sexual abstinence among the vast number of single students is undertaken not through a rhetoric of shame and guilty, but especially through detailed cases of backslide, jokes about micro wars against temptation, and satirical stories about the sexual life of pastors and their eventual downfall. All these invite the students to put themselves in other Christians' shoes and still laugh about a predicaments that is also theirs.

Second, informality is a marker of bishop Dag's own style of teaching and preaching, thus becoming normative at the school. In fact, Rev. Kinsley's performances are living examples of various commands listed in bishop Dag's book on Pastoral Ministry (thus also taught in the classroom) as the defining traits of a good teacher and preacher. He uses "windows", testimonies, jokes, timely call-response strategies and shifts of tone that keep the students' attention level and motivation high, all these under very "Biblical" limits. In sum, by teaching demonology in a certain way, an informal way, the reverend is imparting knowledge to the students in a two-fold manner or through two different "orders of discourse" (Silverstein 2003). At a pragmatic level, he is glossing the bishop's glosses in order to teach them how to recognize the strategies of the devil, and at a meta-pragmatic level, he is teaching them how to teach, and more, how one is supposed to teach within the "Lighthouse family". This leads me to the third ways in which informality is played out in Anagkazo's classrooms: the bond of spiritual kinship.

I started my analysis exploring how the basic structure of participant role of any classroom, that of instructor-student becomes highly dynamic in Anagkazo, shifting back and forth between lecture and church, and eventually hybridizing both. But I believe there is a typified relation that is even prior to this discursive logics, one that, as we have seen, cannot be reduced to linguistic mechanisms of context-making: that of spiritual father-spiritual offspring. Being spiritual kinship fundamentally recursive, it is valid to claim that lecturers ultimately accumulate the roles of spiritual father and spiritual sons in the classroom. Rev. Kinsley's status of bishop Dag's spiritual son is not reducible to a biographical trait, that is, to the fact that, different from Anagkazo students, he had the opportunity of being personally mentored by the bishop. This relation inheres who he is, thus his performance in various ways. First, by citing the bishop verbatim, the reverend cannot but infuse his writings with a sacrality akin to the Bible, thus indexing his hierarchical position vis-à-vis the author. Second, his personal teaching style is itself a citation of bishop Dag's, thus elevating it to a normative type through its concrete and indexical reproduction as a token<sup>90</sup>. Even the reverend's interjections and call-response conventions imply his belonging to the Lighthouse family and its own "ways of speaking" (Hymes 1974), as "Powerful", and the tendency to shift footing to a testimony mode by saying "One day", the students repeating "One day". Those are widespread linguistic habits originated in the bishop and replicated within the institution. But in order to reproduce this general

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<sup>90</sup> On citationality and normativity, see Butler (1993, 1997), Hollywood (2002), Mahmood (2005).

style as a performance-citation, he is acting as a spiritual father, thus the general informality that characterizes the lectures, and the great leeway for playfulness allowed by this uniquely personal academic environment. Whenever asked about the lectures, students would define them as opportunities to “sit at the feet of the fathers”, that is, to be practically exposed to mentors with more “age in Christ” and who have gone through the same discipleship process they had been immersed. Mentorship becomes explicit in the classroom setting especially during questions and answers, which indeed happened a few minutes after the scenes I reproduced above.

Giving continuity to the lecture, Rev. Kinsley expounded on the third way Satan attack through suggestion: “The suggestion to misuse the gifts of God”. He mentioned cases of pastors going to fetish priests in order to acquire their spiritual power and make their churches grow fast, but also disappearing fast. Curiously, he evoked as a counter-example the figure of the European missionary, who sacrificed all they had to bring Christianity to Ghana, eating different foods, learning new languages, and dying of malaria. “Even the doctors who came to treat them would die in one year!” Back to the negative examples, the reverend told a story about the father of one of Anagkazo’s former students who approached him quite upset and complained that his son, a dedicated missionary, was frustrated because he had been sent to a village, whereas his close friend, who had worse grades than him, had been sent abroad. He concluded with more humor:

Beloved, we are not here in the school to be sent abroad. If you want to be sent abroad, then I know the place where you should go to: Takaradi harbor, Kotoka airport. [Students: laughter]. Don’t use the ministry as a means for going abroad [Students: Forgive!] When they get abroad, they abandon the ministry [Forgive!] Satan was speaking to you: make a shortcut.

Going back to the theme of misusing one’s spiritual gifts, Henry then raised his hand with a question in mind:

Henry: Reverend, I want to ask something. How do you differentiate... I mean, God has blessed you with the gifts of power and miracle and you meet someone who needs a miracle. You have that power to minister to the person. How do you know that when you're doing this you're not doing it so the person can see that you really have the gift, you know? Does the person have a genuine need? Let me tell you a testimony: A friend once called me from Korle-Bu hospital telling me her brother [in the sense of friend] was dead and we should come and pray. [Students: Hey! Laughter]. She believed that if I prayed the brother would resurrect. I realized that God has given us an opportunity. We prayed for 2 hours, nothing happened [Laughter]. I was exhausted. It was like I had been praying for 7 hours, and I've prayed for 7 hours before. Nothing happened. I was so tired... [Someone said: next time brother, laughter].

Lecturer: [Start reproducing testimonies about Kenneth Hagin and Benson Idahosa raising the dead, and quotes a few examples of Jesus doing the same in the New Testament] One thing you see in Jesus’ ministry is how people spread your miracles... People talked, created expectations... But you'll find out as you do the ministry that you don’t contribute in any way to miracles. It has nothing to do with you. [Repeats slowly three times: It has nothing to do with you.] One day. [Students: one day]. I was invited to preach in a convention ... two month ago. I just didn’t have time to wait for the Lord before the convention. Sometimes you’re so busy with your activities that you just have the normal time of prayer, from 4:30 to 5:30, and that’s it. The other pastor went to Atwia to wait for the Lord for a long time. I called him, and he was like: “I’m now on the mountain, when I come, we’ll sort it out”. [Impersonating his voice]. I walked from a classroom like this to the convention and the Spirit was operating mightily that night! While other pastors were on the mountains, I was here teaching. Believe me. It has nothing to do with you. What Satan will do is he’ll go to your head and make you see glory in it. And then you start falling. That’s also a suggestion. “You’re big!” “You’re a great man of God!” Beloved: It has nothing to do with you...

During questions and answers students never declined from bringing their personal testimonies, doubts, and even slippages, submitting them to the examination of the lecturers, who, acting as mentors, provided situated counseling and advice. In this case, the reverend takes the opportunity to reiterate one more time the general norm concerning spiritual power in LCI. First, he

recognizes the validity of miracles, especially if they have Biblical currency, which is the case of raising the dead. Second, he responds the student's frustrated testimony with clear guidelines but also with his own testimony, making clear (and repeatedly) that although intense moments of fasting and prayer as "waiting for the Lord" do increase one's sensibility as a vessel of God, ultimately the Christian person is still simply a vessel to supernatural agency, thus should not be accounted for it. The rule remains valid whenever miracles misfire, as in Henry's case, or when they are felicitous, as in his case. By sitting informally "at the feet of fathers", Anagkazo students are therefore normalizing the spiritual, ethical, and doctrinal baggage they brought to the school as they cultivate the bond of spiritual kinship that connects them to instructors in a practical and situated manner. More than students, they are spiritual sons and daughters, apprentices of craft receiving valuable input from experienced masters, which leads me to the next section.

#### 4.3. The disciplines of apprenticeship: training "practically oriented ministers of the gospel"

Right upon my arrival at the school, bishop Nterful reminded me that Anagkazo is not a theology seminary, but a "practically oriented" context of transmission:

God calls men of God for different assignments. When you're in ministry you're part of a total assignment, so it's important that you understand you function in it and you do this by cooperating with the Spirit that god has put in others. Our aim is not to train theologians, but practically oriented ministers of the gospel. They have lectures, are exposed to academic knowledge about the things of god, but they're also exposed to real practical work, where they relate to senior pastors who have proven abilities. There are many theologians who have read but have not done any church work. Writing about something is different from doing it. Even during the school time they may open a real church! When they graduate, the practical work of the ministry is no longer new.

The bishop's statement reedits the long-lasting suspicion of Pentecostals in general with what they consider the "cold" engagement of theologians with the Christian truth and its mysteries (Jacobsen 2003). Differently, charismatic Christianity itself and by default charismatic pastoral training are "practical Christianity", a claim that supposes a marked distinction between theoretical knowledge and experience. However, it is interesting to note that, again, the bishop is not making a claim about the spontaneous ineffability of spiritual experience as *Erlebnis*, but pointing instead to the importance of ministers finding themselves within a "total assignment", a mission, which is divinely appointed and yet immanently organized as a mystical body, to remain with the Pauline allegory. This modality of Pentecostal experience, both spiritual and socially embedded, is one in which converts can enter only through apprenticeship, which Jean Lave defines "a process of changing practice" (Lave 2011: 156), that is, dwelling in practice while absorbing or precipitating the knowledge it embeds.

As I argued before, the valence of the lexicon of spiritual maturation in Ghana and its affinity with intensity and degrees also points to apprenticeship, which is always a generative process of already doing and knowing something and indeed being someone (a born-again Christian), but still finding one's way through this very process of doing, knowing, and being:

(...) to learn to do what you are already doing is a contradiction in terms, it implies that there is always more than one relation of knowing and doing in play – knowing and not knowing, doing and undoing, understanding theoretically but not empirically and vice-versa, starting from both ends of the process of production and coming together in the middle in (relational, concrete) ways that transform conceptions of the ends (Lave 2011: 156).

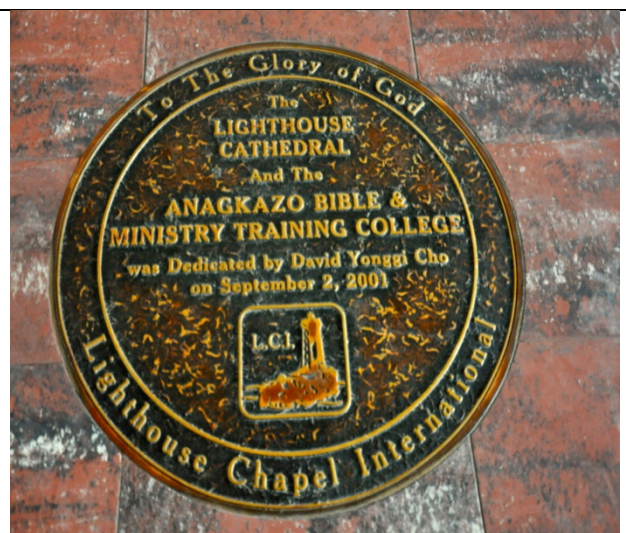
In Anagkazo, this process of changing practice is advanced through various methods and contexts. In fact, as I argued above, lectures themselves can be thought as one of these cases, since

they overlap the verbal transmission of specific doctrinal contents, something closer to “formal education”, and the embodied transmission of a style of teaching, whose logic requires from the students observation and attention to the total communicative fact, including gestures, intonation, and strategies of footing, something closer to what we call “informal education”. In this sense, Anagkazo lectures confirm Lave’s (2011: 16-25) general claim that the very division of pedagogy into formal and informal types is fragile. Moreover, I stressed that the very relation of spiritual kinship, a vital component of Anagkazo lectures, is potentially one of apprenticeship. Considering the pervasiveness of apprenticeship methods in this school, in what follows I consider a few instances in which this form of transmission appears simply in a more preeminent form: the apprenticeship of manners, the student services, and a series of mandatory activities organized during third year “practical rotations”.

*The apprenticeship of manners.* In the first section of this chapter, I was able to highlight how the institutional disciplines of Anagkazo are oriented toward the value of “excellence”, derived from the notion that LCI is an “international church” and Anagkazo an international Bible school that trains “international ministers”. Indeed, we realized that the school does receive a variety of international students. In much lesser scale, the same is valid for instructors. The American minister Robert Liardon comes once a year to Accra to deliver a cycle of lectures on his *God’s Generals*. The globality of the school is also materially inscribed in its landscape, as shown by the pictures below:



*Board with the picture of some of the current international students*



*A ceremonial plaque indicating that the cathedra and the school were dedicated personally by the Korean pastor Yonggi Cho*

Even more importantly, cosmopolitanism also finds a more everyday, widespread, and pedagogical expression at the school, whose environment becomes itself an opportunity for the acquisition of cosmopolitan knowledge-skills through an apprenticeship of manners. One of its central components is the mandatory use of English, both inside and outside the classrooms. Many of the Ghanaian students reminded me, always full of gratitude, that their family and socio-economic backgrounds would have never conferred them the ability to speak English with the proficiency they achieved after joining the school. This was not the result of additional English classes, but of an unprecedented exposition to an English-only environment. Many of them had never met a foreign person before joining the school, and the presence of international students often elicited conversations about cultural habits, thus allowing them to “think outside the box”, as one of the students told me, that is, with a cosmopolitan mindset. The same is valid to socio-

economic statuses, and the school is a true sociological laboratory. Sons of village farmers with incomplete secondary education can be seen at the same stand than students coming from affluent families and with university degrees, or even above them hierarchically speaking. Someone who worked as welder in the Upper Eastern region of Ghana five years ago now has the opportunity of being in close everyday contact with instructors with medical degrees and international experience. My very presence at the school and the opportunity of interacting and asking me constant questions about life in Brazil and California simply confirmed to the students that the family they now belong is “international”, attracting even the attention of a foreign non-believer.

According to bishop Nterful, international ministers cannot be shaped only through book reading. They require a reimmersion into a specific environment where they can be nurtured through listening, observing, asking questions, and emulating. The cycle of meetings *How to Be an International Minister* was created with the aim of facilitating the contact between the apprentices and experienced ministers with international experience, also inviting affluent church members and lay leaders to introduce them to global rules of decorum and etiquette:

How to present yourself, how to communicate in public, how to have meeting with people, how to look, how to sit, to speak, to eat with people, if you're hosting guests, how to handle them, take them to restaurants, order food, all that. The idea is that these guys will feel comfortable regardless of the environment they find themselves. What I do is I bring different people to come and talk to them about different aspects. [Who?] I just look around. Our denomination is blessed with international ministers and also professionals. A lot of us were professionals before we came to full time ministry, so we're blessed with lawyers, accountants, administrators, so we have a lot of people we can invite and learn from. Even among the congregation we have very high profile people.

During these excited informal conversation, students receive “declarations” as “I see an international ministry in your destiny!” Answered by: “I receive it!”, with hands raised. The school also offers periodic dinner parties in which students are taught table manners. A good number of them, mostly Ghanaian, learned how to eat with cutlery in Anagkazo, since the most conventional eating method used in Ghana is with one's right hand. In consonance, the staple food served during these celebration were not traditional doughs, as *fufu* (cassava and plantain), *banku* (fermented corn and cassava), and *kenkey* (fermented corn wrapped in plantain leaves), but rice, considered in Ghana an index of social distinction and a more “international” food. The learning of Western etiquette and lifestyles in Anagkazo was never followed by a discourse detrimental to Ghanaian culture or tradition, being justified only as a form of expanding the students' cultural horizons in order to facilitate their insertion in heterogeneous audiences<sup>91</sup>.

We realized that Anagkazo's holistic behavioral norm is not only “globalized”, a term that might also mean an aestheticized version of cosmopolitanism. It is in many ways globalizing, becoming socially productive as it is embedded and transmitted through relation and methods whose implicitness makes life itself in this total institution a form of apprenticeship.

*Student services.* In his analysis of the “poetics of tool use”, Tim Ingold (2000) works with the hypothesis of two types of actors: the “as if” actor and the “skilled practitioner”. For the “as if” actor, “to have an intention is to prefix that behavior with a thought, plan, or mental representation which it serves to deliver” (415). In this case, intention and attention precede action, which becomes a form of “expression” of a preceding state. The “as if” actor is hence characterized by a more classic Cartesian gap between the inner subject and the material means and environment through

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<sup>91</sup> Most people in Ghana consider rice plates fancier, but still a second rate kind of food in terms of taste. Rice has become increasingly popular especially because its preparation is much faster than the traditional doughs, which requires pounding and longer cooking.

which practice is performed. Conversely, for the “skilled practitioner”, intentionality “is launched and carried forward in the action itself, and corresponds to the attentive quality of that action” (idem), thus emerging immanently in practice. For the skilled mechanic, weaver, musician or public speaker, action is itself “a process of attention” (idem) that envelops mind, body, tools (including voice, gestures and postures), as well as her surrounding environment, in an organic mutuality.

Ingold is remaking an old point of theories of practice and performativity: that a major sign of competency is when the rules and representations governing behavior are dispensed in their imposing externality, becoming spontaneous and embodied dispositions and skills, parts of what Mauss (1978) called a *habitus*. Nevertheless, I find refreshing how Ingold’s model of two types of practitioners can also be conceived as stages of a single biographical series, that is, as two moments of the process of learning a craft, which allows us to consider apprenticeship as the very process of bridging the gap between “as if” and skill. As part of this process, acting “as if” operates as a pedagogical method whereby competencies are sedimented. In the case here at stake, it implies assuming that, in order to become a Pentecostal minister, one needs first to act as if you were already one<sup>92</sup>. We realized that this logic, which relies heavily on anticipation, is not new to Anagkazo neophyte ministers. The fact that they have been progressively convicted about their calling means they are already ministers, although still in preparation, and we have seen that one of the premises of LCI’s dominant notion of the call of God is that the best way of knowing that you are called is to examine your desires attentively while acting “as if” you are called.

In sum, according to Anagkazo’s pedagogical scripts, anticipation is a rule, and student services are one of its privileged contexts of actualization. Those are mandatory activities performed by fourth year students and happen twice a week. Their attendance is also mandatory for the whole student body. The school directors, lecturers, and the school chaplain monitor and judge the activity. Classmates also take part in meetings that follow these events and offer their input on individual and collective performances. Student services happen in two weekly rounds. On Tuesdays, from 7am to 8am, they organize English services. On Fridays, at the same time, students preach in their local languages with a simultaneous translator to English, who is also a student. This is important, since, as argued Joshua:

We are all here to become missionaries, but some people will be based in their countries, not sent outside, so on Fridays we also have the vernacular services, when people preach in some of the local dialects with a translator. Irrespective of where you're coming from, you're supposed to preach in the local dialect, but we should have somebody to translate. You must be able to preach in Zulu, then another South African will translate it to English.

A roster is posted in the school patio with the dates and the role to be performed by specific students, so they have time to prepare. All students will eventually rotate through all of the basic roles during the year: first preacher, second preacher, moderator, praise and worship leader, and offerings leader. The moderator is responsible for welcoming the audience, leading them through an opening prayer, and returning to conclude the event with announcements and a closing prayer. Two praise and worship sections happen before each preaching, and take ten minutes each, the same time preachers have to perform. After the second preaching, the offering leader takes the microphone and encourages the audience to give, also being responsible for coordinating the deacons who manage the offertory baskets.

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<sup>92</sup> Addressing a similar process through the notion of “rehearsed spontaneity”, Mahmood (2001) argues that the veil both anticipates and facilitates the embodiment of the virtue of humility among female practitioners of Islam. This commonality exemplifies how the logic of ethical formation and apprenticeship might overlap in various ways, especially at the level of method.

Student services are therefore opportunities to be exposed to trial and error in front of a large, excited, but also critical audience, considering that neophyte pastors can easily “break the code” of a good performance and recognize its virtues and weaknesses. All activities are evaluated, but preaching is the main object of scrutiny of the judges, who hold a clipboard in which they scribble during the whole ceremony. I had a long talk with the school chaplain, who performed this function frequently and gave me an idea of some of the variables that make a good preacher for Anagkazo:

They are taught all this. They need a good title, a good introduction to their message, a good word base. Good preaching, extemporal or not, must have some key points backed with some “windows”. We believe that “windows” make the people understand the message well. It’s important that they can apply the teachings of the Bible to the life of their congregations, you understand? Everyday examples.... You must be current too. You must show that you’re aware of current events. Mention things like the war in Ivory Coast. Use them as “windows”... Because you find different sections of society in your congregations, farmers, but also doctors, lawyers, so if your message must touch everybody in society, the rich and the poor, the illiterates and those with more knowledge.

During the informal talks that follow these events, I was exposed to other important criteria orienting Anagkazo’s norm concerning proper performance at the pulpit. They range from good time management, to holding the microphone adequately, that is, around the chest area, to dressing well, and quoting the Bible accurately by heart, thus not losing momentum to open the Bible and seek references. Acknowledgments are deemed very important, and are one of the responsibilities of moderators, who open the event by greeting the authorities present and thanking bishop Nterful and bishop Dag. According to one of the students, acknowledgments “give you some authority” by exposing to the audience who are your mentors, also keeping alive the bond of spiritual kinship through public recognition. The interaction between preacher and audience must be dynamic and engaging. Classic call-response formulas, as “Hallelujah? Amen!”, are key to fulfill the phatic function (Jakobson 1960) of testing the communicative channel, but students should not exaggerate on them, which is a sign of immaturity. Mobility is cherished, as it invites the audience’s attention and indexes self-confidence. Preachers should use the whole pulpit area and eventually enter the church aisles, approaching congregants individually by speaking and looking in the eyes. Changes in voice pitch carry a similar function and should vary along the ten minutes of the performance, having both peaceful moments of reflection and teaching and excited moments of exhortation, in which “declarations” are uttered to the audience. The instructors defined messages without these shifts in voice tone as “flat”, being either too “melancholic”, that is, cerebral, or too “choleric”, or over-excited. The most general lexicon used to evaluate pulpit performance is “flow”. A good church service is one that flows well, naturally, attuning ministers and congregation to each other by setting a common rhythm. Conversely, services that do not flow are those that feel forceful and rehearsed.

The criteria guiding good pulpit performances are taught during lectures and, again, find an embodied model in bishop Dag-Heward-Mills and LCI’s more experienced ministers. Student services are therefore moments for both trial and error of practical knowledge once conveyed more abstractly in the classroom setting and a means to the normalization of the students’ conception of the ministerial roles according to the denomination’s tenets. By acting as-if they were already ministers, students are absorbing a particular notion of the “skilled practitioner”, one suffused by LCI’s norms concerning proper Christianity.

*Third year rotations.* Before having the opportunity of leading a church service in front of the school community, fourth year students had already had a much more encompassing experience of apprenticeship during their third year in Anagkazo, fully dedicated to practical learning. The notion



of “practical rotations” is another expression of bishop Dag’s organizational creativity or imitiveness. It was borrowed from his experience as a medical student in the University of Ghana, whose curriculum includes a series of clinical rotations around the country. Third year students in Anagkazo go through four cycles of three months long rotation: Administrative Rotation, Bible Memorization and Character Development Rotation, Practical Evangelistic Rotation, and Rural Ministry Rotation. They happen outside of the school, but within LCI’s networks. As a result, the school direction is still able to monitor the students’ performance at a distance by assigning to them basic tasks, which are catalogued in individual Rotation Year Logbook. After each rotation, local coordinators are supposed to sign these logbooks before students submit them to the supervision of the school direction.

### INTRODUCTION TO LOGBOOK

#### NOTE TO STUDENTS:

This logbook must be completed by **each student** on rotation under the following guidelines:

1. **Always** have it on you during the rotation.
2. Ensure that your **Supervisor signs** the activities/procedures that you do.
3. Failure to get your activity/procedure signed by your Supervisor will be viewed as if that activity was not done, which will result in you **loosing valuable marks**.
4. Your logbook must be kept clean and unstained.

#### NOTE TO SUPERVISORS

1. All Supervisors (Administrative Heads, GO’s, Heads of Missions, Healing Jesus Crusade Directors) are kindly requested to ensure that all aspects of activities/procedures as indicated in this logbook pertaining to your peculiar area are performed by each rotation student.
2. Please give the prerequisite theoretical background to the work of your area. Students must be taken through analysis of charts eg. Attendance Charts, Assets Charts, Financial Charts to help them understand the practical importance of these charts to the running of their future churches.
3. Finally, please make sure that all activities/procedures are signed by you or your designated authority, since this is what will make the activity/procedure acceptable as having been done.

Thank you so much.

ABMTC

*Page 2 of the Rotation Year Logbook*

During Administrative Rotations, students are attached to the church’s administrative offices, located in the Qodesh, and are basically exposed to the bureaucratic backstage of a mega-church. According to Kenyan student Dixon: “There’s so many things involved in running a church, especially a church like Lighthouse. There’s this thing about data, accountability, how many people came to church, how many souls you saved, how many are attending the Bussels, how many are the lay leader, all these things”. Students go through workshops and do internship in two specific sites: the denominational and the finances offices. In the denominational office, they learn how to open a personal email address and send emails, create a Facebook account and how to use it for church purposes. The Internet is deemed an important tool of church publicity and community making in LCI. They become familiarized with the LCI.org set of websites, and help creating church branch

profiles within it. Basic statistical skills are also imparted. They learn how to create and analyze attendance charts, “first timers” chart, “first and best” charts, expenditure charts, and assets charts. At the financial office they are taught basic principles of accounting and are introduced to the financial politics of the denomination, as criteria for selection of treasures and church ushers, how to train them, how to prepare finance reports, and how to open a bank account. Lighthouse has a central account in each country and the money from offerings and tithes are first submitted to it before being transferred to local branch accounts. The mandatory procedure concerning offerings is that it must be counted twice by two different persons, having a third one as witness.

Dixon made me aware about how the managerial skills he acquired during his Administrative Rotations extrapolated their original purpose and had a much deeper impact in his personal life:

My life changed when I went there. I started putting down things that I do and I’m supposed to do. I started to draw charts about myself, keeping myself accountable. How many times do I pray in one day? Have I prayed the prayers I’m supposed to pray? How many books do I read in a week? How many messages I’ve soaked in [listened], and I started to realize that it had changed me! There’s more order in my life now. I didn’t go there with the mind of learning only what they told me to learn. Everywhere I go, I go with the mind of catching something. I was blessed there.

Dixon’s comment produced an interesting parallel between the denomination’s corporate body and his individual body temple, showing how the management of church affairs provided him with an analogous model for “self-management” (Foucault 2008), more rationalized and based upon new forms of self-objectification and self-account, as lists and charts. His testimony exemplifies well the overall juxtaposition of ethical self-government and ecclesiastical government that characterizes the pedagogy of Anagkazo, and it shows that even the skills more unlikely to have a spiritual dimension may become tools for the pastoral craft within a spirituality that constantly surveys the wisdom of secular modernity with the desire of converting them to Christianity.

The Bible Memorization and Character Development Rotation is a more situated and intensified expression of Anagkazo’s institutional disciplines visited above. During this period, students basically provide elementary labor force to the Qodesh. Those were usually menial jobs and other forms of manual labor, as security work. In order to stress the spiritual and ethical dimension of these activities, students are supposed to use their time to simultaneously memorize scriptures by repeating them silently, a spiritual exercise I will analyze in the next chapter. According to Joshua:

Some work as security men, some work as cleaners. Some work as cleaners at the hospital. Some are securities at the offices. We go through long night shifts! And while you’re there, you’re also memorizing scriptures. At the end of the rotation, you must be able to write 120 scriptures.

Confirming my previous analysis, Dixon preferred to stress how the performance of manual labor carries ultimately an ethical purpose, that of cleansing the will from pride and facilitating humility. Praising the positive effects that working three months cleaning the Qodesh’s busy bathrooms had on him, he argued: “It broke me. It broke all my pride. All my pride died. It’s easier for me to handle offenses now. I don’t think much of myself anymore. There are certain things that have died in me”. But that is not all, and Dixon considers the spontaneous disposition to serve acquired during these activities also expedient to any upcoming minister, thus a necessary part of his apprenticeship:

When I open a church, there’ll be not a lot of members, so I’ll have to clean the church, the bathrooms myself. It’s like you clean it, put things in order, wipe out the sweat, put on your jacket and preach! [laughter]. We’re going to be sent as missionaries, we’re not having anyone to help us. Even if you have people, you have to set the example, put a certain spirit in them. When you do it with them,

there's a certain conviction that develops in them. You go and visit their homes, you see that they're cleaning something, you join them! These small things help the person's faith to stick with her. There was some guys around Korle-Gono. We used to play football together. We used to organize the field, clear the grass for them, be part of it. You understand? They'd be cleaning the gutters and we'd join them! Later you go, pray with them, eat with them, and continue. Now even their mothers were demanding them to go to church! These practices changed me. They humbled me. They gave me a certain selfless heart. If I go to a slum area today, I don't feel too big to go to them. I've going through experiences that have killed the self-consciousness in me. The food alone, it helped. In Kenya we don't eat pepper, but you can't say, "back home we don't eat this", you accept what they give you.

Dixon's argument stressed once again the ultimate inseparability between the disciplines of the ministerial way of life and practical matters, in the sense of pragmatic, goal-oriented, and maximizing procedures. First, activities as scrubbing toilets, taking care of the church building, cleaning gutters, caring for the community's soccer field, eating unfamiliar foods without complaint are exercises of humility and self-sacrifice, thus a matter of personal piety and of cultivating a missionary ethos. Second, some of these are also skills required by any missionary, who will have to start a church "from below", thus fulfilling a variety of functions that go far beyond the pulpit. Third, the public display of these practices is an effective strategy of pastoral influence. If you want your congregation to eventually assume these functions, you better be the first one to take the responsibility for them, acting with exemplarity. Finally, acting humbly appears as a convenient method of "interaction" with unbelievers and recent converts, breaking the ice between the evangelist and the community and producing positive feedback into the church's public image. Regardless of how one understands humbleness, as a virtue, a skill, a strategy or an indiscernible mix of all those three, it still needs contexts of practice in order to emerge as a competency, and that is the basic function of the Character Development Rotation.

Whereas student services expose Anagkazo apprentices to the main stage of pastoral performance through a pedagogical use of "as if" practice, third year rotations represent a much more methodic and lengthily use of what Lave and Wenger (1991) call "peripheral participation", a method also common in small churches, as I stressed in chapter two<sup>93</sup>. In this sense, the system of practical rotations exemplify systematically the role of the man of God as a point of entry into much broader communities of practice oriented toward what bishop Nterful above called the "total assignment" of the church. Communities of practice are defined by Wenger (1999: 73-84) as joint enterprises dynamically produced and reproduced through a continuous engagement among actors and between these and a shared repertoire of desirable communal resources and competencies that are acquired individually and in time. The result is a general environment in which doing means simultaneously learning and becoming<sup>94</sup>. Peripheral participation therefore means being adopted by a community of practice through its fringes. In this sense, the Administrative rotation and the Character Development Rotation are highly peripheral dives into the bureaucratic head of the organization, the Qodesh, whereas the Evangelist Rotation and specially the Rural Missions Rotations represent a shift toward increasing protagonism within the church network and mission.

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<sup>93</sup> In her work among Liberian tailors, Jean Lave (2011) shows how the production of these workshops is fractioned into particular instances, thus allowing a division of labor that is also a gradation in complexity. As a result, what she calls the "garment inventory litany" (53) becomes an opportunity for apprentices to seek a progressive immersion into the *métier*, moving from highly peripheral roles, as becoming familiarized with the tools (how peddle the machine and clean it,) to basic operations (as sew or fix buttonholes or cut them; sew back pockets; cut cloth in rode to do different pieces), and finally to more complex assignments (sew a shirt, cut a collar, cut trousers).

<sup>94</sup> As argues Wenger: "Participation here refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the *practices* of social communities and constructing *identities* in relation to these communities" (1999: 4).

During Practical Evangelism rotation, students have the opportunity of assisting bishop Dag's Healing Jesus Crusade team in their itinerant activities in Ghana and abroad. The mandatory activities prescribed by the students' logbook for this rotation are ushering, taking of offerings, distribution of [bishop Dag's] books, and counseling of new converts, and yet my interviews unveiled a much larger set of functions. They cover the whole "production chain" of these massive events, which last three days and may gather one million people. The preparatory stage happens three to four months before the crusade and involves selecting and preparing the mission soil for the arrival of the man of God. This requires, first, building a consensus around the local Christian community, checking their willingness to cooperate, and receiving their authorization:

We have to go there many months before, study the place, and give the church some feedback. See if the terrain is fertile. When the Christians there are not ready to receive you, you can't work. So you must gather the pastors from the region first and say: "That's what we're bringing here, salvation to this community, to this town, and we need your maximum support, because you're the spiritual fathers of this land, and if we don't have this support there's no way we can do it. It's your crusade, but we're paying the bill." If they're interested, they'll gather the local pastors, have a series of meetings, and answer: "Ok, we'd like the evangelist to come".

The quest for permission from the local authorities follows. The crusade team visits traditional chiefs and other religious leaders, bringing them gifts and clarifying their plans. Even in Muslims areas, the event tends to be authorized, since people often believe in and need miracles, although the students defined these regions as "rocky soils". Once the crusade is confirmed, the next step is to recruit and train local Christians to support LCI's personnel and serve during the events as ushers, singers, musicians, and counselors. As the tens of buses and trucks carrying chairs, platforms, sound and light systems, mattresses, and personnel leave Accra toward the crusade grounds, the work of publicity has already started. Students and other workers travel through the surrounding villages hanging banners, billboards, and posters. They broadcast the event on local radio stations and organize public screenings of previous crusades videos, evidencing to the local population the miracles they are allowed to claim. During these moments of closer interaction with the local public, students put in practice their "anagakazoing" skills, eventually generating discontentment and conflicts, which seems to have been a constant factor especially in crusades organized in the Islamic regions of Nigeria. Opposition is faced and overcome through method and miracles, as shown by Alexander's testimony below:

With the crusade we went to Nigeria, another wonderful place. We went to Ijeru, then to Quara state, Ofa. It was not easy, shootings, and all that. Nigeria is tough. They were about to have elections, so there was mess around, and they ran to our place for security! We waited for them to have their elections, and then we came out, evangelizing powerfully, hanging posters, banners. We had Muslims chasing us with cutlasses, telling us we should remove those things from the wall. "Remove those banners!" We hung banners and by the time we were down, they were all on the floor, so we did it again. We developed a strategy. We waited until a week before the crusade, so they'd not have time to put them down. We also increased the number of banners. They were everywhere! We conquered like this, because they didn't have energy to sabotage us anymore. That's the power of Anagakazo, "use force", "compel", whether you like it or not, we enter for Christ. And during the crusade, you'd be surprised to see the same people who were fighting us. It was just a strategy of the devil to prevent us from stopping there, but God had so many people there to save! Half a million people came! The preaching was evangelistic: the blood of Jesus, salvation. The message was strong! I was sitting down there and shaking. In the end I was like: "I wish I could be born again again..." [laughter]. The crippled walking, tumors vanishing, power just flowing and breaking things. It was marvelous. The chiefs, imams came around to see, and it was too much. God is really using our bishop as a healing minister. Wherever he goes with this crusade it's like this.



Joshua defined the crusade event as a vibrant three days “festival” that makes all the effort that enabled it worthy. They articulate bishop Dag and his denominational family with both the local born-again community and other segments of the population through a wide variety of activities in which students have the opportunity to get involved as part of their apprenticeship experience:

It's like a big festival. In the morning we have the leadership training with the local pastors. The bishop, the evangelist, he trains people on how to lead and how to make their churches work. We also have medical screening with a lot of doctors we bring, and we also have people who exhibit the bishop's books. The bishop gives his books for free. He believes that the gospel can reach a far far place through books, not necessarily you going there. And when it gets to the crusade... I tell you... Great miracles! Breast cancer disappearing, the lame walking... It was marvelous. It's powerful, a real joy. After all the work we did, when we saw God moving, the miracles happening, people being saved... It's worthy! That's the payment, the consolation of all the effort, injuries, insect bites, snake attacks. We even had to see the chiefs and clear a big piece of land to have the crusade. And the money we spent! Carpenters... all sorts of labor. After each night, we organize counseling centers. Every church and other places of gathering become a counseling center. Everybody who has not received Christ as his personal savior can do it. They announce: if you're not born-again, you can go here or there. Baptists, Methodists, Anglicans have their center, so they go to their area and we teach the basics of born-again. In the end of the day, the souls that are won don't go to the evangelist, they go to the churches which are established there, because he comes as an evangelist.

The crusade is clearly an intermediary type of Pentecostal assemblage that overlaps this spirituality's non-denominational nature with its denominational form and apparatus. While on the road, bishop Dag is transfigured into “evangelist” Dag Heward-Mills and the crusades he organizes, as argued Joshua, belongs to the local populations and churches, although they obviously know where this gift came from, and not only from God. In this sense, these massive itinerant meetings can be thought as a controlled opening of LCI's mission into the broader mission of global Pentecostalism as a “movement”, a diplomatic gesture whereby the denomination exercises its influence more generously and with a less direct concern with its own institutional growth.

Many students described their apprenticeship experience during Practical Evangelism rotation as a sort of anti-epiphany, which proved their previous view of crusades as the achievements of a single inspired man of God incomplete and immature. Emmanuel commented on his learning experience during one of the crusades in Nigeria as follows:

I used to watch evangelists on TV and I thought it was all about miracles. That's the only thing you can see there. But I learned that the real crusade is what we have not seen, the real sacrifice that so many people go through... That's the crusade. We learned how to relate to people on an international level, how to relate to great men of god too, how to organize a crusade, as upcoming ministers - chairs, sound system, pulpit... What I found most important was learning how to train people, how to engage with people, collaboration, you know? The Christians of these towns did a lot of the work, just because they love God and they love the bishop.

Emmanuel speaks about crusades now as a peripheral participant with a privileged view of their backstage. As a result, his comments stressed the complementarity and indeed reliance of spontaneous miracles on the much less flashy and often silent work of anonymous actors, communities of practice that he both helped to constitute and from which he drew the basic skills acquired during his apprenticeship: practical zeal, collaboration, and delegation. It became clear to Emmanuel that the craft of pastorship relies as much on prayer and intercession than in a variety of skills of a social nature. He had already been exposed to those during his classes on evangelism at Anagkazo, but the Evangelism Rotation provided him with a number of opportunities for trial and error and self-correction, enabling him, LCI's crusade team, and their local collaborators to “bear fruits” in close partnership with the man of God.

Rural Mission rotations are the most encompassing experience of apprenticeship undertaken by third year students. They are sent in pairs to one of the denomination's branches in Ghana, being temporarily under local church authorities. I reproduce below the mandatory activities prescribed to the students by the Rotation Year Logbook during this rotation:

RURAL MINISTRY ROTATION		
ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY /NO. REQUIRED	FREQUENCY /NO. DONE
1. QUIET TIME	DAILY	60
2. DAILY PRAYER	3 HOURS	70
3. FASTING WITH TRAVAILING PRAYER ( AT LEAST 8 HOURS)	2 x A WEEK	20
4. VISITATION	3 x A WEEK	30
5. ASSISTING PASTOR WITH COUNSELLING	1x A WEEK	
6. COUNSELLING ALONE( ie. without assistance starting from 2 <sup>nd</sup> month)	1x A WEEK	
7. INTERACTION (DEEP-SEA FISHING)	2 X A WEEK	30
8. PERSON TO PERSON EVANGELISM	3 X A WEEK	30
9. OPEN AIR CRUSADE	1	
10. STARTING A FELLOWSHIP	1	
11. STARTING AN OCTOPUS	1	
12. TEACHING NEW BELIEVERS' SCHOOL	1x A WEEK.	10
13. SUNDAY SERVICE PREACHING	1x A MONTH	2
14. WEEKDAY SERVICE PREACHING	1x A MONTH	2
15. CONVENTION PREACHING AT AN ESTABLISHED OCTOPUS	1	1
17. HOLY GHOST BAPTISM	1x A MONTH	-
18. WATER BAPTISM	1x A MONTH	1
19. BASIC EQUIPMENT SETUP	WEEKLY AT LEAST ONCE	
20. ASSISTING WITH NAMING CEREMONY	AT LEAST ONCE	
21. ASSISTING WITH BABY DEDICATION	AT LEAST ONCE	
22. FRANK LEARNING TALKS BETWEEN PASTOR AND STUDENT	2 X A MONTH	2

The objective of the Rural Mission Rotation is to immerse students practically in the totality of the ministerial way of life, anticipating the vocation they will soon embrace. This includes personal piety, and the logbook includes a series of mandatory daily spiritual exercises, as quiet time, daily prayer, and fasting with travelling prayer, which are first learned or normalized in Anagkazo, as I will show in detail in the next chapter. The rotation activities range from plain peripherality to greater levels of protagonism. Students are supposed to assist local pastors with manual labor, as “basic equipment set up”, but also during basic ritual and pastoral activities, as naming ceremonies, Holy Ghost baptisms, water baptism, counseling (initially with the main pastor and eventually alone), and teaching at New Believers School. Personal mentorship with the resident pastors follow the whole process, and finds an official version through the assignment “frank learning talk between pastor and student”, supposed to be performed twice a month. Students live with the pastor, usually

a former Anagkazo student, thus being able to have a direct experience of mentorship, as stressed by Emmanuel:

During Rural Mission Rotation we are sent with a partner to live under pastors. It was very good for me. We were with pastor Alexander Kwansah. He pastors a branch in Edumako, Central Region. He is a very good pastor. He gave us the opportunity to do everything we were supposed to do. He was very open, taught us a lot. We'd wake up, take our Bibles and have our quiet time. Then we would pray for 3-4 hours. Quiet time is individual and prayer is together. After that, we'd get something to eat. At 3pm we'd go out for evangelism. Sunday we called people to church. You talk to hundreds of people along the week to see only one in church on Sunday. It's painful, not easy. People give all sorts of excuses.

As we see, much of the apprentices time is spent in evangelistic activities, both door-to-door, that is, simply spreading the news about Christ and the local church, or “deep sea fishing”, which is another curious name for “interaction”, meaning a more focused, careful, and everyday engagement with particular people in order to attract them to church or facilitate their maturation and participation in church affairs (“shepherding”). Those are basically the activities that brought many of Anagkazo students to the school. As students progress, they are allowed to perform even more central roles, as organizing a conference and a crusade, thus testing their managerial and networking skills. They are also supposed to preach during weekday services and open an “octopus”, which is an incipient and potential church branch still attached to another branch. No longer a fellowship, not yet a church, an octopus allows students to coordinate evangelism and pastoral care. Emmanuel and his field partner were able to open an octopus with thirty members. Today, it has been taken up by another local pastor and is in the process of becoming a LCI branch. As it tends to be in apprenticeship methods, learning practices (“as if”) are not only simulation, they are actual labor, and bear concrete fruits to LCI’s “total assignment”.

To be sure, students “bear fruits” in the mission field with variable degrees of effectiveness. Dixon, who was sent to a village in the Ashanti region, stressed the facility he encountered while approaching people with an evangelistic message, something he deems a general trait of Ghana or West Africa, much harder to find in his native country, Kenya:

I believe that is something about West Africans. There's a certain respect for God, and if you want to talk to them about God, they'll listen. They respect men of god. [I mentioned how easy it is to preach in public transports in Ghana]. Yes, I preach in the buses and tro-tros here. I say, let me do it to the extreme, because whenever I go home, it will not be like this. During my rural mission rotation was like this. A total strange, you stand and say I want to share the Word of god, and you preach, and you make an altar call and some people give their lives to Christ. You invite them to church, you collect the offering and they give!

Dixon was able to open an octopus with twenty-five members. On the other hand, Joshua commented that he was sent to a “rocky soil”, the town of Dunkwa, in the Central Region. He described a few of his frustrated “deep sea fishing” attempts: “It's hard to bring them to church. It's an experience. You come to their house. They tell you I'll go and come and never show up. You iron their clothes [so they can wear during church service], they tell you they'll take a bath, and when you realize you're sitting there for 30 minutes, and they're gone through the window! It's very challenging!” Joshua was not able to open an octopus. He was sent to a more developed branch, where he had a personal encounter with one of the greatest challenges to Pentecostal churches, the immature Christian, or, in bishop Dag's terms, “group B” members:

It was a very positive experience. The Bible says that when one soul is saved, there's a great feast in Heaven. The missionary was a Ghanaian who had come from the UK and was sent there by the



bishop. By God's grace the church is going well. They have a big temple, like this, and have branches. It's just the mind of the people that still needs to be changed. They have to be more conscientized about Christ. People come to church with different reasons, and sometimes you think: that's not the main reason you should give your life to Christ. It's not for you to become rich. It's for your soul to be saved. But the time is coming in which every man will have to give an account of his soul.

Other forms of opposition encountered by the students during their attempt to exercise their “anagkazoing” skills in the mission field were other religious and socio-cultural forces that, different from Dixon's experience, hindered proselytism. Alexander was sent with his mission partner to the town of Nkwantan, in the Volta Region. Being an Ashanti, he was impressed by the vitality of traditional shrines among the Ewe, which also had a direct impact on local Christianity. He told me it was common to see Christians wearing “fetishes” for protection, as amulets and waist beads, even during church services. This formidable and insidious enemy also encouraged a specific style of Pentecostal ministry, with a lot of space for power, miracles, and deliverance, and the necessity of proving that the Christian God is “mightier than all their small gods together” (see Meyer 1999). Alexander found this more power-oriented style of Pentecostalism in his local mentor, pastor Nobel, whose spirituality impressed him: “He was very spiritual. He was a student here, and if you go there and see what he's established: miracles, deliverances, how people are gathered, plenty of people. A young guy! A small boy! And you see all these old men, ready to receive the Word of God from him”. During his and his partner's “deep sea fishing” activities in a surrounding village, Alexander found opposition from diverse sectors: the local population's attachment to their tradition, the established status of the mainline churches in the region, and the authority of chiefs. As a result, their project of opening an octopus church was frustrated:

When we went to establish an octopus, the chiefs resisted. There were other churches there, but they were... let's say, cold. The Presbyterian Church is big on that area. They were not much into spiritual prayers. So when we arrived there with prayers and fasting, they said they would not allow us to have a church there. You'd also see different shrines. They'd tell you: you can't pass this place, the shadow of this thing shouldn't touch you, otherwise, you have to bring goods to pacify the gods. Even moving around the area was not easy. It's not every house that you may go and evangelize, because there might be a shrine in that house. You have to remove your sleepers to get in. But because of prayers we were going around, getting people and having fellowship meetings there. But then there was an accusation that we were breaking churches, taking their church members. We were called by the chiefs and we reported it to our pastor, so he told us we should not go there for now (...) So we had to stop our octopus and we started working around him, bringing people to church.

Even more than the Evangelist Rotation, Rural Ministry rotation is an encompassing opportunity to re-contextualize the set of injunctions delivered in an entextualized form by bishop Dag through his books and transmitted during lectures in Anagkazo. As they move from peripheral activities to positions of protagonism, as in the case of organizing conferences, crusades, and opening their octopus churches, students inevitably reckon with the fact that, being the pastoral skills also social skills, they must also be applied in a situated manner, thus according to the needs, conditions, and stages of spiritual development they find in the mission field. Whereas some churches and audiences need more teaching and lay leadership, others need more preaching, prayer, miracles, deliverance, and so forth. Local contexts must be first responded to before they are transformed, and the vast array of knowledges they acquire in Anagkazo must be applied with time and strategy, giving a new meaning to the idea of “practically oriented” ministers.

Chapter 5: Spiritual exercises in Anagkazo: a charismatic *askesis*

To follow a more or less elaborate daily routine of spiritual exercises is the most privileged means for spiritual maturation. It is also a visible marker and in fact a duty embraced along with the pastoral vocation. Anagkazo submits its students to a methodic and closely monitored spiritual diet, which I investigate in this chapter. I will qualify these practices as “spiritual exercises”, mainly because I encountered this notion with some frequency in the field, both inside and outside Bible schools. Just to give one example, during my conversations with Henry, at that time Anagkazo’s student chaplain, I asked him to describe the responsibilities assigned to him by his office, which he did as follows:

I'm the supervisor of all the spiritual activities that take place at the school. There's a natural tendency, even among Bible students, a natural tendency to give excuses, to do other things, when it's time to have your quiet time, pray, worship, memorize the Bible, soak in tapes. That's why I'm here: to inculcate the discipline of spending time with the Lord and to engage in spiritual exercises.

Henry’s duties are basically to certify that students “spend time with the Lord”, that is, cultivate their direct and personal relationship with the true author of the lifelong mission they are about to fully embrace. Being Anagkazo a Bible school, it is important to acknowledge that some of the practices listed by Henry are also skills to be found in the toolkit of any pastor, which does not mean that their acquisition is reducible to a merely instrumental logic. Let’s say, the ability to quote the Bible by heart is a working tool of the pastoral *métier*, but the process of acquiring it, Bible memorization, involves engaging with goods, virtues, and competencies that are inbuilt to the practice, thus disallowing a sharp distinction between the inner agent and its outer expression, person and tool (MacIntyre 1984).

The notion of means and tools that are inherently valuable also bring to the fore the resonances between my interlocutors’ emic notion of spiritual exercises and Pierre Hadot’s (1995: 81-125) conceptual use of the term in his pathbreaking work on ancient philosophy as a “way of life”. An akin dynamic is captured by Foucault’s notion of technologies of the Self mentioned earlier, influenced by Hadot, and which has inspired important recent anthropological work on religious pedagogy and ethics (Robbins 2004, Mahmood 2005, Hirschkind 2006, Marshall 2009). As these authors know, the generativity of practices like spiritual exercises is not entirely new to anthropology, and relates to problems already tackled and concepts already crafted by predecessors, as Marcel Mauss’ (1978) notion of body techniques and habitus, Talal Asad’s (1993) approach to religion as authoritative discourse, and Thomas Csordas cultural phenomenology of the charismatic Self (Csordas 1997, 2001).

In what follows, I present the disciplinary block of spiritual exercises prescribed by Anagkazo as a “charismatic *askesis*”. First, I introduce the notion of *askesis*, and defend its applicability to the case of Pentecostal practices of faith, arguing that, different from a more conventional notion of asceticism, it allows me to acknowledge the importance of the body, desire, and the senses to this spirituality. I also elaborate on the potentially ubiquitous role attributed to divine affects in these pedagogical, routines, or the charismatic dimension of Anagkazo’s *askesis*, arguing that practitioners discern a variety of “modes” of revelation (the *Spirit within*, the *Spirit upon*, the *Spirit across*) by framing their activities according to a normative distribution of agency captured by the notion of “yielding”. After presenting some of the basic concepts that will guide my analysis, I finally elaborate on each of the most central spiritual exercises performed at the school: meditation and Bible memorization as forms of yielding to and bonding with the *Spirit within*, corporate prayers as an ecstatic and collective yielding to the *Spirit upon*, and soaking tapes as yielding to the *Spirit across*, which dwells in the words and voice of the spiritual father and endows them with the tactile capacity

to transfer grace through “impartation”.

### 5.1. Charismatic *askesis*: modes of presence and yielding

The Weberian concept of asceticism, especially “inner-worldly asceticism”, supposes a marked opposition between the methodic control of conduct and desires, passions and the senses, the enemies of method, which he is more prone to associate to “world-fleeing mysticism” (Weber 1978: 534-541, for a critique, see Bynum 1991: 53-78). Alternatively, the ancient notion of *askesis* does not imply a duality and a sense of struggle between body and soul, meaning simply “exercise”, thus being thoroughly spiritual as well as somatic (Foucault 2005: 315-20). The place of the body in Christian piety is a polemic issue, and has been tackled by some of the authors mentioned above in terms of the historical relation between Christianity and Greco-Roman ethical traditions. Foucault (2005) emphasizes a discontinuity between these two ethical paradigms, what I am calling *askesis* and asceticism, seeing in Christianity a moment of ontological rupture between knowledge of the Self and care for the Self and the emergence of what he calls the “hermeneutics of the subject”, characterized by the dominance of an interpretative and juridical model of ethical truth that presupposes a sinful nature, mistrust and renunciation of oneself, fear of God, and therefore suspicion about the flesh<sup>95</sup>. At the heart of this incommensurability is the potential break produced by religions of salvation or axial religions (Robbins 2009) between what Foucault (2011) calls a “life other” (*vie autre*) and “the other life” (*autre vie*), the effort to build other world (*autre monde*) and the effort to reach another world (*monde autre*), in sum, the difference between ethics and soteriology. To be sure, especially in this very last seminar, Foucault (2011: 307-342) does recognize in Christianity what we might call a latent ancient potentiality, although he does so by reaffirming in a Weberian style a supposed gap between the “ascetic” and “mystical” poles of the Christian tradition, centered either on fear of God or love of/for God. This sharp division between matters of salvation and morality and matters of immanent enthusiasm is quite limited when it comes to understanding the concrete weaving of those two forces in history, and in many ways testify to Foucault’s personal taste for the ancient model of ethics (*ethos*) as “a way of conducting oneself corresponding to a rational principles and founding the exercise of freedom understood as independence” (2011: 338). The result is a marked opposition in his narrative between the transcendence-oriented disciplines of submission, articulate to self-renunciation, asceticism, and fear of God, and the immanent-oriented disciplines of care and love, articulated to self-government and *askesis*<sup>96</sup>.

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<sup>95</sup> In *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Foucault summarizes what I am calling the opposition between *askesis* and asceticism as follows: “The *askesis* makes truth-telling a mode of being of the subject. (...) And you see that when, in this epoch [ancient Greece and Rome], this period, and form of culture, ascesis really is what enables truth-telling to become the subject's mode of being, we are necessarily very far from an *askesis* of the kind that will be seen in Christianity, when truth-telling will be defined essentially on the basis of a Revelation, of a Text and of a relationship of faith, and ascesis, for its part, will be a sacrifice: the sacrifice of successive parts of oneself and the final renunciation of oneself. Constituting oneself through an exercise in which truth-telling becomes the subject's mode of being: what could be further from we, in our historical tradition, now understand by an “ascesis,” an asceticism which renounces the self according to a true Word spoken by an Other” (2005: 327).

<sup>96</sup> It is important to recognize that Foucault is extremely ambiguous when it comes to define how historically restricted is the notion of *askesis*. He eventually recognizes moments of continuity between ancient and Christian ethics: “We see that Christian asceticism and ancient philosophy are placed under the same sign: that of the care of the self. The obligation to know oneself is one of the central elements of Christian asceticism. Between those two extremes – Socrates and Gregory of Nyssa – taking care of oneself constituted not only a principle but also a constant practice” (Foucault 1997b: 227). And at others, he even equates *askesis* with apprenticeship in general, a topic I explored in the previous chapter: “No technique, no professional skill can be acquired without exercise, nor can the art of living, the *tekhnē tou biosōs*, be learned without an *askesis* that should be understood as a training of the self by the self” (1997a: 208).

On the other hand, although Hadot acknowledges how ideas of sin in the “religions of the book” did shift the meaning of *askesis* in history, he also recognizes more clearly the inheritance of the ancient paradigm in Christianity, for instance, when he claims that, “Ignatius’ [of Loyola] *Exercitia spiritualia* are nothing but a Christian version of a Greco-Roman tradition” (82). In this sense, prayer, techniques of self-examination and self-publication, and Bible reading carry an inherently affective, imaginative, and sensorial quality that can hardly be ignored, being in many ways irreducible to a merely depth-oriented “confessional subject”. The possibility of a Christian *askesis* is also found in Jean Leclerc’s (1982) classic study of medieval monastic culture, which defines patristic figures as St. Gregory as a “doctor of desire”, whose practical theology was concerned in encouraging in his pupils a “constant progress, for desire, as it becomes more intense is rewarded by a certain possession of god which increases it still more” (31). At any point, Leclerc sees the necessity of opposing love and fear of God, like Foucault (2011) does, thus arguing implicitly that obedience in this context can be thought not only as a virtue, but also as a pleasurable form of submission, whose lively corporeal elements are also found by historians like Bynum (1991) and DeCerteau (1992) among late medieval and early modern Christian traditions. In sum, without exhausting this complex scholarly problem, I would like to simply stress through the notion of *askesis* that Anagkazo’s spiritual exercises are not about evading or domesticating the distractive influence of the body, desires, and the senses upon the project of spiritual rebirth. They are mostly about fostering the right dispositions, desires, emotions, sensations, and even relations through which desire for God can be satisfied and indeed intensified at a personal level in both everyday and ritual contexts. As it might have become clearer in the previous chapter, this therapy of passions is by no means opposed to order, decorum, and doctrine, and in many ways it represents to Anagkazo the possibility of converting untutored into tutored enthusiasm.

I further qualify *askesis* as “charismatic” here because the participants’ engagement with immanent and yet ultimately transcendental forces follows closely all stages of these exercises, thus being irreducible to an ecstatic or introspective “mystical encounter”. The philosopher of religion James Smith addresses the ubiquitous influence of divine presence in Pentecostalism, understood as soteriological grace, intervening miracle, and personal charisma, as an “enchanted” or “en-Spirited naturalism” (2010: 97). Different from what he calls “interventionist supernaturalism”, a straw man crafted by the upholders of secular empiricism, “en-Spirit naturalism” not simply adds a supernatural layer to a disenchanted Nature, it ultimately rejects the notion of a self-sufficient world running on its own steam. Basically, Smith is claiming that Pentecostalism charges nature with divine presence, which spills over ontological boundaries separating nature/culture/divinity. According to the sacramental ontology of “en-Spirited naturalism”, divine presence becomes coeval with life itself.

But if the unmaking of boundaries belongs to the essence of (en)Spirited naturalism, how to confine its affects to a norm, acknowledging that norms rely primarily on the proposition of distinctions? Although this genre of questions evades Smith concerns, as I have argued, they are still fundamental to Pentecostals themselves, especially but not only in a context of crisis of authority and authenticity as contemporary Ghana. Furthermore, this problem points to an important conditionality to approaches to divine immanence in terms of a religious phenomenology (Csordas 1997, 2001) or language and semiotic ideologies (Keane 2007), graspable by the anthropologist as a totality already formed. In order to become sedimented as an embodied sensorial form and circulate through semiotic forms, divine immanence must be first inhabited by the religious subject in a certain way, as a formation and a craft, in which religious pedagogy operates as principle of reality (Asad 1993, 2003, Hirschkind 2006). That is exactly the role of the practices I am addressing here as a charismatic *askesis*: to equip the religious subject with the capacity to summon, provoke, and recognize the Holy Spirit. I therefore believe that there are still discernable operations, in fact, operations of discernment, which insert some degree of expectation in what Smith defines as a

temporality of surprise.

During one of my conversations with pastor Asante, a Praise and Worship leader of LCI, and an instructor at Anagkazo, I was told that in order to properly understand his *métier* one should pay attention to how God's virtually ubiquitous presence is actualized according to particular contexts, practices, and assemblages that compose a Pentecostal life:

When it comes to the presence of god, there are three forms of manifestation. First, there's a general presence of God, which is everywhere. So if you read Psalms, David says: Where can I go from your presence? If I run to the mountains, you're there. If I dive deep into the sea, you're there. If I go into the desert, you're there [Psalms 139: 7-8]. That presence of God is everywhere. Those who are saved and those who are unsaved can experience it. The second one is the presence of God that is in the believer. That one the unbeliever cannot experience, because the Bible says: In him we live, and move, and have our being [Acts 17: 28]. Anyone who gives his or her life to Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes and dwells into the person. Jesus said that if you abide by my word I'll come and dwell in you, me and my father [Romans 8: 9]. Third, there's what we call the manifest presence of god. The scripture says that god inhabits, he sits on the praises and worship of his people [Psalms 22: 3]. When the people of God come together for worship, God manifests himself in a new way. Sometimes there's a physical manifestation, like healing, or people crying, kneeling down, falling down, rolling on the floor. Sometimes you're just in the environment and you feel that the whole thing has taken another turn. You feel it in the air. God can manifest himself when there's preaching and teaching of the Bible, but the reason why most times you see him manifesting during Praise and Worship sections is because during Praise and Worship people's hearts and minds are opened up by the spiritual songs. We are all moving together, singing in one voice, whereas the preacher tends to be separated from the congregation. So when we sing, the Spirit "hits" on us at the same time, and it comes more powerfully.

Careful not to fracture the singleness of monotheistic immanence, Pastor Asante introduced me to a field of divine expressions organized around genres of revelation that I would like to consider as "modes" of the Spirit of God. Spinoza's ontology has established that divinity manifests in the order of Nature (*Deus siva Natura*) as a substance. In the *Ethics*, he defines a substance as "what is in itself and is conceived by itself, that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed". Complementarily, modes are "the affections of a substance, that which is in another through which it is also conceived" (1996: 1). In Spinoza's monistic system, plants, animals, and men are emanations of a single primordial substance, whereas their differences are measured in terms of degrees of power or intensity. We realize why Spinoza's attachment to the "univocity of Being" was accused by his contemporaries of heretic and pantheistic (Smith 2001, Goldstein 2006).

The apparent paradox of divinity as single and heterogeneous is obviously not new. It has been planted at the heart of Christianity by Trinitarianism, understood as a divine economy of persons or a hypostasis, a notion that also evokes, albeit differently from Spinoza, an "underlying substance" with a three-fold design. The figure of a triune God articulates transcendence to immanence while still securing divinity's sovereign unity. What I find fascinating about the model presented by pastor Asante is how much lived and experiential heterogeneity is absorbed by a single person of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit. His map of revelations is not exactly a norm, since the limits of the Pentecostal life-world are not clearly settled, neither by an internal authoritative component (the monopoly of a church or leader to define it), neither by a clear-cut distinction between a transcendent God and a disenchanting nature. Things are held together as a set of forces and potentialities saturated by divine agency, which is actualized in heterogeneous albeit non-contradictory ways. And yet, it is clear that (en)Spirit naturalism is not without distinctions, where norms can be at least attached to.

What pastor Asante calls "the general presence of God" indexes the omnipresence and

omnipotence of God, the creator. Here divinity appears either in a position of omniscient observation and moral surveillance (as in the Biblical scene of David) or divine intervention on nature and history. This *Spirit in the world* also grants that divine affects are not exclusive to converts. The fact that Pentecostal healing, prophecies, and other miraculous events move people to convert confirms that this mode of presence pertains to the whole of creation, saved and unsaved. One of the complains ventilated within Ghanaian Bible schools referred to the need of healing evangelists, deliverance ministers, and prophets to condition these affects to conversion, persuading their audiences that without spiritual rebirth one cannot “hold” one’s healing and deliverance or fulfill the personal prophecies one might have received. Much as I did, instructors acknowledged that the *Spirit in the world* can be a dangerous line of flight of Pentecostalism, which blurs their religion’s boundaries while attracting individuals interested in the bonus of spiritual intercession, but not ready to pay the onus of personal submission. This Pentecostal “free rider” (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 89) is what mature Ghanaian converts call immature Christians and what bishop Dag calls the “group B” church member.

Conversion represents the possibility of establishing a personal and vital bond with God. Taken in its phenomenological implications, the Holy Ghost baptism can be understood as a true spiritual surgery, which implants a foreign agent into the born-again body, a pneumatic prosthesis that invites its hosts to recognize themselves anew by recognizing the “moves” of the Spirit of God as they mature in the faith. This initiatory process is called the “infilling” of the Spirit, but pastor Asante also exemplifies what is conventionally addressed as the “outpouring” of the Spirit when he mentions the context of praise and worship, in which the Holy Spirit, already within and in the world, still falls “upon” the congregation during spiritual songs and dances mightily, thus actualizing itself through an alternative mode. During my analysis of Anagkazo’s charismatic *askesis*, I will address those two modes of revelation as the *Spirit within* and the *Spirit upon*, and will associate the first to Pentecostal meditation and Bible memorization, and the latter to worship and glossolalia. I will eventually add another mode to this field of divine affects, the *Spirit across*, which emphasizes the more inter-personal and flow-oriented potentialities of presence, being actualized during practices of impartation, as laying on of hands and “soaking in tapes”. I will show that, although differently distributed, divine presence is still the enduring horizon of born-again “technologies of the Self”, making of spiritual exercises ways of relating to the Spirit, thus joint-exercises that modulate spiritual agency and practice according to specific directionalities.

Before moving to my ethnographic analysis, I would like to address a potential objection to the framework I am trying to set. When I stress the importance of cultivated competencies to each of these Pentecostal modes of revelation, I assume that the relation of mature Pentecostal subjects to their religion is not so different from other “ascetic” traditions without an equally marked “mystical” component (Asad 1993, Mahmood 2005, Hirschkind 2006). This analytical move invites the problem of how the transparency of charisma, grace, and miracles are granted in this process. Are revelations “learned” through charismatic *askesis*? I would say yes and no, especially because an appropriate answer requires first understanding what is the meta-pragmatics of learning in a Pentecostal setting as Anagkazo, in sum, what is one doing while one is learning and practicing the faith at the school. An important aspect to be recognized here is that even if not learned, chosen or socially constructed, revelations do require a specific receptivity, indeed a cultivated one, articulated by the students as “yielding”, the most basic step of a broader process they referred to as “knowing how to receive from God”<sup>97</sup>. In many ways, yielding is homologous to obedience, which I defined

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<sup>97</sup> In a list of emic categories (a “vocabulary of motives”) articulated by Catholic charismatics during ritual practices, Csordas defines submission as “the proper attitude to authority, also a synonym for ‘yielding’ in that one submits or yield to gifts (i.e., accepts gifts) given by God” (2001:196). See also Brahinsky (2013).

with Asad in the previous chapter as a meta-virtue that allows the sedimentation of other Christian virtues, that is, a condition of possibility to the pedagogy of spiritual maturation. But in order to sustain the non-discernibility between morality and spirituality that characterizes charismatic *askesis*, I rather establish that yielding *is* obedience, both terms indicating the centrality of submission as the privileged form assumed by human agency in this tradition.

As most Pentecostals, Anagkazo student never showed any sign of Calvinistic concerns with “election”. God wants and will give his Spirit (or himself) to those converts who desire it, including all the cherished supplements that come with it: holiness, spiritual gifts, the capacity of “being led” by the Spirit, dreams, visions. And yet this generous giver cannot touch, affect, fill and move within the convert, if she is not ready to receive. This elusive, passive, and almost self-denying form of agency, “to receive”, is probably the only legitimate manifestation of human agency in (en)Spirited naturalism, as it is able to introduce a human component in revelations while retaining the overdeterminacy of divine agency during spiritual practices and ritual gatherings<sup>98</sup>. In fact, as we will see, the coadunation of obedience and yielding helps making sense of how the totality of the learning experiences in Anagkazo become suffused by spirituality, observed in the students’ tendency to define the school as a “spiritual environment”. From the point of view of the normative disposition of their practitioners, activities as attending lectures, abiding to rules of decorum, or studying for quizzes become enveloped in the same meta-pragmatics of spiritual exercises as fasting and prayer: they are all typified as forms of yielding and learning how to receive. By engaging with the school’s routines and modus operandi holistically, students are manifesting their desire for God in practice through acts of self-sacrifice, surrender, and commitment. In sum, through learning practices they yield, become better vessels, and learn how to receive from God.

In the next section, I start exploring the first axis of Anagkazo’s charismatic *askesis*: attuning oneself to the *Spirit within* through charismatic meditation, or quiet time, and Bible memorization.

## 5.2. Yielding to the Spirit within: quiet time and Bible memorization

Charismatic meditation or “quiet time” differs significantly from Socratic mediation (*melete*), or “the practice of dialogue with oneself” (Hadot 1995: 91), since apprentice pastors entertain it as a moment of fellowship with the *Spirit within*. In his book on Basic Theology, Heward-Mills defines quiet time simply as “time you spend with God alone”, arguing that “if anybody were ask me what the greatest secret of my relationship with God is, I would say without any hesitation that it is the power of the quiet times I have with him everyday” (2007a: 227). It is a norm in LCI that ministers must have their quiet time daily. The practice is also taught and prescribed by the church to members during preaching and discipleship contexts. It is important to have an unchangeable schedule and an environment conducive to the performance. In Anagkazo, students wake up at 4am, have 15 minutes to freshen up and start the day with a “morning devotion” at Robert’s Chapel, underneath the hostel building. It is basically a collective praise and worship and short prayer session, which lasts forty minutes. After that, the large group breaks away and each of the students finds a peaceful place to preform their quiet time, which last 50 minutes.

Quiet time is a popular practice among Ghanaian Pentecostals at large, and the Scripture Union was its major original disseminator in the country. Nevertheless, a good number of the students did not hold it as a habit before joining the school or did not understand Bible reading and

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<sup>98</sup> In one of the greatest achievements of anthropological thought, Marcel Mauss’ *The Gift*, we have a clear notion that to receive, usually understood as a passive attitude or a mere compliance, is an action, indeed a fundamental ethical practice, since it propels relations of reciprocity. If I receive a gift, I am immediately giving myself to a relation and committing myself to a future expectation: to reciprocate.



meditation as a specific type of devotional practice with such methodic outlines and a name attached to it. As a result, similar to all other spiritual exercises, quiet time is normalized during school lectures, which includes acknowledging its Biblical nature. Once absorbed by the students, Anagkazo scripts eventually emerged during my interviews. Second year student Anthony, from India, made sure to recognize that a variety of Biblical characters can be found in the Bible having their “quiet time”:

Quite time has really improved my life. I've learned a lot from the Lord. It has also made me understand my real calling. Quiet time is basically having quality time with the Lord, with no disturbances. We can see it in the Bible that Moses had his quiet time. In Exodus, God told Moses he should come to the mounting, early in the morning, bring two tablets of stones, and he should come at the time in which the cattle or flock would not be grazing. We also see it in the book of Mark how early in the morning Jesus departed to a place of solitude and fellowshiped with the Lord. A lot of people in the Bible fellowshiped with the Lord, and that's a secret of this house.

Anthony finds in the Biblical text all the artifacts and conditions that compose “quiet time” as a type of practice, although this title itself is never used in the holy book. As a result, the extraordinary scene in which Moses receives from God the Commandments loses its uniqueness and becomes a source of legitimacy for an everyday rule of action: the stone tablets are quiet time notebooks, and “the time in which the cattle or flock would not be grazing” are the early mornings of Accra. Contemporary Pentecostals add to this arsenal a new item, the Bible itself, and meditation unfolds in close intellectual and spiritual contact with the Word. In many ways quiet time is a form of Bible studies, in which students put in practice specific methods, as the “microscopic” study, when a single passage is dissected word by word, the “telescopic” study, a longer and progressive engagement with a whole Bible chapter or book, and the “topical” study, when the reader engages with the Bible selectively with a theme in mind, for instance, a study about leadership through Joshua’s life or, as exemplified above, a study about quiet time itself through a variety of Biblical characters<sup>99</sup>.

The meditative and inspired nature assumed by the practice of reading during quiet time makes it fundamentally a spiritual exercise. It is opened by a silent or spoken prayer whereby the practitioner praises and thanks God, confesses sins, and finally invites the Holy Spirit to intercede. As I walked through the school as the students had their quiet time I overheard them often telling the Spirit (which is already in) to “come and dwell in me, lead me through this reading”, etc. Through focused reading of scriptures and self-examination one fosters the capacity of hearing God as the exercise unfolds (Luhmann 2012). Despite the phonocentric (Derrida 1997) equation between divine presence and the voice implied by the notion of “hearing God”, this phenomenon assumes various somatic expressions and semiotic inscriptions both during quiet time and beyond it. During my fieldwork, I learned that God might speak through a “still small voice” (1 Kings 19: 12), assuming an audible form, but also through imaginations, chains of thought, sharper feelings of love, joy, self-confidence, and fuzzy sensations that induce (“prompt”) decision-making. In sum, “hearing God” is an overall term for the perception of intimate revelations. In fact, many students already oriented their “topical” studies of the Bible according to God’s voice. In one of the quiet time notebooks I was allowed to photocopy, the student had had repeated dreams with eagles, which she registered in the diary and had been surveying the Bible for two weeks in a quest for passages in

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<sup>99</sup> The use of daily devotionals, or manuals with specific dates, Biblical passages, interpretations, and space for writing personal notes is also allowed in Anagkazo, but it is rarely used, being more popular among regular church members. Scripture Union publishes two highly popular devotionals: Daily Bread and Daily Power. LCI’s devotional is called Daily Word.

which this animal appears. The dream was recognized as a way in which the Holy Spirit had “spoken back” to the Bible, leading the vessel to seek a deeper understanding about a specific topic.



Quite time is a privileged occasion in which the born-again subject receives biblical understanding through the “inner witness” of the Holy Spirit (Abraham 2002: 139-161), meaning that mental associations, analogies, comparisons, insights emerging along the reading practice are perceived as revelations. Alexander gave me a lengthily example of how reading and learning become entirely suffused by divine agency during this spiritual exercise:

The Spirit gives you that conviction. It speaks to your mind. You'll be sitting, reading your Bible, and you have a thought: Hey! This thing! It's like this, like that! You begin to have a deeper revelation of the Word. You begin to find connections, and then you begin to learn. The Holy Spirit relates to your spirit, and you begin to write this down [repeat “write this down” four times]. You take John 1:1 as your quiet time: In the beginning was the Word, etc. You start to ponder: In the beginning was the Word. Then you find that this is Jesus himself. So before the world came into existence, Jesus was there, because he is the Word. Jesus was with God before the beginning of this world. It's a revelation! You pick up your notebook, write the scripture John 1:1, and writes: I learned that 1) Jesus was with God from the beginning, 2) Jesus was the Word and he became flesh. It's a revelation! So when you meet people who don't know this you share: Jesus was the Word and so and so. Somebody might pick this same Bible and read, and they'll not have the same revelation, but when you spend time with the Holy Spirit, when you take the scriptures, when you read them, and ask the Holy Spirit: “Holy Spirit, I don't understand this”. He brings it to your understanding. You pick the concordance: “beginning”. In Greek it means this and that. You break it down. You begin to have depth in the Word. Some of these things you learn bring such a joy in your heart, you're like: man! You feel so good. You're exited about sharing it with others and you could not learn this by yourself. You start relating this scripture to another one, then you jump to another one and the person you're talking to is like: Hey! This guy is a genius! Making all the connections. That is the secret of these big ministers in this country. It's the Holy Spirit teaching them. Jesus told us he'd send us a comforter. And when you don't understand something, you're not comfortable. The Holy Spirit then brings you insight into the Word and comforts you. The Holy Spirit is the one giving you understanding into the Word.

Joshua's comments express the overall tendency of mature Pentecostals to disperse the miraculous into the everyday. The tedious nature of his example of personal revelation made the whole process almost comical from my perspective, and yet these indexes of divine agency were received with joy and blessings, as a multitude of micro-revivals sparking inside the subject. Confirming my previous argument, divine agency goes hand-in-hand with learning. In fact, revelations are recognized as such in the flow of quiet time as a practice exactly where learning emerges: new associations and insights. The whole pattern of accountability is fundamentally generous and even anti-meritocratic: I work hard on my Christianity, and yet, whenever any positive

feedback is received from this process, that is exactly where I feel divine agency at work. As I testified again and again, the *Spirit within* tends to be foregrounded specially at those points in the flow of events in which born-again individuals exceed in their self-expectations positively, that is, when they excel in a practice, be that meditative (ex. new insights) or not (ex. spontaneous association of ideas during preaching or evangelism). According to this norm, achievements are never self-achievement, but divine affects reviving a body-vessel.

Evangelism is a prime example of this generous pattern of accountability. While telling me about his involvement with lay church work prior to the school, Dixon highlighted, as many others, how his calling emerged more strongly during his evangelistic incursions into “the world”, where he also first noticed the guiding agency of the Holy Spirit in his life:

I could clearly realize that there was nothing else that would satisfy me apart from doing church work. I remember there were these guys who used to hang out close to my work [Dixon worked as a clerk in a graphic]. They used to smoke marijuana. But I wasn't afraid of people like that. There was something controlling me. I felt boldness. That's the Spirit, you know? Look at me! I could have never been so bold on my own. I would never persuade people like this to change if the Spirit didn't lead me. You understand? It led me to speak to them and two of them joined the church! My heart feels for that, I need more of that. I want to see people coming to church.

Dixon's description of the act of evangelism as a moment of “being led” exemplifies powerfully how Pentecostalism undermines strong oppositions between asceticism and mysticism, in this case at the level of what I am calling its “church labor ethics”, which is both inspired and inner-wordily. As one of the primary forms of nurturing spiritual sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, quiet time is clearly irreducible to a “ritual” practice, since the competencies acquired through it evade the context of performance and accompany the mystical vessel as she enters the everyday as a disseminator of the faith.

Going back to Joshua's comment, it is important to acknowledge that quiet time is in many ways an exercise of “self-writing” (Foucault 1997b), one that although performed in Africa is not essentially “African” (Mbembe 2002) in either form or content. Foucault has noted how writing inhered the *askesis* of Pythagoreans, Socratics, and Cynics, assuming a two-fold dynamic. A linear model went from meditation to writing and finally to a concrete trial of the knowledge acquired: “a labor of thought, a labor through writing, a labor in reality” (209). A circular model implied that “the meditation precedes the notes which enable the rereading which in turn reinitiates the meditation” (209). Albeit differently, those two forms convert writing into a technology of the Self and an ethical equipment (Foucault 2005) that precipitates truth as an embodied *ethos*. Alexander exemplifies homologous uses of writing during quiet time in Anagkazo, which were confirmed by other students.

On the one hand, the quiet time notebook was defined as a mnemonic reservoir for revelational-Biblical knowledge, one that should be sporadically revisited and deployed in order to disseminate the Word during evangelism or preaching. The notebooks are therefore an archive where one can find one's personal voice, themes, and reflections to be mobilized publicly when it comes to interpellate others, a curious “personal voice”, as it indeed reports the voice of God heteroglossically. On the other, notebooks were also understood as tools that helped tracing the Holy Spirit's inner guidance on the long run. South African student Akhona clarified this more circular use of writing during quiet time: “Sometimes I pray, I start reading, and he drops a word in my spirit, so I write. Sometimes I'm asleep and he gives me a word through a dream, that's the first word that I get, and then I wake up. It's a sentence, a statement about to begin. It could be a scripture, a word of encouragement, so I also go to my diary and write”. Akhona told me that the

Spirit of God operates in its own time, and a revelation can be only a unit in a much larger syntagma. Writing helps her to slowly reconstruct divine utterances linearly and seek for interpretation, a process that often reintegrates writing into the meditation, for instance, when one asks the Spirit for an interpretation of a past dream. She also told me that registering revelations was helpful when it came to sharing them with other Christians and seek interpretation or “confirmations” afterwards and in collaboration. As it tends to be in a charismatic *askesis*, both linear and circular modalities of “self-writing” in quiet time are ultimately forms of “fellowship” with the Holy Spirit, thus an inspired form of “alter-writing”, in which the subject finds herself anew in a dialogue with the *Spirit within*.

A final point to be made on quiet time is its influence on the moral dimension of spiritual maturation. Ghanaian student Boateng evaluated the generative relation between daily meditation and holiness as follows:

Maturity differs. You can get two people who became born again on the same day. In one year you'll see a huge difference. What makes this difference is the depth of your understanding and the fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Both these people received the Holy Spirit on the same day, but fellowshipping with the Holy Spirit brings maturity. When you desire to do something sinful, the Holy Spirit prompts you inside. But some Christians ignore this sign, go ahead and do whatever they want to do... But if you follow the Holy Spirit, with time, the understanding will sit in your heart. Holiness becomes easier, and then you'll realize that you're living in fellowship. He talks to us all the time, but you have to yield. (...) That's the problem: people get born again, but still want to use their own might, their own understanding, the wisdom they have acquired in the world. People want to be sanctified by their own means. It shouldn't be, because once you become a Christian you cast your burdens and everything upon Christ. He should walk with you. The more you listen to the Holy Spirit in you, better is your understanding of his movements and directions, and it flows naturally at the end. Revelations come all the time. If you don't listen to the Spirit, it'll get to a time in which he will be screaming and you'll not hear it. (...) Obedience is key. That's what quiet time does to me: it increases this fellowship, this connection.

Boateng warns against behavior grounded on one's own judgment and volition. Once again, virtue is not about heroic resilience to the urges of the flesh, but about casting one's burdens upon Christ, a matter of accepting grace and slowly building a rapport. Being led and hearing God appeared in his description clearly as a competency cultivated in time, the result of a long-term process of sensorial attunement (Hirschkind 2006). As a result virtuous behavior becomes a collaborative work, an ongoing fellowship unfolding dynamically within the body-temple. By predicating holiness, or the imitation of Christ's character, on the ability to recognize the “prompts” of the Spirit in the soul, his comment also clarify the coadunation between obedience and yielding in Pentecostalism. Submission to the *Spirit within* is the proper ground for Pentecostal ethical agency and self-awareness, quiet time being an important way of nurturing this bond generatively.

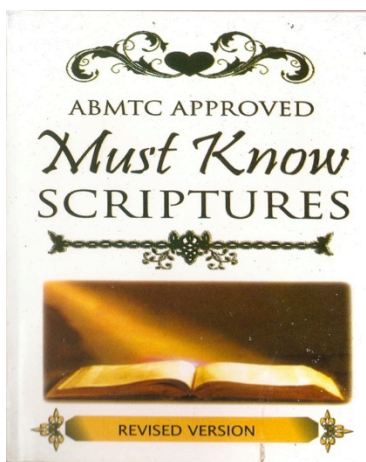
I move now to Bible memorization, which I consider another set of spiritual exercises that coordinate closely pedagogy and the act and process of yielding to the *Spirit within*. As I argued before, to quote the Bible by heart is a required skill of preachers and evangelists. It endows their truth claims with authority and legitimacy. Moreover, as part of spiritual maturation, Bible memorization equips converts to engage with other Christians critically, thus not taking any claim in its face value, especially when they come from the pulpit. Having a well-sedimented Biblical knowledge is a way of certifying if the messages one receives are adequately “backed” by the scriptures. Maybe the most important aspect of Bible memorization concerns personal piety and the desired aim of having one's behavior led by Biblical precepts. I have argued in chapter four that the Bible can be thought as a manual, a book on how to live the Christian life. This process is epitomized by the evangelical and Pentecostal method of regulating everyday behavior by asking oneself during emerging situations: “What Jesus would do?” In this sense, memorization is a process

of making Biblical truths and imperatives personal, of making the Biblical narrative one's own. The process of embodying the Word was represented in Anagkazo as the desired aim of "acting" and "thinking Biblically", that is, acquiring a Biblical understanding, which connects inner and outward worlds, apperception and perception, manifesting itself spontaneously as a holistic sensibility<sup>100</sup>.

Acknowledging the importance of Bible memorization to Christian maturation and the ministerial *métier*, Anagkazo exposes its students to an intense demand in terms of memorization exercises, which cover all the school years and are performed in different contexts. One of these instances are third year rotations, referred by the Scottish student Caleb below:

That's probably my biggest challenge [to memorize the Bible]. I'm a school dropper. I dropped out of school when I was 14. I hated school, or the school hated me. The whole studying thing... I'm a smart person. I can read and retain, but that is all. But there's so much to read in this school! Now we're doing BMCDR - Bible Memorization and Character Development Rotation. You have to remember 300 Bible scriptures, and be able to sit down and write them down. Basically, you have to learn the whole *Must Know*. Usually it's encouraging stuff, so I love it. I need it, because I'm missing home. It really nurtures you. There's nothing like learning scriptures. That's what Christianity is after all.

It was common during my fieldwork experience to see student in rotation guarding the school gate always with a booklet in their hands, walking back and forth while moving their lips, a sign of continuous silent recitation. The booklet was not the Bible, but the *Must Know Scriptures*, referred by Caleb, a selection of Biblical passages from Genesis to Revelations assembled by the school with the finality of facilitating memorization.



(ABMTC= *Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center*)

In this abridged Bible, we are supposed to find the quintessence of Christianity ready to be put in practice at the levels of personal piety and evangelism. Dixon exemplifies how the books comes out handy in the latter case:

I met some guys around here. I spoke to them for some time. In the end, they asked me: "If only you could give us scriptures to support, I'd agree with what you say". People know the Bible here in

<sup>100</sup> I approach understanding here in Voloshinov's (1986) terms: "consciousness itself can arise and become a viable fact only in the material embodiment of signs. The understanding of a sign is, after all, an act of reference between the sign apprehended and other, already known signs; in other words, understanding is a response to a sign with signs" (1986: 11). What Voloshinov calls "ideological chains" are always continuous and semiotic, thus material and practical in nature. It connects surfaces and suffuses interiority with narrativity, since "nowhere is there a break in the chain, nowhere the chain plunges into the inner being, nonmaterial in nature and unembodied in signs" (*idem*).

Ghana! I said: Oh man! And I started quoting. And they were mostly the *Must Know Scriptures*, the ones we've been memorizing. They started coming to mind. The first scripture came. It was Romans 1: 16. Even the way they have been aligned in the book and in our exercises, it's just for the purpose of evangelism. At least, that's how I see it. Always the first to come to mind is Romans 1: 16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile". Even before leaving home I recite it, to give me a certain courage. It's the power of God, so I know that when I'm moving, I'm moving with the power of God. The scripture that follows [in the booklet] is Romans 3: 23: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." When I read that, it shows me that the fact that I'm saved does not make me less of a sinner than the people I'm talking to. But [Romans] 6: 23 says: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord". That's the next step in the book too, and that's a solution! (...) You know, the Bible says that we should always be ready to give an answer to someone who ask you about your faith. It's better if you have the answers with you than start looking for them in the Bible, showing doubt, fragility, you know? Reading this is easy [points to the Bible], but not putting it in your memory, not committing to it. When I need to speak for it, I don't know, I fail. Even right now, you believe in what I'm telling you, about my life, about my calling, because I've been speaking it from my heart. If I was like "Let me confirm this fact, I'll look at this book", you would not believe in me as much.

Dixon's use of the *Must Know Scripture* shows how this booklet is a supplemental manual facilitating access to the main manual, the Bible itself, which is obviously never discarded by the students. That is also the role performed by bishop Dag's books, only with the addition of glosses and commentaries. Its linear logic was mapped out smoothly by Dixon to the different steps of evangelism as a concrete practice. Not only a guiding frame to be quoted during the procedure of spreading and sharing the Word, the scriptures are "applied" by Dixon to himself, giving him the motivation to fulfill his mission. He has clearly advanced in the process of acquiring Biblical understanding, as evidenced by his capacity to legitimize the very use of the *Must Know Scriptures* as biblical when he argues that "the Bible says that we should always be ready to give an answer to someone who ask you about your faith", itself a gloss on 1 Peter 3: 15: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (NIV). Finally, his comments clarify that, even when considered a matter of sincerity and a "religion of the heart" (Keane 2007), Christianity can be juxtaposed with no great trauma to its rehearsed, methodic and rationalized "application" in the everyday, especially if both content and form are "Biblical", as it seems to be the case with the *Must Know*. Dixon framed our own interview as an instance of communication aimed at persuasion, thus using our interaction as a "window" for his argument on evangelism. He was right when he claimed that I would not have believed him or trusted his words as coming from a sincere speaker if he had answered my questions by reading a testimony about his calling and growing zeal from a piece of paper. Of course, this does not mean (and he seems to admit) that his sincere speech was devoid of rhetorical strategies. Similarly, the authority and authenticity of preachers or evangelists is predicated on their sincerity but also competency, which is indexed during everyday interactions, among other things, by the ability to quote the Bible by heart. Sincere speech is no doubt a norm, and yet it becomes subsumed in a broader category: Biblical speech. In fact, sincerity, commitment, and zeal without Biblical understanding are probably more potentially dangerous to Christianity than insincerity.

As I have often reminded, skills and tools in the case of pastoral training tend to be indiscernible from "technologies of the Self", since their generative effect upon users sets the logic of tool and skill-use in a different register than plain instrumentality. For instance, departing from modernist notions of memory as mental retention of data, Anagkazo students described their methods of silent and spoken recitation of the Bible mostly through allegories of digestion ("feed in the Word" or "eat scriptures"), inscription and sedimentation (make scriptures "sit into one's heart"), and absorption ("soak in the Word"). These motives are all very popular in Ghana, finding

their way into bishop Dag's preaching and books. Organic ideologies of memory as consumption were justified by the students by referring me to Biblical passages such as God's interpellation to the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 3: 3-4) to "(...) feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you", or Matthew's claim that: "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (4:4). Notions of sedimentation or absorption therefore follow as legitimate analogies with the digestion and rumination (*ruminatio*) motif, which has a long historical valence in Christianity (see Leclercq 1982: 71-88, Carruthers 2008). Another extension by analogy is found by Simon Coleman (2006) among his Word of Faith Pentecostal interlocutors in Sweden, who defined Bible reading as a holy gymnastics, whereby one progressively becomes the "equivalent of a spiritual body builder" (170)<sup>101</sup>.

In their organic resonance, all the allegories above point to the Self-transforming nature of Bible reading as a spiritual exercise inciting spiritual growth. That is obviously not true in all cases, since eating, precipitating, absorbing, or even "pumping up" scriptures require a specific type of receptivity, a way of reading. Dixon stressed how the Bible can be understood either as a book or as a source of nourishment, depending on the disposition of the reader: "The Bible is, in quotes, a book. It means that anybody can teach from it in terms of theology. But when you memorize the scriptures, it's like taking the Bible and putting it inside of you, eating the scriptures, making them sit in your heart. You have to do this with love, like a prayer". Dixon's equation between Bible reading and the passionate phenomenology of prayer resonates with the medieval arts of memory studied by Carruthers (2008), in which "the emotions (*affectus*) are the starting-point, as they must be in order to engage *memoria* and *cogitatio*" (249). Not simply a matter of right interpretation, scriptures must be passionately incorporated, thus becoming one with the subject's thoughts, conations and feelings. Memorization is therefore more than rote repetition and, as I argue below, the boundaries separating this spiritual exercise from meditation are elusive, the same happening with worship, prayer, and preaching.

Besides the Bible Memorization and Character Development Rotation, memorization exercises are performed in other contexts in Anagkazo, both individually and in groups. Students spontaneously organized themselves in Bible memorization groups with names like "We love scriptures" and "Crazy for the Word of God". During one-hour daily meetings, usually organized at the school or hostel patio, a group leader calls a verse and the group responds by repeating it unison. The passage goes back and a forth a great number of times. Boredom is avoided by sustaining a dynamic call-response rhythm, which is eventually transformed into singing, or worship. It is also common to see the repetitive recitation of the leader being inflected by a preaching voice pitch as he moves his arms energetically, clearly mimicking a pastor at work. I mentioned before that this general juxtaposition of disciplinary rigor, intense zeal, and playfulness is encouraged and corroborated by the school. Anagkazo organizes "Scripture Nights", contests happening at the cathedral involving the best memorization group of each year. They are arbitrated and judged by the school head and faculty. Contenders have to cite specific scripture numbers or guess the numbers of specific texts recited by the judges. Recitation must be verbatim and according to the King James Bible. One mistake and the attempt fails. The winner receives a trophy, usually celebrated with dance

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<sup>101</sup> Michel DeCerteau (1992) analyses similar processes of becoming-Word through the disciplines of the monastic copyist: "(...) the copyist transformed his body into the spoken word of the other; he imitated and incarnated the text into a liturgy of reproduction. Simultaneously, he gave body to the verb ("verbum caro factum est") and made the verb into his own body ("hoc est corpus meum") in a process of assimilation that eliminated differences, to make way for the sacrament of the copy. (...) He reproduced otherness, but within a field that didn't belong to him any more than that other language did, a field in which he had no right of authorship" (119) He argues that the early modern mystic converted the medieval copyist into a translator, inhabiting the same field of divine otherness, but now through a "manner of speaking" (123).



and worship songs at the end of the event. The overall environment is very festive, including excited supporters packing the Cathedral benches.

Although the school sets apart specific times to Bible memorization, thus making it more marked as a spiritual exercise, the practice also suffuses the everyday of the students. Ebenezer gave me some examples of how he uses any spare time he has to get deeper into the Word through a dynamic form of personal recitation:

I memorize during everyday life too. If I go out and you see me on the streets, you'll see that I'll be talking to myself. What am I doing? Quoting scriptures. It helps me always to stay in touch with God. As I quote scriptures, and I begin to think about them, their meaning, I'll jump to another scripture. So as I walk, sometimes I preach a full sermon. I remember one day a little girl approached me and started running. Since I was talking to myself, she thought I was mad. I was only preaching to myself. Most of the time, I preach to myself as I walk. I quote as I walk. Now, if I'm in the room alone, you may think I'm on the phone, but I'm rather quoting scriptures and preaching to myself. Because of this, I'm always in tune with the Word of God. It takes my time, it soaks me in, so it's a way of developing my spirituality. Sometime, here at the school we're so busy that we don't have enough time to devote on prayer, but as you go along and memorize, it becomes a prayer. So beyond the preaching, quoting scriptures within and without me fills my mind and heart with God during the whole day.

Ebenezer's eccentric habits highlight the fundamental status of quotation to Christianity. Quotation is the basic procedure of Bible memorization, which adds to it repetition, and the personal methods Ebenezer disclosed underline how to cite the Bible is also the matrix and source of other Pentecostal discourse genres (Hanks 1987), especially prayer and preaching.

I found the notion that proper prayer is "Biblical" prayer highly popular among my mature interlocutors inside and outside of Bible schools. It assumes that Biblical promises must be referred and claimed during prayers. As a result, scriptures are either improvised upon or simply incorporated verbatim into one's prayers, almost as a form of remembering God of his own immutable Word. A hypothetical example would be a petition prayer starting with: "Father, you said in Jeremiah 29:12 that 'you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you'. Tonight I fall on my knees and ask you..." Another possible example is an intercessory prayer for peaceful elections in Ghana that incorporates Joel 3:12 ("Let the nations be awakened!") or Psalms 111:6 ("You have declared to Your people the power of Your works"). This logic of finding one's prayerful voice in the Bible and "pray scriptures back" to God is almost endless in terms of possible combinations. It is deployed by Ebenezer as his own personal strategy of transfiguring the mechanics of repetitive recitation required by memorization exercises into a devotional practice.

The same can be said of preaching. I found the habit of "preaching to oneself" to be highly common among upcoming ministers. It is often nothing but a chain of Biblical quotations punctuated by conventional interjections (Amen?), declarations, and formulas as "In the name of Jesus". "Windows" and longer improvisations tend not to be used. This habit can be understood as an "as if" version of preaching performed as both inner dialogue and low voice pitch, analogous to other forms of private and reflexive training used by preachers, as preaching to oneself in front of a mirror. Ebenezer made sure to stress the spiritual component of this form of rehearsal. It is one of the means he uses to be permanently "soaked" in the Word of God as the day unfolds. Other students also commended preaching to oneself as a form of exercising faith and raising the level of motivation, important in a context like Anagkazo, marked by disconnection from their families and significant others<sup>102</sup>. I was told that preaching to oneself brings encouragement and renews the

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<sup>102</sup> This procedure includes uttering declarations to oneself. Declarations or "speaking words into the lives of others" are nothing but a slightly transformed quotation, converted into a performative command or promise. An hypothetical

energy to endure life in the school.

A final and yet fundamental point is that the mechanics of Bible memorization is also suffused by spiritual agency, operating as a form of yielding not so far from meditation, since the Holy Spirit plays an active role in the project of “thinking biblically” that underpins these exercises. As argued fourth-year student Abednegu: “It is only what you have studied, absorbed... it’s only the scriptures you ‘ate’ that the Holy Spirit will bring to your mind. If you have not memorized, if you’re empty ... he’ll be silent”. The procedure is very similar to quiet time, and as an inner teacher, the Spirit is summoned into action through mental associations and insights that feed upon the scriptures, thus bringing deeper understanding. The composition of sermons was considered the collaborative outcome of the process of digesting scriptures while catalyzing spiritual insights, whereas preaching was dominantly framed by the students as the last stage of an ongoing organic cycle: “feeding” the congregation.

### 5.3. *Yielding to the Spirit upon: corporate prayer in Anagkazo*

In the opening chapter of the section on “The Doctrine of Prayer and Faith” on his Basic Theology manual, bishop Dag defines prayer as “a privilege that God has given to His children. We can talk to our heavenly father directly and receive answers (...) Why pray if you will not get results? I believe that you can have one hundred percent results every time you pray” (Heward-Mills 2007a: 81). The passage underlines a few key aspects of Pentecostal prayer, especially that God is a “living God” who evidences his existence through concrete acts of intervention and that prayer is a basic form of petitioning for this interceding presence. The first aspect reveals the pragmatist and, for some, utilitarian flavor of the Pentecostal-charismatic *ethos* as a whole, manifested especially through its attachment to intercession, miracles, and the non-contradictory juxtaposition of salvation as eternal life and a worldly “better life”. The second aspect, that prayer is about “talking to God” and receiving answers implies that prayer is fundamentally a form of communication between immanence and transcendence, that is, a reciprocal conversation between creature and creator. In fact, Joel Robbins (2001) has shown how the advance of Christianity over traditional spirituality might mean a replacement of multi-sensorial ritual practices by speech, often based on internalized felicity conditions as sincerity (see also Keane 2007).

The two notions transpired by bishop Dag’s description of what is prayer - its pragmatist and communicational qualities - obviously represent Anagkazo’s approach to prayer, since he is the school’s “meta-father” and its main authoritative raw model. And yet they still require further unpacking, which I will do by evoking a passage of the bishop’s own preaching about prayer, originally uttered on a Friday night service at the Qodesh in June 2011, when he declared:

If you do not pray, your life will be governed and controlled by the will of men. Do you want your life to follow the will of God or the will of man? The disloyalties, fears, jealousies, greed and hatred of men will unravel your nice plans for life and bring you to a place you never planned to be. Give yourself over to the will of God through prayer. Pray until God’s will is done!

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example of a declaration during conventional preaching would be quoting Acts 26:18 - “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” - and after teaching about the passage, repeating it in a more contextualized form while embedding its statements in the concrete structure of participant role underpinning the preaching event: “Lord, open their [immediate audience] eyes, turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God (...)”. In the case of preaching to oneself, the same declaration would simply shift to a reflexive mode, as “Lord, open my eyes, turn me from darkness to light (...)”. These words of faith can be consecrated with the authority of the “name of Jesus” or reshaped into an anticipatory form. “Lord, my eyes are now opened, I have moved away from darkness to light (...)”.

Instead of defining what is prayer directly, the bishop opted for stressing at this occasion its most critical felicity condition, not sincerity in the sense of isomorphism between words and inner states, but a normative volitional state. I believe he does so because even if we consider prayer an act of petition and communication, its structure of participant roles is a very special one. You can only “ask” God for anything, from holiness to a car, and “talk” to him privately, if you realize first that this is not really an “exchange”, as it must be done either literally or existentially by “falling on one’s knees”, that is, as an act of submission, considering the absolute sovereignty of the will of the agent to whom one is petitioning or talking. In this sense, the volition of prayer appears in the passage as an act of self-sacrifice and submission: “give yourself to the will of God through prayer”. When the bishop exhorts his audience to “pray until God’s will is done”, he is indeed recognizing what many in Ghana recognize as the power of prayer, its capacity to “shake” Heaven. And yet, the weapon of prayer must be recognized in its true structure of agency: making room through submission to the fulfillment of God’s will, which is itself immutable.

Another normative aspect that follows is that even if you are praying for a car, a job, or a visa, the very act of prayer must be recognized as carrying internal goods, which explains that many of those who never actually receive their miracles still remain “strong in prayer”. Pregnant expectation and persistence are vital to the exercise of faith, which does not disallow praying for more pragmatic issues, as protection or prosperity<sup>103</sup>. Not by chance, maturing Christians are defined in Ghana as “prayerful” Christians, an expression that makes of a practice (prayer) an acquired personal quality, prayerfulness, converting an act into a teleological virtue. As all Anagkazo students, prayerful Christian also “love” prayer and desire to submit to the will of god through a practice that, although carrying instrumental and communicative elements, is not only good but also pleasurable in its own, as riding a bike can be both useful and delightful, the taste for it growing with experience and the habitual engagement with its athletics. It is a maxim of Anagkazo that “God is not a spare tire”, that is, something the believer reaches out to only in moments of emergency. God will bless you if he sees a consistent attitude of self-donation, meaning that prayer must be a daily habit. In his doctrine on prayer, bishop Dag refers explicitly to the importance of cultivating a prayer *habitus*, which is everyday, methodic, and at the same time a spontaneous part of the believer’s bodily equipment: “Develop your prayer life until it happens spontaneously. Develop your prayer life until you pray habitually without even thinking of what you are doing” (Heward-Mills 2007: 96)

The point above simply reiterates that prayer is part of a Christian *askesis*, that is, a disciplinary project that evades the so-called “ritual” context and enters the everyday of believers through an engagement with the body which is more generative than ascetic, that is, more about reshaping than repressing desires, dispositions, and emotions. But there is still what I am calling the charismatic component of this *askesis*, which represents yet another way in which Pentecostal prayer evades the conventional model of “communication” with God: the fact that submitting to the will of God through prayer is often coeval to yielding to divine presence. As a result, the prayerful subject not only communicates *with* divinity as an addressee, but also *through* it, as a body-vessel being filled by the Spirit during prayer.

Csordas retains a more marked distinction between subject and God during Catholic charismatic prayer, thus the model of communication: “In prayer humans both speak and listen to the deity. The ‘lord’ should be ‘present’ within a group or with an individual in prayer” (2001: 175). Presence in this case finds a more discernable position within the practice. Moving from

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<sup>103</sup> Praying for protection, prosperity (deemed more “pragmatic” from a secular perspective) or, let us say, holiness (deemed more ethical and spiritual), are fundamentally the same practice from a heavenly perspective. They are acts of humility, and index the fact that one cannot achieve anything by one’s will, but only through the will of God.

communication to communion, Luhrmann (2008) revisits Lévy-Bruhl in order to address the infusion of charismatic prayer by divine presence as a case of “participation” between subject and object, implying some sense of co-fusion (and for some confusion) between the agent and recipient of prayer. I believe the positionality of the subject-God relation in the phenomenology of Pentecostal prayer varies according to the genre of prayer one is referring to, which, as both these authors recognize, vary immensely in Christian charismatic traditions. A large variety of prayers are performed in Anagkazo, both individually and in groups, silently and audibly. Some instructors pray before each lecture and even announcements of the school head are opened with prayers. Students pray for thanksgiving, intercession, petition, spiritual gifts, salvation, learning, deeper understanding, remission of sins, and the list goes on and on. Variety is important in a mature prayer diet. In fact, prayer has already emerged in this chapter in a more situate manner, opening quiet time, or in a more diffuses manner, when mediation and memorization are spontaneously transfigured into prayer. In both cases, prayer tends to be silent and in “one’s words” and the presence of God inhabits it in a more interiorized form, as what I am calling the *Spirit within*, which is allowed to be heard by attuning oneself through diverse forms of inner attention Luhrmann (2012) calls “absorption”.

Prayer “in words” is cherished in Anagkazo and is dissected in a variety of types and formulas extracted from the prayer life of Biblical figures as Daniel, Timothy, Jesus (“the Lord’s Prayer formula”) and the “Ephesians Prayer formula” (see Heard-Mills 2007a: 94-109). We have also seen that the words spoken during this practice do not ultimately belong to the praying subject and are inflected by citational methods. It is key to pray “Biblically” both through scriptures and aware that one must abide by the guidelines of the Word in order to achieve “one hundred percent answered prayer”, as argued the bishop<sup>104</sup>. Here I would like to highlight another style of prayer, with a phenomenology of its own, characterized by a more visceral engagement with the mode of presence I have called above the *Spirit upon*. They are the various cycles of corporate prayers in tongues performed at the school.

Glossolalia epitomizes a specific modality of the bond of “participation” between subject and presence during prayer, with a more stressed consubstantiation between vessel and divine substance. Glossolalia is a paradigmatic form of “outpouring” of the Spirit, and exemplifies Pentecostals’ spiritualized engagement with what Merleau-Ponty (2005: 202- 234) calls the “gestural” nature of speech, the fact that, as a competency, speech is hosted in a holistic apparatus of expression articulating mind, linguistic signs, voice, breath, face, gestures, and motility pragmatically. While praying in tongues, the person lends body and voice to the Spirit of god, operating as an immanent animator of a transcendental author (Goffman 1981). Glossolalia is therefore the prime expression of praying according to the will of God. In his book, bishop Dag stresses the curious structure of address of prayer “in the Spirit”, in which God basically prays to himself through his vessel: “God wants you to pray in tongues. A large percentage of my prayer is prayer “in the Spirit”. I can give you many reasons why you should pray in tongues. One reason is that when you pray in the Spirit, God direct your prayer himself. He leads you to ask Him for what is necessary” (Heward-Mills: 2007a: 91). The outcome of this tautological prayer is a surface speech whose sacrality is marked by the absolute evacuation of semantic traits from the phonological rhythms and intonations

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<sup>104</sup> Bishop Dag’s doctrine of one hundred percent answered prayers urge its readers to not “violate God’s principles” during the practice by uttering “foolish prayers” (ex. ask God for somebody’s husband), “unscriptural prayers” (ex. pray to God to help you divorce – one is allowed to divorce, but this must be done through one’s own will), “illegal prayers” (ex. pray against pain during childbirth, which is considered a necessary part of Adam and Eve’s curse. One can mitigate pain in this case, but with science, not prayer), and to avoid “difficult prayers” (praying for a dead person to revive if you have not been led by the Spirit to do so).

of prayer, which rescinds interpretation<sup>105</sup>.

It is important to highlight that, despite glossolalia's sacramental nature, there is nothing esoteric about this practice. In fact, anyone who spend more intimate time with Pentecostals will rapidly notice how extremely mundane it is. Third year student Kodjo also realized that right upon his arrival in Anagkazo. He came from the Western region of Ghana, and applied to Anagkazo after the Healing Jesus Crusade passed close to his hometown. Kodjo had been involved with Spiritual Churches for some time, so although he was familiarized with worship, faith healing, and prophecy, glossolalia was still shrouded in mystery to him. This aura was dissipated rapidly once he set foot at the school:

I passed through all these Spiritual Churches and something I didn't really know was to speak in tongues. It was something mysterious to me. I didn't believe in it. Here, as soon as they open their mouths, they speak in tongues! I didn't have the knowledge that I also had that gift. When I arrived here, scriptures were open to me and I realized that this thing is for my benefit. Suddenly, I didn't force it, the thing came, and I was flowing and now I love speaking the tongues for the whole day. I love it so much.

Kodjos's comments evoke the interesting question of how one learns how to speak in tongues, which was one of the subjects I explored during my interviews. In a few cases, students received the gift of tongues through epiphanies, events in which they felt like they were drunk and were driven by an irresistible urge to move their lips and utter glossolalic speech. In the large majority of the cases though, they went through methodic pedagogical procedures, as Holy Ghost baptism courses, in which they learned about the gift before actually receiving it. The technique of laying on of hands is another common tool used in this process, as shown by Jonas' case:

All my spiritual growth started here at the school. [How did you receive the gift of speaking in tongues?] Laying on of hands. There was a senior, a final year student, student. When we came, three days later, he gathered all of us who didn't have the gift and prayed for us. Through that I spoke in tongues. It has helped me in prayer so much....

During my fieldwork I watched and was indeed the target of various attempts to "impart" the capacity of speaking in tongues by my Spirit-filled acquaintances. They would "pray over" me for long periods, asking for my (reticent) prayerful collaboration while touching my head and shouting performative utterances as "Now you can speak!" Although in my case the procedure came to no avail, it is acknowledged as highly felicitous among converts. Kodjo above clarified well what is the dynamic of transmission here in course when he claimed that: "I didn't have the knowledge that *I also had that gift*". It means that he did not necessary "learned" the gift of tongues in Anagkazo, but yielded to a gift he potentially had<sup>106</sup>. Pedagogical contexts as discipleship courses are important therefore because they teach *about* the gift, thus granting its scriptural legitimacy. Moreover, they

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<sup>105</sup> The question about interpretation of tongues is polemic among Pentecostals in general. Jacobson shows how Parham, Seymour, and their disciples in the USA in early 20<sup>th</sup> century faced this problem in an early stage. Is glossolalia an unintelligible prayer language or the capacity to speak other languages without previous learning, for missionary purposes, that is, a language "for service"? Was the revival literally a shift from a Babel of national languages to a global evangelistic Pentecost? That was the view that Parham sustained for his whole life, although "the movement as a whole ultimately rejected his claim and instead came to interpret tongues as a gift of speech that involved the humanly unintelligible language(s) of heaven" (Jacobsen 2003: 19).

<sup>106</sup> That is exactly what lacked in my case: I did not yield to the gift. Moreover, I am not even born-again, and maybe those attempting to impart the gift of tongues onto me were simply expecting a miraculous intervention that would drive me to tongues and conversion simultaneously.

demystify glossolalia and encourage any convert to receive it, first by desiring it sincerely and fervently, eventually asking God to “release” it through prayer.

To express desire practically is therefore the first form of yielding. A second one already appeared in my analysis of ICGC’s discipleship program in chapter two: to “speak out of faith”. The expression means simply mimicking glossolalic speech, usually through very basic sequences as “ab-ab-ab-ab-ab” while displaying a desirous disposition to receive, until the Holy Spirit “kicks in” and authenticates the copy. With time, glossolalia matures. The syntagma above emphasizes the vowel-sound, which was associated by my interlocutors to immature tongues, a gift recently released to a spiritual baby. Diversity of sound patters is deemed more mature, and so are phonemes with more complex consonantal sounds, like “cha-la-ha-ba-le-ra-ka-ri-an-ta-be-le-re”. Amorine exemplified this dynamic: “Yes. I used to speak only ‘one tongue’, like mamamamam..., but as I continued to speak, it changed and became more diverse and complex”. “Speaking out of faith” implies that, as other spiritual gifts, tongues grow and mature as the gift is exercised. Moreover, this method points interestingly to the possibility of framing mimesis as an expression of submission according to the meta-pragmatic of yielding. I explore this theme in the next section, where I deal with other modalities of transmission through “impartation”: “soaking in tapes”.

In this section, I want to focus on corporate prayers as moments of yielding to the *Spirit upon*, which falls upon the collective body in prayer with greater intensity during co-performance. Anagkazo students do pray in tongues individually, but mostly during corporate prayer meetings, which are held at the cathedral, happening three or four times a day, varying from 30 minutes to 3 hours. Many of these meetings are accompanied by frequent cycles of fasting, whose beginning, length, and conditions are assigned to each yearly class by the school direction. Averagely, I would say that from each month at the school, students are oriented to fast for at least two weeks. The fast is broken daily after 8pm and liquids are allowed during the whole day. Fasting increases spiritual sensibility, since it allows those undertaking it to lives in an ongoing state of submission and yielding, domesticating the urges of the flesh and attuning oneself to divine presence as a proper vessel<sup>107</sup>.

It is bishop Dag’s hence Anagkazo’s maxim that “fasting without prayer is dieting”. In his doctrine of prayer he comments on the organic complementarity between fasting and prayer by referring the reader to his first years as a born-again Christian. “Many years ago, I remember fasting for tree days. By the third day, I was so weak that I could not rise out of bed.” At that time, his prayer life was not strong and he fell ill and had to be brought to a hospital. He tried again a few months later, but now waking up at 4am and spending a couple of hours in prayer before the day begun. In the third day, he sais: “I felt as I had had something to eat (...) I had such strength because I had been more prayerful. My Christian friend, prayer is a supernatural act that provides strength even when your flesh is weak” (108). By recasting the habit of prayer as a form of nurturance, bishop Dag stresses the energetic component of glossolalic prayer, which indeed stands out in Anagkazo, where prayer in tongues assumes an evident physicality, involving mobility, sweat, tears, and a guttural voice pitch that often scared me. Foreigner students like Caleb, from Scotland, and Amorine, from Kenya, commended this style of prayer as a Ghanaian or West Africa expertise, something they admired and wanted to bring back home when they graduate. But Ghanaian student simply justified their vibrant prayers by understanding it as an imitation of Jesus’s paradigmatic style, mentioned for instance in Hebrews 5:7: “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what

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<sup>107</sup> Retreats for fasting and prayer are extremely popular in Ghana and it is common to receive the Holy Ghost baptism after long fasts at “prayer grounds” like Achimota forest, Akoko and Atwia mountains.

he suffered”<sup>108</sup>. When it comes to what is called “travailing prayers”, intensity thus length is very important. That was indeed one of the benefits of glossolalia stressed by multiple students, as fourth year Ewe student Augustine:

At first, I prayed without the tongues. But when I prayed without tongues, I didn't enjoy it. I saw it more as a ritual. The words I had to say used to make it difficult for me to pray for long periods. I didn't really enjoyed praying at that time. I felt mandatory, and I didn't dedicate much time for it. Praying in my words, in my understanding, I could pray only for one hour, but with the tongues and my understanding, I can pray for 5, 6, 7 hours. And the more I pray in tongues, it makes me more spiritual. It makes me feel that I'm getting closer to God. After coming to the school, my prayers with words improved a lot, but I still prefer to pray in the Spirit.

Augustine also stressed that one of the benefits of corporate prayer is that it facilitates praying longer by setting a shared standard, rhythm, and performance flow. I believe intensity helps understanding why speaking in tongues can be, on the one hand, an everyday practice that some students even perform silently (using their inner voices) while taking a public transport or in the classroom during breaks between classes, and, on the other, a powerful example of zeal and religious enthusiasm with a marked ecstatic component. The very phenomenology of glossolalia is predicated on the intensity of practice, the more time one prays the more emphasized becomes the consubstantiation between vessel and its holy content, a peak of intensity being the phenomenon of being “slain by the spirit”, when the praying vessel falls on the floor not necessarily unconscious, and yet “deeper in the Spirit”. One of the ways of understanding the differences but also the ultimate continuity between the affects of the *Spirit within* and the *Spirit upon* as pertaining to two modes of a single agent is taking the difference between the intimacy of meditation and the ecstasy of corporate prayer as a matter of intensification.

Corporate prayer meetings in Anagkazo start with the singing and dancing of spiritual songs by the whole group. The music is performed either live or mechanically through the cathedral's sound system. The praise and worship section is inaugurated by slow tempo “praise songs”, which express thankfulness for Christ's redemptive work on the cross, whereas fast tempo “worship songs” glorify God's power and greatness. The use of God's diverse names in the lyrics follows the shift of addressee that characterizes the ceremony, from the intimate and loving Emmanuel to the glorious El-Shadai and Adonai. As commented by pastor Asante's long quote in the first section, from which I extracted the notion of modes of presence that have oriented this chapter, worship is not “causing” the Spirit to manifest, but getting the congregation ready to “receive it”, thus inviting divine presence and “opening” the participants to the Holy Spirit. His careful wording depicted the practice as a form of seduction, whereby subjects make themselves “available” to the Spirit without assuming the role of primary agent. In sum, by praising and worshiping God, the corporate body is yielding collectively to his presence<sup>109</sup>.

Glossolalia takes most of the performance's time. A prayer leader conducts the section, a role usually assigned to the student chaplain or one of the assistant chaplains. Prayer leaders perform a twofold function. First, they establish “prayer points”, for instance, pray for Ghana, bishop Dag, LCI, holiness, understanding, spiritual power, soul-winning, church growth, etc. One of the most vigorous prayer meetings I attended was organized after news arrived from Guinea that a LCI

<sup>108</sup> Another vital event in Biblical narrative that corroborates this perspective is Jesus's transfiguration scene (Matthew 17:1–9, Mark 9:2–8, Luke 9:28–36), which happened in a mountain and after forty days of fasting and intense prayer.

<sup>109</sup> In this sense, my interlocutors would accept that their emotional co-performance during praise and worship, this basic form of Pentecostal being-together, attracts presence, but they would find Durkheim's (1995) enthronement of “collective effervescence” as a self-generative God fetishistic, as it confuses divinity with its context of apparition.



missionary and Anagkazo's former student had died during a flood. The school head and the faculty joined the students and prayed during one hour for the missionary's soul and against the "Spirit of death", "demonic strongholds", and for missionaries worldwide. Considering that glossolalia is widely defined by Pentecostals as praying according to the will of God, the mechanism of "prayer points" seems to complexity this economy of agency. By orienting the flow of glossolalic speech and presence toward specific targets, prayer points attempt to channel divine will and power. As a result, this procedure also helps assembling the corporate body in prayer as a plurality of inspired vessels oriented to a common aim or in a single flow.

A second function of the prayer leader is to orchestrate and uphold the vigor of the performance. They stand in the pulpit and hold a microphone, setting a shared tempo with their own prayer in tongues, eventually interrupting glossolalia to shout commands as "Keep praying..." or "More fire, more fire..."



The evocation of fire is not gratuitous, since sensible qualities as heat, intensity and spreadability help situating both the athletics required by the praying vessel in these contexts and the particularities of the divine affects embedded in the practice. According to Miller, "different understandings of immateriality become expressed through material forms" (2005: 21). Breath is a major motif of Pentecostal spirituality and ecclesiology (Abreu 2010), as it is the dominant form of material manifestation of the Holy Spirit during glossolalia, where in order to become sensible, pneuma is expressed through an unintelligible and yet speaking voice. The experience of the *Spirit within* during meditation and memorization is dominantly that of a "gentle" Spirit, who speaks through a "still small voice". Moments of spiritual arousal are experienced as "refreshing winds", or watery and vaporous figures as "showers of blessing" or "clouds of glory". Conversely, during corporate prayer, presence was dominantly metamorphosed into the "Holy Ghost fire", and its grammar of sensations revolves around passionate and violent "burning". Mystical experiences that reiterated Moses' (Ex 3) "burning bush" event were extremely common among the testimonies I collected. This simultaneous shift in the material register and the economy of affect of corporate prayer is made evident by two highly visible aspects. First, its extreme physicality: the intense repetitive movements accompanied by sweat and bodily exhaustion, and the glossolalic cries. Second, diverse manifestations of spiritual power: laying on of hands for healing, prophetic

utterances, and being “Slain in the Spirit”.

I am not claiming that discursive motifs revolving around breath, water, and fire are simply tags to which emotions already in place find a meaning, but inherent parts of the cultivated structure of sensibility in which charismatic experience is expressed (see Voloshinov 1986: 83- 98). Moreover, the materiality of these divine affects is not randomly assigned, but ultimately biblical and easily mapped out by the students to specific scriptures, thus learned and cultivated<sup>110</sup>. In sum, those are “Biblical experiences”, moments in which the relation between subject and sacred text transcends mere interpretation and appears as a structure of feelings. These embodied forms of meaningful experience are “somatic modes of attention” (Csordas 1997: 67-70), an aggregate of narrative, apperception, and perception shaped by habituation and practical learning. Finally, it is also important to recognize that the fiery affects of corporate prayer index a fundamental function of this practice as a performance, and not only as a habit, that is, a practice whose efficacy must be reclaimed each time it unfolds by building up a specific flow. In this contextualized form, the *Spirit up* or “the Holy Ghost fire” and the burning bodies in prayer emerge as part of a dynamic of mutual intensification, in which the latter yield to the first by expressing their desire for God through fellowship and glossolalia.

#### 5.4. Yielding to the *Spirit across*: impartation, the anointing, and soaking in tapes

In his analysis of a Word of Faith community in Sweden, Simon Coleman (2006) observes that, for his interlocutors, “to ‘speak out’ sacred words that have been stored in the self is not merely to communicate to others in a semantic sense; it is also to recreate and extend one’s persona in the act of giving an aspects of the self to others – an aspect that is never truly alienated from the giver” (2006: 165). Coleman refers here especially to the habit of speaking spiritually charged “words of faith”, more popularly known in Ghana as “speaking words into someone’s life”, which we have already seen at use during Anagkazo lectures. This point is then integrated in his argument to prosperity theology’s enchantment of the act of giving (of money and of objects), leading Coleman to argue that this brand of Pentecostalism presupposes the interchangeability between words and things as material supports to the concrete exercise of faith, concluding that “the charismatic self is constituted by becoming a materialized self through the agency of words and things” (182).

I am specifically interested here on Coleman’s recognition of the simultaneously spiritual, sensible, and material [“objectlike” (Coleman 2006: 173)] nature of words in Pentecostalism, which Bialecki (2011) aptly dubs a “centrifugal” trend of Protestant language ideology. According to Bialecki, Pentecostals’ fascination with the performativity and sensorial richness of inspired speech sets it apart from more “centripetal” Protestant language ideologies, as those found by Keane (2007) among Calvinists and Harding (2000) among Southern Baptists, with a marked emphasis on immateriality and intimacy. Coleman himself addresses this gap when he argues that the normative form of charismatic personhood he found in the field is “rather more complex than a simple equation of Protestantism with ‘individualism’, since it implies that the spiritual self is realized in reaching out to others, and that what can be transferred between people is that which is generic, or

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<sup>110</sup> One of the rich sources of possible material supports to charismatic experience is 1 Kings 19:11-13: “The Lord said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.’ Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” (NIV). The passage stresses the vast array of semiotic possibilities for revelations, ranging from the spectacular to the intimate, which is ultimately emphasized in this case.

shared, by believers” (180). In this community “in the Spirit”, relations and reciprocations are allowed to proliferate without the ultimate alienation of that which is given: faith itself and the Spirit.

Developing this basic argument in a different direction, that of charismatic leadership, Coleman (2009) goes as far as to argue that famous Pentecostal ministers would perform a disseminating function comparable to that of Catholic saints in the early Middle Ages. Following this lead, it is valid to assume that, as dense concentrations of grace and spiritual power, famous men and women of god perform a role analogous to the one attributed by Peter Brown (1983) to tombs and relics related to the dead bodies of saints in Late Ancient Christianity: they are “privileged places, where the contrasted poles of Heaven and Earth meet”, becoming “centers of the ecclesiastical life of their region” (4). But Coleman is careful enough to stress an important particularity of the Pentecostal case: that “preachers do not rely on relics and shrines but on exchanges of substance that invoke flows from the body of the virtuoso (...)” (2009: 437).

In this section, I am interested in exploring the inter-personal and yet still highly spiritualized dimension of Pentecostalism stressed by Coleman as it unfolds in Anagkazo. This is a slightly different mode of presence than the one I addressed in the previous sections as the *Spirit upon*. As I argued, the *Spirit upon* is catalyzed by the sociality of corporate prayer, but the ties binding this collective together is not necessarily inter-personal but mostly one of co-performance, that is, the simultaneous submission of each of the praying vessels to a common prayer rhythm and a “mutual tuning-in” (Schulz 1976) oriented toward the Spirit. I also showed how this corporate body upon which the Spirit falls is assembled by a common orientation, thus channeling sacred power toward pre-established prayer points. In neither of these cases we see an emphasis on horizontal links between vessels. Conversely, what I will call here the *Spirit across* manifests exactly during moments in which the Pentecostal body-vessel operates as a body-conduit, thus connecting to other believers and letting presence flows across. I will show how this specific mode of presence finds a methodic place in Anagkazo’s charismatic *askesis* through a quite unusual spiritual exercise, called “soaking in tapes”, understood as a technology of “impartation” or grace transference.

Although the idea of transferring grace, a free and sovereign gift of God, interpersonally might sound heretic, it finds a variety of Biblical supports in Anagkazo and indeed can be seen ubiquitously in Christian history. One classic example already mentioned above is laying on of hands, a technique deployed in both Old and New Testaments as a means for spiritual intercession, consecration, and transmission (Service 2006). Common to all of these three functions of laying on of hands is a spiritualized notion of transmission centered on contact. The intercessory use of laying on of hands is seen during faith healing séances when ministers are led by the Spirit to touch specific body parts of those petitioning healing. They often “pray over” those who need healing and utter “declarations”, which can be performative commands as “Be healed!” or anticipatory “You are healed!”, predicated on the idea that God wants you to be healed and that the efficacy of healing requires faith from those receiving it, that is, “accepting” their healing. As a form of consecration, laying on of hands appears especially in the Old Testament in moments of transferring political offices or enthroning Kings. It was adopted by the ritual apparatus of divine kingship of early modern Europe and is part of ordination ceremonies of almost all Christian traditions. Different from intercession and consecration, impartation implies the transference of spiritual capacities through contiguity. In this sense, laying on of hands can be used both to heal (intercession) or to transfer the gift of healing (impartation). The apostle Paul appears a variety of times both in his letters and in the book of Acts using laying on of hands for the purpose of imparting spiritual gifts. For instance, in Acts 19: 6 we read that “When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.”

Another vital component of impartation through “soaking in tapes” that requires some previous unpacking is the notion of the anointing. It finds Biblical support in the Old Testament

habit of consecrating Jewish priests, prophets, and divinely appointed kings by pouring oil in their heads (Flaming 1998). It enters the New Testament through scenes in which the disciples and church elders anoint the sick for healing (Mark 6:13, James 5:14), when Jesus is anointed by Mary, in an act of worship (Mark 14:3-9), and when Christ is anointed by God as he ascends to heaven with “the oil of gladness” (Hebrews 1:8-9). Finally, in 1 John 2: 20 we find a reference to Spirit-filled Christians as the “anointed ones”, thus enabling a juxtaposition between the dominant Johannine definition of the Holy Spirit as *pneuma hagion* - Spirit (Other), soul (I), and breath (matter) - and the oily figure of the anointing.

The anointing was already part of the vocabulary of American Pentecostals in early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Jacobsen 2003), but became popularized in Ghana especially through Kenneth Hagin’s tapes and books, as the 1983 best-seller *Understanding the Anointing*, where the notion denotes spiritual power and the ministerial grace. Men of God therefore are not only mature Christians. They have also been “anointed” by God in greater measure. The anointing is frequently mobilized during intercessory practices, where this sacred substance can assume a more material form. After one of his anointing service I attended, the famous Ghanaian minister Rev. Eastwood Anaba oriented his audience to make a line, since the Spirit had directed him to anoint the audience with oil. Almost a thousand people flocked into the line waiting patiently for their time to be smeared by the man of God, mostly on their foreheads, but also on their feet, shoulders or abdomen, according to the lead of the Spirit. The procedure lasted almost two hours, and his assistants kept emptying bottle after bottle of olive oil while pouring the substance over the pastor’s hands. I performed a similar supporting function while “serving” Prophet Patrick Sam during one of his conferences, along with other students of his Bible school. Stressing the contentious place of the oil in normative notions of Pentecostal materiality in contemporary Ghana, the prophet went back to the pulpit at the end of the event and declared: “I want to remind you that the anointing is not the oil!” The prophet meant that the oil was just a “point of contact” for the transmission of spiritual power, which should be received with adequate faith. The intercessory act was therefore not “magic”, and just like the man of God’s hands, the substance should be understood as a conduit to a transcendental and yet materially embedded agency.

In LCI, oil is the only material “point of contact” allowed to be used during church services, and even so it is rarely deployed. Bishop Dag himself only uses oil to consecrate pastors. In his “miracle services”, the anointing appears preferably as the spiritual power he channels mostly through his breath, voice, and words. The oily figure of the anointing is therefore an expression of what Coleman above called the “substance” that “flows through the body of the virtuoso”, and can be transferred even through media as TV, radio, tapes, CDs, and DVDs (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005). As I understand, similar to breath, water, and fire, other material expression of divine presence in churches like LCI, the unbounded and sticky substance of the anointing, as both oil and inspired words, allow Pentecostals to engage unapologetically with embodied sacred matter while sustaining an aversion for religious artifacts. In this sense, the anointing can work as a qualisign (Pierce 1955: 98-119, Munn 1992: 74-104) that allows believers to situate divine presence according to specific sensible qualities, especially *intensity* or gradation and *non-appropriation*.

First, grace-talk and grace-recognition in terms of the anointing allows Christians to evade the binary of presence or absence, typical of the logic of reciprocity that undergirds the notion of spiritual gifts. Whereas a gift can be received or not, grace is “liquefied” by the anointing, borrowing from the oil the sensible quality of gradation. During a class about “Hearing from God” in Central Bible College, the instructor reproduced the following scheme on the blackboard, entitled “Levels of Anointing”. It depicts the born-again body as a vessel being progressively filled by the Spirit:

Anointing [1] – Ankle

- Anointing [2] – Knees
- Anointing [3] – Waist
- Anointing [4] – Swimming/Overflow

The bodily parts and the process of saturating oneself with divinity reproduce the watery allegory of Ezekiel 47, in which divine presence rises until it fully covers the Jewish prophet. The system was later articulated to particular spiritual “tastes” experienced by the joyful container - [1] milk; [2] fish; [3] meat; [4] honey - and complemented by teachings on disciplines through which one “feeds” oneself spiritually: prayer, fasting, reading and memorizing the Word, holiness, praise and worship, service [doing church work], fellowship, giving alms, tithes, and offerings. We realize that, as the organic lexicons of maturation and Biblical commensality, the liquid materiality of the anointing modulates presence in a gradational spectrum.

Second, the anointing, this sacred oil, cannot and should not be hold. It drips through the fingers and overflows containers. As an evasive matter, ambiguously situated between solid and liquid, this sticky qualisign marks the non-appropriative nature of divine presence in Pentecostalism, or the fact that the Spirit is everywhere but nowhere in its fullness, thus frustrating any attempt at an exhaustive objectification. The anointing has a primary relation to movement, as it flows, disseminates and disperses inter-personally. That explains why denominations like LCI consider exploratory but also heretic practices extremely current among popular prophets in Ghana, as the selling of anointing oil in small bottles, to be used at home. By encapsulating and objectifying the Spirit, these artifacts interrupt the flow that the sacred ultimately is. This logic is confirmed by another common material figure of presence among Pentecostals, one that is not even matter per se, but simply a force: electricity<sup>111</sup>. Gideon, the ICGC pastor to whom we were introduced in chapter two, enlightened me on how the anointing operates as electric energy with the following example:

In Ghana here, we use the Akosombo dam as a source of electricity. Now, if you need electricity in your home, you don't have to travel to Akosombo and tap directly from the source. Electricity has been brought to your house, and you have plugs and switches all around. If you need electricity you just connect to the immediate power plug you have in your house, and you'll be tapping from Akosombo's electricity. It's the same with the anointing. You cannot say you're going to god directly, because there are people who have been anointed already, so connect with these people and obviously you'll be anointed.

This sacred electricity is not the same evoked by Durkheim (1995: 217) in order to make sense of the ecstatic confusion of souls produced by ritual “effervescence”. Conversely, Gideon approaches the dynamic sensible qualities of energy as a source of discernment about how presence disseminates through recognizable conduits with some degree of regularity. Different from an idiosyncratic electroshock spreading chaotically, he used notion like the “dam” and the “plug”, the source and the flow, in order to advance a point that is also *the* point of soaking in tapes: that the ministerial grace can be inherited through human vessels. Although the anointing is a cogent and unstoppable flow of presence, ultimately ungraspable as a totality, it can still be “channeled” according to specific directions and tributaries of grace, also permeating and sticking to those vessels articulated by presence as its travels.

In LCI and Anagkazo, formulas like “It’s all because of the anointing” have assumed an almost proverbial nature. They imply that the success of bishop Dag and his denomination is ultimately indebted to God himself and the ministerial grace he has bestowed upon his vessel, the

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<sup>111</sup> Electricity is technically a movement or friction of electrons, basic particles of matter. An analogy would be electricity/ matter :: traffic/cars.



man of God. But the man of god is not only a body-vessel, a receiver of gifts and grace, he is also a body-conduit, and it is a basic principle of the church and its Bible school that the anointing can be “caught” or “tapped into”, thus empowering others for Christians service. One of the motivations that led students to Anagkazo was therefore to “catch” or “tap” into bishop Dag’s anointing.

Bishop Dag is probably the greatest Ghanaian expert in the anointing, and has written a variety of books on the subject. His detailed “anointing doctrine” plays a fundamental role in the school curriculum and its circulation in the public sphere through books, CDs, and DVDs has popularized the notion in Ghana. The bishop is not only an imitator of Kenneth Hagin though. He considers himself and is recognized by those who know his ministry as Hagin’s spiritual son, although he never actually met the famous American preacher personally. It all started with a peculiar mystical experience, which is told and retold in Anagkazo and LCI as a true origin myth. That is the story of how bishop Dag “caught the anointing” of Kenneth Hagin, which finds one of its versions in a section entitled “A personal encounter with the anointing”, from his textbook *Pastoral Ministry*. The passage introduces the reader to the bleak circumstances of his beginnings in ministry: isolation, frustration, and lack of peer support. That was 1988, when Heward-Mills was still a final year medical student at the University of Ghana, struggling to coordinate religious and secular vocations. As required by the university, the recently ordained “pastor Dag” had to go on a Community Health Rotation in Suhum, a town in the Eastern region of Ghana. Before leaving Accra though, the apprentice pastor felt an urge to stop at a Christian bookstore and purchase some tapes containing Kenneth Hagin’s sermons.

I felt that I needed something to soak in whilst I was in Suhum. I had been a great follower and admirer of Kenneth Hagin’s ministry. Actually, I had already listened to those tapes many times but I thought I would just have something to listen to. No one had ever told me to listen to tapes. I just enjoyed doing it. I loved the Word and I loved the ministers of the Word. No one told me to listen to tapes over and over. I wasn’t trying to memorize the message although I ended up remembering almost every sentence. Listening to tapes never replaced Bible study and personal quiet time for me. I wasn’t losing my personality! I wasn’t becoming a clone. I was being blessed tremendously! One night I was praying, fasting and listening to one of these tapes that I had bought. I remember that day as if it was yesterday. I was using a small red Sony auto-reverse tape recorder. The message that was being played was something about dealing with demons. It was a message I had enjoyed listening to many times. The tape played nonstop throughout the night. At about 3 a.m., I was kneeling by the bed praying. I could see the tape recorder situated at the other end of the room. Then, suddenly, something literally jumped out of the tape which was playing and moved into my belly. I could feel it entering me. Then I heard a voice saying, “From now you can teach.” (...) I didn’t know at that time that I had received a major impartation of anointing through the channel of soaking in tapes (Heward-Mills 2007: 163-64)

Through a highly idiosyncratic experience, Heward-Mills captured Hagin’s grace to teach, as evidenced by the steady expansion of his church following the event. More importantly, he also had a pedagogical revelation, and idiosyncrasy rapidly gave room to a transposable method of “grace capture”, which plays a pivotal role in Anagkazo’s charismatic *askesis*: soaking in tapes. The convertibility of epiphany into method already appears as a potentiality in the testimony above when bishop Dag acknowledges his longstanding status of a “follower” of Hagin, another way of implying that he was already his spiritual son, someone who consumed his media materials systematically and intensely. In fact, the same disturbing overlapping of visceral proximity and technical mediation characterizes bishop Dag’s relationship to Anagkazo’s students. Although he visits, lectures, and lay hands on the students personally quite rarely, mediatic artifacts render his personal presence at the school as ubiquitous as the Holy Spirit, saturating teaching, learning, and even spiritual exercises. As

LCI's meta-father the bishop's anointing can be also seen at work in the school head and faculty, his more experienced disciples.

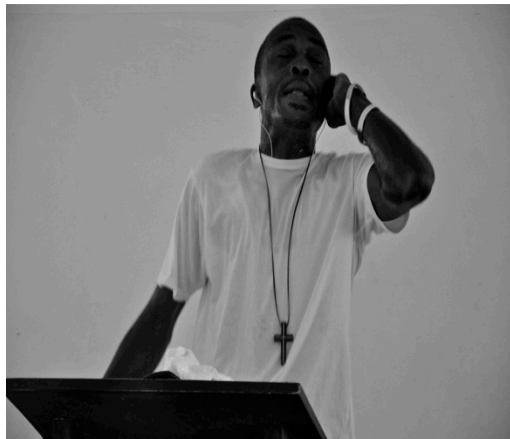
All second and fourth year Anagkazo students must perform soaking in tapes every Saturday, from 8am to 4pm. Location varies, and the activity fills classrooms, the school chapel and the patio. Third year students in rotations are encouraged to soak in tapes every day for at least two hours. Practitioners listen to the bishops' voice echoing through MP3 players and "pray over" it, mostly in tongues, but also "in their own words". Just like suit and tie, MP3 players are considered mandatory component of the school uniform. Incoming students who cannot afford these gadgets receive them as gifts from the school direction right upon their arrival. Practitioners are free to choose any sermon from the *Machaneh*, a compilation of the bishop's "camp messages", thus originally performed during camp meetings with pastors and lay leaders. The school makes the upload of these files available to the students with no costs. Taking its name from the Hebrew word meaning "encampment", "resting place of an army" or "company of travelers at night", the Machaneh de-territorializes these intimate moments of personal mentorship with the spiritual father and enables the replication (Urban 1996, 2000) of his authoritative doctrinal and spiritual influence along the church's transnational body. Soaking in tapes is performed not only in Anagkazo. It is a habit encouraged during "camp meetings" without the bishop's presence, being also held by every minister of the denomination in their everyday lives. Again, Anagkazo represents a condensed, intensified, and closely monitored version of technologies of self-government widely distributed in LCI as a visible body of Christ.



*The CD version of the Machaneh, sold at LCI's bookstore and online store*

As a spiritual exercise, soaking in tapes is not merely listening for the purpose of acquiring knowledge. Its impressive length and the fact that students are fasting and simultaneously praying in tongues indicates that the practice adds to the passionate dynamics of corporate prayer an interesting element of human relationality. Through intense glossolalia, the students yield to the *Spirit across*, which dwells in the digitalized breath, voice, and words of their Spiritual father, the vigorous physicality of the scene indexing to anyone who can watch the students' zealous desire to catch the teaching anointing from bishop Dag.





How such an unintuitive practice thrives authoritatively? I asked myself this question over and over again as I listened to the students' testimonies about its evident efficacy. I believe the visceral reality of the haptic voice of soaking in tapes lies in the holistic roles played by the anointing in Anagkazo, where it unfolds simultaneously in two orders of discourse (Silverstein 2003). As the agency of a sacred other, the anointing inheres the students' experience as a flow, whereas as a biblical frame, it normalizes their sensibilities and apperceptions as a frame, a metapragmatic script for the performance of soaking in tapes. These scripts appear explicitly in the lecture rooms and implicitly during the practice itself, thus covering and articulating authoritatively three main areas: i) the establishment of spiritual kinship as the legitimate means to receive an impartation, ii) the establishment of a normative receptivity through a pedagogy of listening (Hirschkind 2006), and iii) the establishment of a way of accounting for the effects of impartation through a non-contradictory coordination of mimesis and contagion, similitude and contact (Taussig 1993).

Somehow acknowledging how unintuitive soaking in tapes can be for those unaccustomed with its conditions of possibility, all the students I talked to about this practice started our interviews by granting the biblical nature of the anointing transference. This notion is rendered legitimate through bishop Dag's experiences and glosses of Kenneth Hagin's glosses on the Bible, as shown by the following testimony of Joshua:

[So, the anointing is a grace, but it's also transferred, right?]. Yes! The anointing comes with association. It's Biblical. We can see it in the life of Moses. When Moses died, the anointing went to Joshua [Number 27: 18]. We also find in the Bible the anointing sharing, when a man of God is alive, but his anointing can be seen in his children. God said to Moses: Gather seventy men from Israel and I'll take the Spirit that is upon you, and I'll put it upon them [Numbers 11: 16-17]. Don't bear the

burden alone. They'll bear the burden with you. I see this in the life of the bishop. We also see the anointing going from Elijah to Elisha [2 Kings 2], an enhanced form of the anointing transfer [also called in Ghana "the double portion", since Elisha, the disciple, performed 32 miracles, whereas Elijah, the mentor, performed 16]. (...) Timothy was loyal to Paul and caught his anointing, so Paul could continue with his travels, his apostolic ministry, and Timothy would stay and pastor his church. That's the bond we're trying to build at this school, because the anointing comes when you show loyalty to the fathers.

As a fourth-year student, Joshua had already absorbed Anagkazo's anointing doctrine as his own, as shown by his ability to discern a pattern of sacred transmissibility in Biblical narrative that remains contemporary. This hermeneutics is irreducible to a secular opposition between literal and allegorical as two alternative ways of engaging with the meaning of Biblical texts. Rather, the work performed by homologies like Bishop Dag/students :: Moses/Joshua :: Elijah/Elisha :: Paul/Timothy is closer to what Hans Frei (1974) calls "figuration", the dominant regime of realist Bible hermeneutics in a pre-critical epoch. According to Frei, a Biblical figure is neither a metaphor nor an isolated event, but a historical event that anticipates another historical event by unveiling an immanent pattern of divine intervention in history. This process of weaving historical analogies refuses to submit the Word to the world and History as autonomous externalities. By establishing that it is God's *modus operandi* to *work through relations*, the chain of figurations evoked by Joshua authorizes the novelty of soaking in tapes as more archaic than any human tradition or invention. Those are not merely relations in general, as they are typified as spiritual kinship, thus folding back into the ideology and ethics of submission and loyalty that characterizes this bond in LCI and Anagkazo, already reconstituted in chapters three and four. As Joshua reminded me: "(...) the anointing comes when you show loyalty to the fathers".

The second and third points I would like to stress is that Anagkazo students' go through a pedagogy of listening that goes beyond the art of hearing God and learning how to "be led" by the *Spirit within*. This pedagogy predicates the felicity of the soaking in tapes in a normative disposition of the listeners. It also assists students on how to recognize the effects of this practice in themselves, as a learned pattern of apperception, self-recognition, and accountability. Reverend Hamish started a class about "The Power of Words" by quoting bishop Dag on the subject, presenting us to a local articulation of Pentecostalism's Spirit-filled and "centripetal" language ideology evoked by Coleman and Bialecki above:

In this section, I want to share about a channel of anointing that is not usually spoken of. It may sound new to you, but it is very real. (...) I am not presenting this as the only way that god can anoint you. I am sharing with you what I have received from the Lord. I am sharing with you what is Biblically and scripturally sound (...) I have shared about the importance of associating closely with the man of God in order to receive the anointing. Why do you have to associate with anointed men of God? What exactly do you acquire through association? As you closely associate with a man of God you will hear him speaking over and over. The words are what contain the anointing. When Elisha associated himself closely with Elijah he heard him speaking over and over again. "And it came to pass as they still went on, and talked" (2 Kings 2:11)

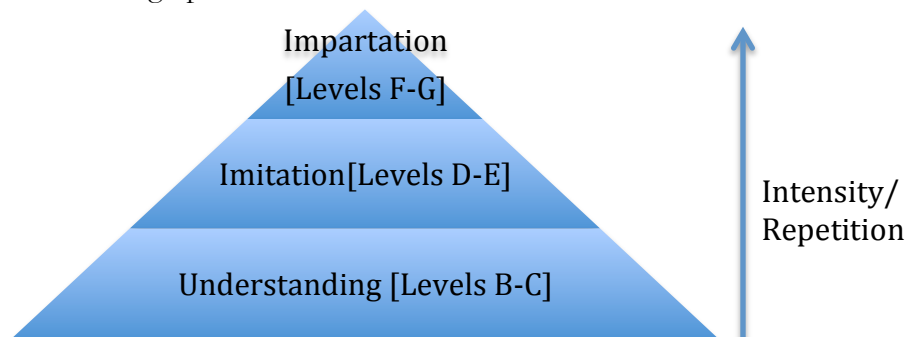
The instructor-animator then shifted to his own voice and stressed the importance of associating oneself with the right mentors for the purpose of Christian maturation, and described verbal exchanges as acts of "fellowship" whereby both knowledge and Spirit are transferred. "If you walk with the wise, you become wise. If you walk with the fool, you become foolish. That's biblical. It's in Proverbs 13:20". During the lecture, Rev. Hamish stressed that transmission through verbal "fellowship" is not exclusive to face-to-face interactions. "Reading a Christian book, that's a fellowship. Listening to sermons, that's a fellowship. Watching Christian videos, that's a fellowship. It makes you grow in the ministry. You have to be selective on what you're soaking in".

Akin to the organic motif of commensality (“eating Scriptures”) and the very notion of the anointing, the framing of receptivity as “soaking in” conveys a gradational notion of listening. It supposes a marked difference between listening distractively and listening with the aim and desire of incorporating both the message and the divine presence that suffuses it. Rev. Hamish clarified how religious listening as a practice includes depth and performativity as he drew in the blackboard the following scheme, entitled “Levels of Receptivity”:

Level A: The Word had no impact
Level B: The Word has an impact on you
Level C: You absorb the Word even further
Level D: You absorb the Word so much
Level E: You begin to learn how to preach and teach
Level F: You absorb the Word and at the same time begin to absorb the anointing and spirit in the message
Level G: At this level, the transfer of an entire ministry gift takes place

Whereas level A indicates a total lack of intelligibility, level B is a stage in which the message produces “excitement” and some degree of meaningful apprehension. Level C implies that the message has been listened repeatedly and understood, and yet, the receiver still cannot reproduce it, which differentiates it from Level D. In Level E, according to Rev. Hamish, the receiver “preaches and teaches in the same anointed manner”. To preach in the “same anointed manner” does not mean that one shares the anointing, but that the receiver is using her own mind to emulate the message, which is approved by the school, but is deemed still insufficient. Only in Level F, after a long exposure to the same message, the receiver is able not only to grasp the full meaning of the sermon and reproduce it mimetically, but also absorb the grace that animates it.

According to the model above, the intensity of the receiver’s self-exposure to the message organizes understanding, capacity to mime, and spiritual impartation into a single vector, one folding into the other, as I show in the graphic below:



More than an absolute gap, the divide between mental and spiritual absorption, learning the message and “catching” the anointing in it, is bridged by repetition, understood as a form of yielding to the *Spirit across* that flows through the words of the father. Only through this type of ear the anointing can be “caught”. As a result, one of the differences between bishop Dag’s epiphany and the method of soaking in tapes is that the efficacy of the latter is stretched in time, becoming a habit of spiritual consumption similar to Bible memorization, whose main effect is mimetism. Dixon described the effects of soaking in tapes as follows:

I think the first point is: you increase in knowledge with soaking in tapes. It's an obvious thing, even for seculars. You become the person you listen to. We grow up and become like our parents, because we've been under them, and we listened to them. A sort of spirit has been implanted in you, transferred to you. Whether it's good or bad, you become what you listen to consistently. There's a spiritual implantation, a spiritual transfer to you when you listen to these messages. Not only listening to the messages, but continually listening to it, over and over, and automatically it becomes part of you, and even in your speech, in the way you talk, you realize that you're saying the same things, walking the same way, using the same expressions. It's the Spirit of the House that is settling in you. You share the same thing he shares (...) We pray over these messages. We do that because it's not only about obtaining knowledge. As the Bible says: "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" [2 Co 2: 6].

Zigzagging between knowledge acquisitions ("letter") and impartation ("Spirit"), Dixon's description of soaking in tapes highlights one of its key functions in Anagkazo: the practice gives a denominational imprint to presence. One could claim that, during this exercise, students are "eating" and "digesting", i.e., incorporating bishop Dag's Biblical glosses but also his personal preaching style as a second nature, thus acquiring his likeness. A denominational seal emerges from the gray zone of agency in which a lack of distinction between presence and its transporting vessel, author and animator, reigns momentarily, as epitomized by Dixon's own terminology, "the Spirit of the house", an expression that implies the consubstantiation of leader, institution, and Spirit.

We realize that, whereas the analogies underpinning Biblical figuration typify soaking in tapes' structure of participant roles as one of spiritual kinship, they also imbue it with a sense of contiguity, contagion, metonymical identification, allowing the bond of discipleship to operate as a channel to a trans-personal and transnational flow of presence reaching the students through authorized tributaries: Kenneth Hagin → Dad Heward-Mills → Anagkazo students. By desiring the father's gifts while simultaneously praying to the giver, denominational markers that make Lighthouse Chapel not only a church among many, but also a particular and publicly recognized breed of charismatic Christianity, are reproduced as a ministerial *habitus* (Mauss 1978). This enabling power (Asad 1997) is embodied, incorporated, and replicated by the students as they yield to the anointing. Expressing the deep entanglement between desire and relationality mobilized by soaking in tapes, fourth-year Liberian student Henry described his personal prayers while soaking in the Spirit-filled words animated by the bishop as follows:

I also pray with my own words while soaking in messages. I declare: "God, God, I need your Spirit. May it not be that I'm just listening to this thing and obtaining knowledge. May I catch the Spirit behind what I'm listening. Let me plug in to the source, even if I'm using the plug". We're under the bishop, but we pray to the source, so the source should help you, allow you to tap in. I can see that I'm flowing like him [the bishop] now. I see that the anointing flows and I recognize it in other students too. They talk, they walk, they start thinking like the bishop, and we love that...we love him...

Corroborating the generative effects of grace-inheritance in his preaching, fourth-year student Ado, an Indian who converted to Lighthouse while studying medicine in Guyana declared:

Effects of the anointing? The preaching, of course. You just absorb everything: the jokes, the way he speaks, the way he moves in the pulpit, the relaxed attitude, all that. But apart from these, there's also the way of life, the way of thinking, the way of taking decisions, which has changed. His messages make holiness easy. It's practical Christianity.

We realize that the potentially contradictory impact of mimesis on charisma - a power often characterized by transparency, spontaneity, and immediacy - rarely comes to fruition, since students like Henry and Ado frame and account for the emerging similitudes between themselves and the bishop simply as an effect of impartation, a flowing together of those who knew how to something

neither of the parts actually owns. There is something reminiscent here of the place of mimesis in the method of learning glossolalia by “speaking out of faith” reconstructed above. In both, mimesis is both encouraged within the stream of practice and yet deemed underdetermined when it comes to accounting for the effects of the competencies it enables, divine agency coming fully to the fore. Moreover, both cases tend to frame mimesis as something that transcends a mere intellectual operation. To mime is to yield. In the case of soaking in tapes, it is to express a desire to receive the *Spirit across*, and tap into the flow of presence.

Notions of flow are ubiquitous in Pentecostal everyday talk in Ghana, being a central figure in LCI and Anagkazo’s ways of speaking. During my analysis of student services and preaching exams in chapter four I noted that good preaching is preaching that “flows”, whereas bad preaching cannot “flow”. This evaluative use of “flow” resonates with Richard Schechner’s definition of the terms in his theory of performance:

To go with the flow means not only to do what everyone else is doing, but to merge with whatever activity one is engaged in. Players in flow may be aware of their actions, but not of the awareness itself (...) Flow occurs when the player becomes one with the play. ‘The dance danced me’. At the same time, flow can be an extreme self-awareness where the player has total control over the play act. These two aspects of flow, apparently contrasting are essentially the same. In each case, the boundary between the interior psychological self and the performed activity dissolves (Schechner 2003: 97)

The capacity of flowing during/with a performance can be thought as an attribute of “skilled practitioners”, to remain with Tim Ingold’s (2000) vocabulary evoked in chapter four. It results from the organic synthesis between actor and practice enabled by an acquired competency, producing both an encompassing experience in which subject and practice fold into each other and a heightened sense of control displayed by those who think through a practice, thus leaving no gap for hesitation, as a jazz saxophonist thinks and improvises through his fingers. In this sense, preachers who cannot flow are those who transmit to their audiences a sensible dissociation between doer and deeds, a gap that can only be bridged in time through more habituation, self-correction, repetition, try and error. Anagkazo knows that and submits its students to an intense schedule of doctrinal and practical learning. But the school also never stops reminding its pupils, as they reminded myself, that it is “all because of the anointing”, which is in fact just another example of the anti-meritocratic vein of Pentecostal accountability: whenever you achieve, excel, surprise, that is exactly where the agency of the Spirit lies.

In chapter four I mentioned how Jonas had preached a very successful message on types of vessels and the pains of the process of “vessel change” during a student service. The school chaplain graded his performance highly in all criteria: mobility, title, relevance, changes in voice pitch, interesting windows, holding the microphone, etc. His peers also celebrated Jonas for his edifying message. A consensus was established: Jonas had “flown” extremely well. This led our conversation to the methods he used to prepare for the exam:

One of the things that helped me at this occasion was soaking in one of the bishop’s message on MP3 and watching it on video. I had heard the presiding bishop preaching it. I had heard a senior student, the former school prefect, also preaching it. I was soaking in this message during the whole month. So when I was preaching it, I literally saw myself operating under the anointing of the presiding bishop. The same! At some point even my footsteps virtually looked like his, if you look in the video. I felt like he was right there. Also, the school prefect, I think I got part of his authority in preaching. There was an authority... I don’t call it strength. There was an authority there that I had seen in the school prefect. The anointing was there.

Inspiration or transpiration? Miracle or learning? It is hard to pin down. First, as a senior student, Jonas had learned how to learn, how to perform, and how to account for the felicity of his performance. No longer lying on the surface of books and blackboards or in videos and MP3 files, the anointing doctrine, as well as the anointing itself, the holy substance, had been converted into a *habitus* and a mode of self-recognition. The Word (glossed by the spiritual father and the school instructors) had been made flesh (John 1: 14), one of its effects being Jonas' capacity to frame learning as yielding, and to read his successful mimetism of bishop Dag as an index of grace-inheritance. After all, he could have never done so well on his own might. The general disposition that underpins Jonas self-evaluation is a special own, and shows that, by precipitating a second-nature that is also a super-nature, soaking in tapes produces a tight and mutually supporting articulation in Anagkazo between the flow of presence and the flow of performance by means of a true spiritual lineage. Through flow and frame, Jonas "caught" the anointing of his spiritual father.

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I opened my analysis of Anagkazo's block of spiritual disciplines by evoking with pastor Asante how mature Pentecostals are able to discern a variety of modes of divine immanence and map them out to specific economies of affect. I argued that his descriptions were best understood as a set of potentialities, to which norms might be attached. It was exactly this shift from potentiality to norm that I was able to trace by getting familiarized with Anagkazo's spiritual routines, where students are led into the cultivation of methodic forms of dispossession and where the charismatic Self is seen reaching out and being affected by divine presence through prescribed practices and acquired biblical scripts. Soaking in tapes plays a key role in the process of normalizing Pentecostal experience (Droogers 1994) in Anagkazo, as it tempers the intimacy of the *Spirit within* and the ecstasy of the *Spirit upon* with a spiritual exercise that overlaps in an explicit manner divine presence and human relationality. In this sense, the *Spirit across* converts mystical experience in a form of communion, which in Anagkazo acquires clear denominational tones.

By saturating relations, the anointing represents a specific use of the saintly powers Simon Coleman (2009) attributes to Pentecostal men and women of God. Saints are always liminal beings. They connect transcendence and immanence and bridge this axial gap by operating as examples of the Christian life or intercessors, models to be emulated or advocates pleading to God for those unable to follow the path of sainthood. In Anagkazo's case, we find in the emic notion of transmission through "impartation" an interesting synthesis between ethical mimesis and intercessory grace, in which the man of God appears both as a model for the ministerial way of life and a preferable conduit to the flow of presence, someone who exercises his authority by delegating it miraculously to his disciples, oozing power out in a substantial form. Impartation is therefore the preferable miracle of apostolic power, the miracle of empowerment.

Conclusion - Tapping into the anointing: order, disorder, and the varieties of Pentecostalism in Ghana

The Bible is a narrative that starts with foundational order, tracing the emergence of the serpent of chaos and a variety of covenants trying to remediate this primal disconnection. This dissertation started from the middle, as an ethnographic incursion into how a more enduring sense of Christian futurity can thrive in an environment that has become unfavorable. Unfavorable not because bare and irresponsive to the Christian message, but in many ways because over-responsive. As argues Englund (2012: 16), the Pentecostal “explosion” in sub-Saharan Africa must be qualified in order to avoid homogenizing much more complex religious settings. In the case of Ghana, first because Pentecostal churches still represent only 28,3% of the overall population, although these numbers would be much greater if they included born-again and Spirit-filled Christians within the mainline churches. Second, despite the general crisis of the mission-originated churches, it is clear that Methodists, Presbyterians, and especially Catholics are still resilient and extremely influential in Ghana’s public sphere and civil society. And so is Islam, which has indeed grown in the past decade, representing today 17,6% of the population<sup>112</sup>.

More important to my present concerns is the fact that the impressive cumulative numbers used to portray Pentecostalism in Ghana belie great heterogeneity. I attempted to convey a sense of this heterogeneity in this dissertation's Introduction, presenting the reader to the local Pentecostal scene as it appears at first: an ungovernable religion, made of “mushrooming churches”, trickster-pastors, scandals, and accusation of fakery and involvement with “the occult”. The statistical success of this form of spirituality in Ghana notwithstanding, there is a general anxiety about the quality of the piety practiced (or not practiced but professed) by its vast numbers of followers. Personally interested in investigating methods of pastoral training when I first set foot in the field, my research topic sounded inappropriately utopian when contrasted to the erratic discourses about Pentecostalism available in the local public sphere. How are the most authoritative spokespersons of this spirituality, Pentecostal ministers, nurtured in such an uncanny setting? Religious pedagogy, as any other pedagogy, relies upon relatively stable forms of authoritative transmission (Asad 1993), as doctrinal frameworks, relations of apprenticeship (Lave 2011), emulation (Mahmood 2005), care (Foucault 2005, Klaitz 2010), and flourishing (MacIntyre 1999) able to convey the will of God with some degree of legitimacy. In this sense, my question risked being posed to an irresponsive object, indeed an object that might not even exist as such despite its flamboyant presence in the public sphere.

My analysis showed, however, that crises can be answered and managed without being fully dissipated, and that Pentecostal individuals and groups developed their own power strategies, models of authority, and relationality so that their faith can endure and reshape lives and contexts, thus also thriving qualitatively. A protean object as “Pentecostalism in Ghana” can hardly be represented exhaustively in a single academic text. It is important therefore to keep an adequate and ethnographically grounded balance between the shortcomings and achievements of this spirituality in terms of social productivity. Through the foregoing chapters, my analysis moved from a broad perspective to a more situated one, as my focus shifted from an impression of generalized confusion in the public sphere toward the normative clarity facilitated and closely monitored by well-organized ecclesiastic structures. The very existence of a church like Lighthouse Chapel International is a cogent proof of the enabling quality of the religious enthusiasm and entrepreneurship of Ghanaian

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<sup>112</sup> As shown by Larkin and Meyer (2006), reformist Islam and Pentecostalism have expanded in West Africa through competition but also ideological affinities, most importantly an emphasis on religiously informed critiques of local cultures, which have been displaced by global networks and normative lifestyles pointing East and West.



Pentecostals. I do not believe this organizational capacity is exclusive to mega-churches, although, the level of rationalization of the strategies used for building more enduring Pentecostal communities and institutions varies immensely. In what follows, I summarize key steps in my analysis and argument, highlighting my own contributions to the scholarship on global Pentecostalism in Africa.

### 1. Unveiling a problem-space: What is a Christian?

My focus on the resilient nature of Pentecostalism as a way of life converges with the overall tendency of the emerging sub-field of the Anthropology of Christianity (Bialecki, Haynes & Robbins 2008) to retain some sense of autonomy when it comes to the comparative analysis of global Christianity. This does not mean that these scholars understand Christianity as a discernible “sphere” of life, as in the secular and Weberian grammar of religious autonomy (Weber 1957: 323-362). They simply hesitate in subsuming this religious tradition within broader theories about the relationship between modernity and secularization, which reduce it to an epiphenomenon of social processes of a different order. Instead, they engage carefully with Christian truth claims, agencies, sensibilities, discourses, and practices--in sum, with the historicity of religion--before jumping to claims on a larger scale. The comparative results have been far from consensual, but they have successfully extended to Christian groups the ethnographic maxim of anthropological knowledge: to take “natives” seriously, sometime regardless of the anthropologist’ political and moral stance (Harding 1991), and eventually letting one’s own theoretical frameworks to be surprised by what comes out of the ethnographic encounter. This includes the problem of indigenizing Christianity in spite of native claims about discontinuity and Christian cosmopolitanism (Robbins 2007).

But it is telling that a fundamental problem recently popularized by the Anthropology of Christianity - that of the definition of anthropologists’ object of research (Robbins 2003) – is also one that Ghanaian Pentecostals have to reckon with in an almost daily manner. To be sure, this general blur of discernment affecting Pentecostal spirituality is definitely not a Ghanaian particularity (Jacobsen 2003, Gariot & O’Neill 2008)<sup>113</sup>. But this underlining skepticism has admittedly come to the fore more forcefully than the usual in contemporary Africa, where the success of Pentecostal Christianity has happened within and for many because of the moral and political space Mbembe (2001) calls “the postcolony”, characterized by a general crisis of legitimacy (Apter 2005) and sovereignty (Ferguson 2006), an epoch of West African history in which the imaginary and institutions of the secular nation-state have been unable to appeal to the bodies, minds, and souls of their citizens and subjects, especially the young. Charles Piot argues that in this context “(...) money has dried up, the state has pulled back from social and developmental fields”, providing charismatic churches and para-statal bodies like NGOs with positive conditions “to realize the everyday lives and imaginations of those in city and village” (2010: 5). In the case of Pentecostal-charismatic churches, the problem seems to be how to make of crisis an opportunity for advancing the promises of Christian discontinuity and futurity without ultimately being infected by the same predicaments of the present.

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<sup>113</sup> As I argued in my introduction, skepticism might even be legitimately taken as a problem that is endemic to Christianity in general as a religion of salvation, that is, a promise, always in some sense a step into the unknown, in which a certain dose of criticism (about others and about oneself) is required in order to avoid anticipating salvation, a decision that ultimately belongs to God’s sovereign grace and will. Taking to its ultimate implications, the problem of who is really a Christian belongs to the end of times, where we will all (believers and unbelievers alike) see the loving or terrible face of God, and when his divine plans will be finally “made public”. This does not mean that, as a promise, Christianity cannot be dwelt upon differently and with different levels of intensity and expectation.

Before tackling this question ethnographically, I argued that from a local Christian perspective, concerns about discernment, authority, and authenticity are not new. The history of Christianity in Ghana--discussed in chapter one--was explicitly concerned with the present, and the question of who was a Christian was addressed in the region by a variety of groups interested in advancing and giving a normative shape to Christian discontinuity, in dialogue with the encompassing socio-historical forces of their age. I started with the alliance between conversion and the norm of civilization partaken by the missionary and colonial projects. Although West Africa had played an important role in capitalist modernity since the slave trade, the 19<sup>th</sup> century represented a more explicit pedagogical engagement with modern ideology and teleology, which happened not at the expenses of lived Christianity, as in Europe, but by exploring in a explicit manner its elective affinities with the secular modern.

Webb Keane has argued that “the global spread of Christianity (...) was not just the inculcation of new religious doctrine but also, in many cases, the introduction of a new category of religion altogether” (2007: 84). This is also true to Ghana, as it is to most sub-Saharan Africa (Chidester 1996, Landau 1999), where “the encounter” cannot be reduced to the arrival of another force in a religious field, because this field was yet to be established. Nevertheless, the outcome of this process was not a clear definition of religion or Christianity, as stressed by Keane’s focus on the affinities between the Protestant “norm of sincerity” and the “moral narrative of modernity”. Keane argues that missionaries disseminated at the fringes of European modernity the Liberal grammar of public/private by encouraging the interiorization of the colonial and Christian subject. The true Self was hence to be found and recognized preferably in the inner realm, deemed ontologically irreducible to the public substances of tradition: conventionality and materiality. Conversely, I argued that what I find rather unique about post-colonial African societies like Ghana is how this introverted religion of inner states fashioned in Europe was transfigured into an “extroverted” religion, in a two-fold sense.

First, conversion meant adoption of a Christian norm in which materiality and the body played a central role. To become a Christian was not only to abandon a traditional past and engage with a quest for authentic inner truth. It was also to embrace a holistic lifestyle that included religious values, imaginaries, and piety side-by-side with new consumption desires, etiquette, language and ways of speaking, everyday habits and aesthetics, and technologies of production and knowledge, primarily reading and writing (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991, 1996, Bayart 2005). Second, once irreducible to authority structures, Christianity became explicitly predicated on the convert’s allegiance to institutional apparatuses in which the pedagogy of salvation and civilization was lodged and where its materialities were distributed and regulated. This process was observed more unambiguously in highly territorialized missionary assemblages as Christian towns, but persisted with the establishment of the colonial rule of law, when missionary influence became more capillary and centered not only in the church and its more conventional sub-ecclesiastical bodies (catechism, youth ministries, choirs and bands), but also in intuitions like the school, the hospital, and legal artifacts as “Christian marriage”.

It is clear that, instead of a recent development (Casanova 1994), Christianity’s status of “public religion” is at its very origin in a place like Ghana, as testified by the ubiquitous imprints left by the missionary factor in this country’s modern social-structure, ranging from civil society, politics and economy to education, health, kinship, and gender. The histories of modern Ghana and Christianity are intimately entwined, and it is unfeasible to conceive the first without the latter. The result of this encompassing secular-religious intervention was not exactly an adamant hegemony and the advance of a specific type of moral subject through ideological saturation. The links between the teleologies of salvation and civilization during the colonial epoch are best understood in terms of “resonance” (see Connolly 2008), that is, not autonomy, but also not causal determinacy, a tendency

that remained dominant at a post-independence moment. Christianity was not simply a tool for an imperialist conversion to modernity. First, because it never really had a univocal identity in Ghana, where it arrived already inflected by diverse theological emphases, institutional politics, and norms. Methodism, Pietism, and latter Catholicism and evangelicalism were themselves part of broader moral geographies pointing to different countries in Europe, America, the Black Atlantic, and to other colonial publics. Moreover, the alliance between salvation and civilization was pervaded by tensions and double-binds, which just increased once it became juxtaposed to other norms. Indirect rule was responsible for securing in time the ongoing separation between Islamic North and Christian South as well as a marked urban and rural divide (Mamdani 1996), whereas racial segregation imposed obvious hindrances to the assimilative logic of civilization. As a result, the everyday of colonial and missionary governance was marked by an ongoing administration of coevalness that simultaneously reclaimed sincerity, multiplied the material and institutional benefits of Christianity (thus potential “freed riders”), and eventually interrupted assimilatory processes with a strategic “not yet”, a process captured by Mbembe’s definition of the colonial power as “the power of the fake” (2010: 15).

In many ways, the inheritance of the colonial epoch to the post-colony was both a general incitement to define Christianity and make public its virtues and vices, authenticity and fakery, facade and secrets, closely followed by a certain inability to fully objectify such a porous object. More than a “religious field” (Bourdieu 1991), religion and Christianity itself became in Ghana what David Scott calls a post-colonial “problem space” or an “ensemble of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs” (Scott 2004: 3). As the origin of this problem-space, the missionary epoch reaches the present not as an essentialized “inheritance”, but rather as a set of riddles. In this sense, when I argued in chapters one and two that Christian discontinuity must be thought in a situated manner, I did not mean that this religious tradition has been “indigenized” by “Ghanaian culture”. Indeed, “culture” is itself an inheritance of this problem-space, one that gained centrality and political valence during the nationalist epoch. By pleading for situatedness, I meant that in order to flourish, Christian churches had and still have to establish who is a Christian by reckoning with a set of reiterating riddles that accompanied the expansion of the Christian spectrum during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, also entering the new millennium. The longevity of Ghana’s Christian problem-space should prevent us from reducing the vicissitudes of the present to a homogenous and recent phenomenon.

The relations between *African identity and Christianity* are among the haunting riddles I mentioned above. Although the question of the level of locality and universality of Christianity and the impact of conversion on previous identities is endemic to this religious tradition, it tends to find a more urgent expression in the extroverted religion crafted during the missionary and colonial epoch. It came out forcefully in Ghana’s public sphere during the period that preceded and followed political independence, when Christian discontinuity was critically detached from the European norm of civilization and allowed to resonate with other secular values in vogue, as autochthony and cultural authenticity. The resulting idea of “African Christianity” was ever ambiguous though. In the mainline churches, it varied from simply having a native clergy and administrative autonomy to liturgical innovations as Africanized worship and theologies of inculturation based on a pastoral image of the village as the cradle of African virtues. At a popular level, and engaging with the spirituality of the village in a more concrete manner, we saw the apex of the so-called Spiritual Churches. These churches resonated positively with the nationalist *Zetigeist* especially because they proved the organizational capacity of local Christian leaders and advanced a clear break with the missionary monopoly over Biblical hermeneutics. I therefore made sure to preserve a certain level of indiscernibility concerning the “African” or “syncretic” nature of innovations like Christian polygamy, food taboos, and these churches’ vast repertoire of liturgical objects, acknowledging that

the “oral prophetic culture” embodied by popular charismatic leaders ultimately sought to “Christianize African traditions yet more profoundly than the missionaries and their catechists had been able to do” (Ranger 2008: 6).

None of the trends above was particularly “local” considering that their norms were fashioned through an ongoing dialogue with the missionary model itself, pan-African and nationalist imaginaries stemming especially from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, and the Black Atlantic, as well as regional prophetic movements that had been in close contact with Baptist, evangelical, and Pentecostals doctrines circulating in the colonial public sphere. That was also the context in which classic Pentecostal churches emerged in early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and we have seen that pioneers like Peter Anim received the promises of faith healing and glossolalia first through print, but also through missionary support. Early revivalists obviously approved political independence, but passed the nationalist epoch much more concerned in expanding the Kingdom of God. They were joined by a variety of other evangelical and Pentecostal trends emphasizing personal salvation and a Holy Spirit-centered spirituality with a marked influence from global evangelistic networks with strong nodes in the U.S.A. I argued that especially in its Pentecostal-charismatic wave, churches and fellowships advanced a much more marked version of Christian discontinuity while simultaneously resonated with dominant values of the neoliberal epoch, as innovation and entrepreneurship. Homologous to the colonial epoch, conversion to Pentecostal-charismatic churches is often seen in Ghana as representing, among other things, a shift to a more “modern” church, where one can find the key to both piety and success, and an updated Christian norm concerning sexuality, gender, aesthetics, and family life. This explains the great receptivity of their message among the youth.

Pentecostalism is both a cultural critique and a critique of “culture”, which undermines the arbitrary link between content and expression often supposed by the most conventional use of this concept. In this sense, to be a born-again Christian is to be aware that one is inherently shaped, constituted, and even spiritually suffused by what one does, listens to, sees, touches, and relates to. For instance, to attend one of Ghana’s many traditional festivals is not to celebrate and express one’s ethnic identity, but to engage in an “unchristian” environment with both spiritual components (demonic practices like sacrifice, libation, and other “pagan” rituals) and moral flaws (drinking, courtship, improper music and dances). To dissociate private engagement from public expression is delusional, and to choose Christianity as a way of life produces tensions with other social roles: citizen of Ghana, member of an ethnic group (or “tribe”, in popular parlance), extended family, neighborhood, professional group, age group, etc.

The global nature of Africa’s new Christianity has received much scholarly analysis. Patrick Chabal (2009) deplors what he considers Pentecostalism’s individualist ethos, naïve internationalism, and promotion of a politically alienated logic of “self-improvement”: “Worthy as they may seem to the American churches that sponsor Pentecostalism, these priorities are disruptive of received notions of identity, reciprocity, and even nationality. In ways that are not always discernible today, they could pose a greater challenge to the African polity than is presently envisaged” (Chabal 2009: 5). Apprehensive comments like this not only overstate the actual influence of these churches but also ignore the complexity of born-again globalism on the ground. First, at least in Ghana, the absolute majority of the Pentecostal-charismatic churches are self-financed, although they are quite explicit about their admiration for and learning from foreign “men of god”, who are not only from America. Second, recall that this “internationalism” is a Christian one, and can be seen directing its criticism to secular modern culture, including the God-less success and entrepreneurship of the West. Third, by undermining ethnic identities, Pentecostal churches do contribute in their own ways to the establishment of a national imagined community. Although “the village” appears most often in these church leaders’ messages as the epitome of Africa’s backwardness, almost all charismatic church congregations pray for Ghana and national unity, most

of them warn against electoral violence and “tribalism”, though they do not support candidates explicitly, and a few of them—including small popular churches—preach critically about national politics.

My impression is that Pentecostal globality tends to reinforce an urbanized, non-ethnic, and, in the case of mega-churches, Anglophone national identity, which does not mean that they are simply alienated from locality. To embrace a “post-national religious identity” (Marshall-Fratani 1998: 310) is not synonymous with discharging other forms of belonging. Nevertheless, I do agree that the problem of where to draw the line between the born-again way of life and other social roles is one of the forces producing inner heterogeneity in the Pentecostal norm in Ghana, and the sedimentation of the first might affect one’s capacity or desire to coordinate Christianity with inherited social markers. Some might interact normally with their fetish priestess mother living in the village or would attend a village festival, albeit keeping a critical distance from some of its aspects. Others would simply disconnect themselves entirely from pre-conversion bonds and practices. Some would watch, listen and appreciate secular movies or songs whose content is edifying and morally proper, others would simply get themselves immersed exclusively in Christian media.

Closely related to the issue above is another riddle of this Christian problem-space, one best analyzed in its historical depth by Birgit Meyer (1999): *the position of the Christian person vis-à-vis the realm of spiritual agencies and powers*. Meyer shows how missionaries questioned the reality of African spirits as fruits of “superstitious” minds and eventually of “primitive religion”, also attacking their moral influence as demonic. Nationalist church elites countered the first trend by symbolizing spiritual agents and culturalizing “African Traditional Religion”, thus approaching the world of spirits as part of a set of positive values detachable from “paganism” and translatable into Christianity. African reformers supplemented the vacuum left by their own critique of the European instrumentalization and enculturation of Christianity in Africa with a positive engagement with the African past, willing to make of African Christianity both legitimately autochthonous and authentically Christian. Conversely, Spiritual Churches were prone to corroborate demonization and respond to the problem of evil effectively, through prayer, protection, spiritual healing, and fertility. Demands for Christian intercession were indeed heightened and rendered ungovernable by colonial modernity. The colonial economy intensified and expanded the reach of predatory spiritual agents as witches, and by undermining the authority of traditional priests, the colonial rule of law incited a highly deregulated dissemination of anti-witchcraft shrines as *Tigare*.

The emphasis on effective spiritual power initiated by prophetic movements, Spiritual Churches, and classic Pentecostals was continued and indeed expanded by Pentecostal-charismatics, which introduced in Ghana the systematic theodicy known as “spiritual battle theology”. This highly dualist moral and spiritual economy enchants the everyday by embracing a Pauline eschatological framework that assumes the Christian person is submerged in an ongoing struggle against “principalities and powers”<sup>114</sup> (Caird 2003). The spiritual battle theology is indeed one of the key weapons of Pentecostal cultural critique and critique of “culture” in the Global South, enchanting life with affective forces of good and evil. Meyer has called attention to the variety of tensions Pentecostal demonology introduces in Christian discontinuity, since it “provides a bridge over which it is possible to move back and forth and thereby to thematise modernity’s ambivalences” (Meyer 1999: 215).

Although I disagreed in chapter two with Meyer’s sharp opposition between missionary evil as interiorizing sin and Pentecostal evil as public defilement, I believe she is accurate in recognizing the destabilizing effects of demonology on how Christianity defines and defends its borders. First,

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<sup>114</sup> “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*” (Ephesians 6: 12, KJB)



demonology is probably the major source of uncertainty concerning proper doctrine in Ghana, since demons operate as hinges connecting the Bible to local traditions. Although most Ghanaian pastors claim that their theological references when it comes to “deliverance” from evil spirits are global preachers, the list of demonic entities never stops growing, which can include more generalized entities, as the “Spirit of death” and the “Spirit of poverty”, side-by-side with highly situated and territorialized agents like *Mami Water*, Krobo stool spirits, witches and wizards from the villages, and ancestral curses being transmitted through the extended family. Ritual procedures addressing these demons vary, and have included a set of material mediators (candles, holy water, colored oils, etc.) previously used by Spiritual Churches. Nigerian ministers are considered the greatest experts on this subject, but also are seen by Ghanaians with heightened suspicion. Second, the over-spiritualization of traditional and secular life has produced great disagreement when it comes to establish the degree of influence that demons might have on a Christian person. Can demons possess a born-again, Spirit-filled Christian or is possession a sign that the person has never really become born-again? Most churches today would accept that demons might attack but not possess Christians, since they are filled with the Spirit. But how are these attacks performed? Are they only through inner voices, sexual dreams, or worldly seductions and temptations or they can find more material supports, like polluted foods, clothes, handshakes, and demonic songs and videos infecting God’s bodily temple? By providing divergent answers to these fundamental questions, Pentecostal churches endow their spirituality with different degrees of agonism.

Whereas some pastors and especially prophets clearly capitalize on their flock’s fear of the devil, eventually to the point of feeding personal conflicts in order to ascertain their own intercessory powers, others prefer to focus on the loving and protective influence of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Most of them stand in the middle, and try to coordinate some level of agonism with conviction about spiritual rebirth, praying for protection and using the “armor of God” against principalities and powers while still encouraging personal piety. The result is a notion of good and evil that combines closely holiness and purity, sin and defilement. As I mentioned before, “deliverance ministries” specialized in casting out demons have become less and less popular in Ghana. Nevertheless, the problem of how to conceive the reach and depth of demonic agency in the Christian life can still make Ghanaian Pentecostals expose the fragility of their common identity and look to each other as strangers.

Another closely related riddle of Ghana’s Christian problem-space is *how to coordinate Christianity as “another life” (salvation), a “life other” (ethics) (Foucault 2009), and a better life (material progress)*. Since its missionary and colonial inceptions, Christianity has been a harbor where local converts sought eternal life and moral guidance side-by-side with social mobility, prosperity, and in some cases, even survival. The mission churches have been focal points that in some stages exceeded and therefore prefigured the colonial state in terms of control and distribution of resources. Their direct fruits, the mainline churches, are still actively involved in education, health, development projects and social welfare. Even the much more modest Spiritual Churches as Musama opened schools and clinics, most of them never recognized by the colonial state. The boundaries between compassion as a virtue and pure proselytism are hard to draw, and in fact this is not a major problem to most Christian actors, including international evangelical NGOs thriving in neoliberal Africa (Bornstein 2005). I understand that the main challenge to the Christian norm in this circumstances is not necessarily how to defend the autonomy of their religion from scarcity by producing a marked gap between the world of freedom, values, faith, and imagination and the world of necessity, but how to refashion paralyzing forms of deprivation into what MacIntyre (1999) calls vulnerability, that is, a disability that is not a dead-end, but a universal condition for ethical, religious, and spiritual transformation.

The Pentecostal presence in Ghana’s civil society can be seen in the fields of health,

education (especially tertiary), development, and welfare, but they cannot match the mainline churches here. Their most evident answer to neoliberal scarcity/vulnerability has been the so-called prosperity theology, which is probably the greatest black hole on the vast scholarship on this religious movement. Comaroff and Comaroff (2000) are adamant in claiming that this doctrine is where “Pentecostalism *meets* neoliberal enterprise” (my emphasis, 314). They oppose Pentecostalism to any Weberian concern with labor discipline and rationalization of expenditure, interpreting prosperity theology as a spiritualization of consumerism. Meyer (2012) elaborates on a similar diagnostic when she claims that:

Consumer items, as the prosperity gospel also stipulates, are an inalienable part of it [“Pentecostal cosmology”]. Commodities and gifts are far from bad per se, because their positive or negative nature entirely depends on the spirit that is supposed to be behind them. On principle, anything can be imbued with the Holy Spirit, and thus be a blessing in a born-again’s life. That is what accounts for the close connection between the spread of capitalism, consumerism, and the appeal of the prosperity gospel. Pentecostalism *embeds* neoliberal economics (my emphasis, 156).

By focusing on how Pentecostalism unleashes and capitalizes upon consumption desires, the authors above show that flamboyant narratives about Christian discontinuity can hide a deeper and almost causal continuity with the spirit of the age. However, it is important to note that their analytical engagement with prosperity theology is mostly at the level of the pulpit and the public sphere (see also Gifford 2004), shedding almost no light on how this ideology is received and applied in the everyday of followers. Conversely, Maxwell’s (1998) research on the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God present us to a more situated analysis, centered on local appropriations of international prosperity theology tools like the “doctrine of talents” and “the Spirit of poverty”. Maxwell describes how this denomination releases and develops their congregant’s talents at the level of church work, and facilitates among them the development of “penny capitalism,” or small-scale entrepreneurialism. Maxwell sees no need to oppose labor ethics, discipline, and consumption desires, also calling attention to the economic dimension of Christian networking, which can enrich both churches, through tithes and sacrificial giving, and followers. Similarly, Haynes (2013) explores how a Pentecostal church in Zambia facilitates networks of reciprocity among congregants, leading her analysis to investigate the “subtle interplay of sacrificial gifts to God and socially productive gifts to men as means of both creating and protecting prosperity (93).

I understand that such heterogeneous views of prosperity theology are not simply reducible to methodological matters, that is, to divergent conceptual emphasis on consumption and the miraculous promises of “breakthrough” at the public sphere, labor in church and market, or informal networks of exchange. Although I did not focus my research in this topic, I could testify that in Ghana all these options are in some degree or the other true and their variability lies at the core of normative disputes about proper use of these doctrines. Ultimately, much of this disagreement testifies to how the social productivity of faith-based economic (empty promises or deeper life renewal?) tends to be predicated on a final riddle of the Christian problem-space: *the relations among congregants, and between them, Christian leaders, and institutions.*

As I argued, a basic trait of the extroverted Christianity introduced by missionaries and colonialist was a close equation between conversion and affiliation, thus not only disaffiliation from tradition. Christian denominations in Ghana have always been nodal points of allegiance providing new criteria for membership and sociality, whose relation to inherited social markers, as ethnicity and kinship, were ever complex, displaying moments of indirect complementarity and conflict. I showed how during colonial times Christian membership was often addressed by epithets that stressed either the geopolitical particularities of denominations, as “the English” (Methodists), “the Germans” (Baselers), “the Romans” (Catholics), or a more general Christian identity of “school



people”. At these churches’ institutional apparatuses converts found learning, economic networks, the basis for a public sphere, marriage, entertainment, a place to die, and Christian norms with their own specificities. Moreover, the new institutions and forms of publicity introduced by missionaries worked as mediators between the processes of shaping a local civil society and the process of state formation in the colonial and post-colonial ages. Acting as strategic hinges between equally emergent state and society, Christian churches had to deal over and over again with secular political agents attempting to encroach, draw upon, or borrow their legitimacy, both through a shared concern with civilization, nationalism, development, and the moral edification of society or through explicit strategies of cooptation. The line between resonance and mere appropriation shifted in time.

Though less influential and more fragmented, Spiritual Churches developed their own strategies of community- and institution-building. Prophetic authority was used to reclaim from missionaries the task of defining Christianity and consequently enable them to develop new ecclesiological models. Most of these were hybrid associations that drew inspiration from traditional kinship and chieftaincy systems as well as the mission churches, adopting Methodist “circuits” systems and even Christian towns, as exemplified by Musama’s sacred city of Mazano. Charismatic leadership was central, helping making sense of why many of these churches were vibrant during their leader’s lives, but disappeared with them through either slow deterioration or immediate schisms. Succession and the possibility of disengaging office from office holder, the institution from the leader’s idiosyncratic influence, were major issues. The lack of a more solid institutional basis also explained how the Spiritual Churches became more prone to engage in strategies of “religious concubinage” (Mbembe 1988: 32, Bayart 1989) with post-colonial authoritarian regimes, thus submitting their ecclesiastical structures and prophetic discourses to projects of state hegemony.

When it comes to various breeds of Pentecostalism in Ghana, we have a sheer explosion of institutional and associational models, some of them transcending conventional church models. Small charismatic ministries can be extremely personalized and leader-centered, similar to the Spiritual Churches, whereas mega-churches display a large institutional baggage akin to mainline churches. A classic Pentecostal church like the Church of Pentecost, for example, has survived the death of Apostle Amin, and even thrived, having achieved since his passing the status of second largest Christian denomination of Ghana, with more than two million members and sixteen thousand branches worldwide<sup>115</sup>. More importantly, the evangelical focus on personal salvation has produced a structural shift on the very terms of the relation between members, leaders, and institutions. Whereas members of the mainline churches are more likely to answer “Presbyterian”, “Methodist” or “Catholic” whenever asked about their religion belonging, most bon-again Christians in Ghana would point to a non-denominational identity: “charismatic” or “Pentecostal”. Christian fellowships were the privileged grounds for the emergence of this non-denominational identity. Their reticular and informal logic is still highly institutionalized in terms of format, and can be attached to other religious institutions, as the mainline churches, and also to secular spaces. Taking the heightened fragility and porosity of the post-colonial state as an opportunity for growth, fellowships like Scripture Union have been able to infiltrate Ghana’s public schools at ease, eventually being even commended by the secular state for their edifying moral role among the youth.

Another important effect of this non-denominational identity was the legitimation of a type of consumer of religious media and discourses who is unconcerned with denominational allegiances. This deregulation of religious consumption developed in close mutuality with the deterritorialization of charismatic discourse through mediatization since the end of the 1980s. Birgit Meyer (2004b, 2010, 2011, 2012) has developed the most refined analysis of this process, arguing that Pentecostalism in

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<sup>115</sup> See their website at <http://thecophq.org>.

Ghana is best understood today as a “public”, a deterritorialized community of feeling shaped through a shared engagement with a “sensorial formation” or “sensational forms”, a contemporary type of religious material culture intrinsically bound to media. This argument is followed by a plea to reconsider Pentecostal associations beyond a more conventional model of the church:

Congregating around the iconized image of the pastor, spectators form part of a new kind of community that is quite different from the congregational model that still organizes social relations among practitioners and church leaders in historic churches. The new kind of community excels by the marked contrast between the utmost control that the church leadership wields over the carefully designed images of the pastor-star and his ideal congregation, and its actual lack of control over the mass audience that attends services or watches the televised program (Meyer 2012: 163).

Although Meyer recognizes that sensational forms are “authorized modes for invoking and organizing access to the transcendental that shape both religious content (beliefs, doctrines, sets of symbols) and norms” (2011: 751), the religious media-mediation argument tends to stress how the regulatory control of denominations over their mediatic artifacts and messages unfolds exclusively at the level of production, for instance, by “formatting charisma” through edition (DeWitte 2008: 85-124). At the level of reception, normativity seems to fade as part of highly performative and individualized religious assemblages that rescind from durable institutional allegiances<sup>116</sup>. Not by chance, this deterritorialized ecclesia is prone to let Pentecostal spirituality and ethics decay into a “Pentecostalite” aesthetics (Meyer 2004b). This begs the question: Where lies the authority of these sensorial formations and the norms they convey? Meyer assumes accurately that those norms should be found *in media res* (in the midst of things), but I would question whether they are to be found only in mediatic artifacts.

Scholars interested in retaining the relevance of more conventional ecclesiastical institutions to African Pentecostalism have varied immensely in their evaluations. As I argued before, Paul Gifford (2004) characterizes charismatic churches as entirely centered on their leader’s enchanting influence. They “have absolutely nothing except the pastor’s vision” (188) and “operate on neo-patrimonial or patronage rather than accountable bureaucratic lines, encouraging the emergence of ‘Big Man’ rather than empowering the ranks” (197). What an astonishing difference from Charles Piot’s (2010) assessment. Dealing with a contemporary Togo marked by a deep economic crisis and an authoritarian political culture, Piot portrays charismatic churches as a true beacon of sociality, offering to converts “a type of total institution or total culture which stands in for the family in otherwise anomic urban conditions” (54). They are “proxies for the family, regulating marriage, encouraging believers to marry within the church and insisting on premarital chastity” (55). He describes these encompassing organizational structures as anti-authoritarian, “horizontal and networked (and that thus stands as a critique of centralizing state projects)”, expressing “a worldview that is utopian and world-transforming” (75).

A variety of other authors corroborate Piot’s point of view. They tend to highlight that Pentecostalism has grown in sub-Saharan Africa by resonating not only with the Spirit of neoliberalism, but also with the last wave of redemocratization rising in the continent during the 1980s and 1990s (Martin 2002, Ranger 2008). A comparison with the mainline churches is enlightening in this regard. In Ghana, Presbyterian, Methodists, and especially Catholics played a

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<sup>116</sup> In this sense, the Pentecostal ecclesia cannot be captured by Durkheim’s well-bounded notion of *socius* although it still gives a marked importance to “ritual effervescence”: “Certainly this is a community of a new kind, unlike the ordered congregational structures that characterize historical mission churches, yet nonetheless binding believers via shared sensational forms that generate - reminiscent of Émile Durkheim’s analysis of the effects of participation in religious rituals - feelings of effervescence” (Meyer 2011: 758).

crucial political role during this country's authoritarian age. They were outspoken defenders of the autonomy of the church, democracy, and human rights, latter turning their focus to development. But they always preserved solid hierarchical structures when it came to their "domestic" church politics and ecclesiology. Conversely, charismatic leaders are in their majority "spiritually-minded". They "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (9 Mark 12: 17), meaning that they encourage voting, discourage bribery, and pray for Ghana and the government in office, but avoid mingling in political matters further than this. Their moral agenda is markedly conservative for Western eyes. But they convey these positions through a much more vocal ethics of conviction<sup>117</sup>. I did argue that deliberation and critique are most often welcomed among Pentecostals, but their validity is very diminished when it comes to the ultimate authority of Biblical truths and commands. For charismatics, "God is not a democrat" (Marshall 1995). But this "authoritarian" and depoliticized moral framework unfolds through organizations that have a strong democratic potentiality, in the sense that they might encourage members' active participation in organizations that provide them with greater leeway for individual agency and empowerment, an opportunity found much more rarely in the secular sectors of Ghana's civil society<sup>118</sup>.

I say "might" because Gifford's reading can be correct in some cases, although his view is definitely not generalizable to every Pentecostal church, fellowship or public. Similarly to prosperity theology, I rather take the variety of views above as a reflex of the potentialities of Pentecostalism as a ubiquitous and porous object in Ghana, and not as excluding options. Asamoah-Gyadu recognizes in Ghana's charismatic movement a "democratization of charisma" (2005: 96-131) comparable to the Second Great Awakening in America (Hatch 1989). But he also claims that spiritual intercession and the personal charisma of leaders might lead to a highly hierarchical form of spiritual dependence, similar to the one that led to the demise and demystification of the Spiritual Churches a few decades ago (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005: 64-95). Moreover, unbridled enthusiasm has produced a plurality of church schisms and an unregulated form of religious entrepreneurship unable to leave stronger institutional and associational marks. Finally, as I argued in chapter two, these churches have grown by absorbing almost in a Catholic manner a great variety of levels of personal commitment and heterogeneous degrees of participation in their institutional apparatus. In sum, the problem of intuitions and how to assert the legitimacy and necessity of church life for a convert's individual Christian life has itself victimized charismatic churches, as it did to the first mission-stations.

In order to inhabit Ghana's Christian problem-space and craft authoritative models and norms for what is a Christian, Pentecostal leaders and associations have to reckon with a series of riddles I reconstructed above: the relation between African identity and Christian globality, the position of the Christian person vis-à-vis the spiritual realm (including the Holy Spirit), how to convert deprivation into vulnerability, and how to build and manage Christian institutions and use them as spaces for mutual flourishing. The result is a wide variety of Christian assemblages with different levels of stability, reach, and styles. Their differences might be seen as complementary, as shown by popular theological notions that emphasize division of church labor and interdependence,

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<sup>117</sup> Although this incisive ethos might eventually unsettle a pluralistic order like Ghana, the normal religious environment in the country is surprisingly peaceful, maybe a sign of the Christian hegemony or a conveniently tolerant compartmentalization of the country between a Muslim North and a Christian South, with African Traditional Religions remaining often silent.

<sup>118</sup> According to Martin: "(...) the broad background is the weakness of the African state, vast indebtedness, and corrupt clientelism, which means that churches become the main mediating institutions, and Christians appeals count as major arbiters of political legitimacy. Churches become alternative communities wielding power through non-governmental organization, and Pentecostals may sometimes act as alternative oppositions, picking up sentiments of the excluded (2002: 134).

as the “five-fold ministry”, which encodes inner difference as a desirable “diversity”. But various situated articulations of Pentecostalism might also become inimical to each other, and not only in the sense of rivals in a competitive religious market, but as divergent Pentecostal norms (Dasawani 2013). In the latter case, celebrated “diversity” can easily transform into accusations of heresy. In order to trace the varieties of Pentecostalism in Ghana from the perspective of its social productivity, I shifted my focus from history to ethnography, and examined the problem of conversion from the emic perspective of spiritual maturation.

## 2. Reassembling the ecclesia: retracing the path of spiritual maturation

Spiritual maturation provided me with an alternative entrance to the problem of Christian conversion and temporal discontinuity in the post-colony, which I started developing in chapter two. I believe this approach is more sensitive to everyday practice and able to acknowledge the imposing riddles mentioned above without either culturalizing Ghana’s Pentecostalism as uniquely “Ghanaian” or simply dwelling in the subject of crisis. Spiritual maturation or growth is not a single concept. As my analysis unfolded, it rapidly stretched into a much broader lexicon pointing to a relatively systematic religious grammar. By tracing the concrete articulation of these terms I was able to reach a series of conclusions that helped me to advance this dissertation primarily as an inquiry into specific strategies of authoritative transmission of Pentecostalism in Ghana.

First, maturation indicates that conversion or spiritual rebirth is an event enabled by God’s sovereign grace, but also a competency that must be acquired, learned, and achieved individually as a process. This dialectic of grace and growth is best understood through the common definition of recent converts as both “born-again” and “spiritual babies”. I argued that maturation could be thought as the process of precipitating the event of conversion retrospectively. According to this logic, conversion should never be simply assumed in its face value, even at the risk of falling into the sin of self-righteousness. Some degree of skepticism is salutary, since salvation can be lost, but also regained by “recommitting” one’s life to Christ. Nonetheless, by maturing in the faith and abandoning the state of spiritual infancy, converts achieve greater conviction about their spiritual rebirth. This perspective reshaped my understanding of the more ritualized markers of conversion, as the sinner’s prayer, and consequently of Christian natality itself. I showed that formulaic evangelistic utterances like “I accept Jesus as Lord and personal savior” are best understood as promises. Those are a specific type of illocutionary speech acts John Austin calls “commissives” (1975: 151-64), which are found explicitly in first-person uses of verbs like “promise”, “pledge”, “intend”, “vow”, etc.<sup>119</sup> In order to be felicitous, commissives require that performers sincerely pledge themselves in/through their words, but also commit themselves to change their course of action. In the case of the sinner’s prayer, it means that the subject who utters these commissives will not be the same who fulfills them, since through this confession of faith one is basically promising to become someone else. The temporality of commissives is always one of expectation and their authenticity lies in a future that is prefigured but not achieved through the originating speech act. Similar to the evangelist’s anticipatory utterances like “You are saved”, the sinner’s prayer marks an event by simultaneously producing a pregnant expectation, a potentiality.

Second, by transcending sincerity, the promises that are reciprocated with God during ritual conversion – salvation/submission – tend to make the break with the past irreducible to the adoption of a new language (Harding 2001), thus pointing to a more encompassing process of “realignment of rupture” (Engelke 2010). In fact, when my interlocutors articulated the lexicon of

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<sup>119</sup> Other types of illocutionary speech acts besides commissives are verdictives, exercitives, behabitives, and expositives (Austin 1975: 151-64).

spiritual maturation they were rendering it almost synonym to this process of realignment, which includes adopting new narrative frameworks but also new regimes of habituation endowed with generative or autopoietic powers (Asad 1993, Mahmood, 2005, Hirschkind 2006, Faubion 2010). The result is a born-again ecclesia with a distinctive design. Its borders are built upon an event-like opposition between Christian/non-Christian, spiritually dead/spiritually alive, unbelievers/believers, whereas its interior is conceived as a spectrum of levels of maturation acquired during a totality of one's "conversion career" (Gooren 2010), going from "spiritual babies" to "men" and "women of God". The process of maturation makes room to a true grammar of organic intensities. Reading the Bible becomes "feeding in the Word". Holding prayer as a habit means becoming "stronger" in prayer. Even speaking in tongues can mature, and develop into more complex and diversified sound patterns. One can "sharpen" spiritual gifts like prophecy, healing, or deliverance through try and error. This logic displaces dualist notions like "belief"/"non-belief" and gives preference to "faith" or "zeal", human forces that combine expectation, submission, and desire for God, thus transcending a religious truth regime conceived as a mental assent to a set of true propositions. Common to this terminology is the possibility of intensifying one's relation to truth, that is, the possibility of expecting, submitting, and desiring less or more. With Evangelist Daniel's case in chapter two, we saw clearly how Christian maturation is a form of empowerment. By "feeding in the Word", becoming "stronger in prayer", and "fuller with the Spirit", he was countering the predatory agencies of a past he considers demonic and ever present. In sum, through new regimes of habituation, Daniel was maturing and becoming convicted. He was establishing retrospectively his break with the past through holiness and purity, thus through an ever-agonistic style of Pentecostal piety that is still distinctively Christian.

Third, I argued that spiritual maturation requires adding to the generativity of religious practices the autopoiesis of relations (Carsten 2000, 2004, Faubion 2001b, Faubion and Hamilton 2007). A remarkably common trace of the conversion narratives I collected in Ghana was the tendency to point to somebody who "led" you to Christ, and "followed up" on you conversion. This habit legitimizes a notion of conversion conceived as a twofold process of adopting Christianity and being adopted by Christian networks. It is articulated in practice by what can be interpreted as a whole subfield of the born-again grammar of Christian natality and maturation: the lexicon of spiritual kinship. Spiritual kinship recasts the born-again ecclesia in various ways, each of them endowed with its own politics. It may express the non-denominational identity of born-again Christians as part of an equalitarian "family in Christ" that trespasses national frontiers. Membership here implies a mutual siblinghood produced by a shared submission to Christ, the father of all. But spiritual kinship might also indicate denominational allegiances as the "ICGC family" or "Lighthouse family", thus a shared siblinghood that is institutionally bound. In this case, Christ's parental position is accessed through the pastoral influence of his denominational proxy, the man of God, who is also a spiritual father. Moreover, as part of the everyday of Christian communities, spiritual kinship assumes a capillary design that might also overflow denominational allegiances, suffusing fellowships and more informal interactions with a dynamic that combines horizontal and equalitarian belonging to the ecclesia with vertical and hierarchical bonds of Christian discipleship with ministers and lay leaders.

Whereas spiritual kinship has appeared in other scholarly works on Pentecostalism in Africa with an emphasis on community making in terms of trust (Englund 2007, 2012) and mutual care (Klaits 2010), I approached it here preferably as a relational component of Pentecostal pedagogy, a set of relations deemed fundamentally Christian and concerned with the transmission of religious capacities. I believe spiritual kinship provides a privileged access to how Pentecostalism can originate what MacIntyre (1999) calls communities of flourishing, networks where practices whose goods are intrinsic to their performance are acquired. In the case of Pentecostalism, communities of

flourishing produce a specific type of bond: pedagogical allegiances. In this sense, spiritual kinship undermines the opposition between Christian discontinuity and relationality through the typification of relations of discipleship as legitimately Biblical, meaning that in order to effectively convert, one must also convert relations, and not only to abandon them.

Fourth, bonds of spiritual kinship are extremely versatile and modular, hence hard to pin down. They are accumulative, and one can grow in the faith by following and submitting to a variety of spiritual parents. In this sense, spiritual kinship's logic of emulation, transmission, and care is both a source of normativity and a stage where the allegiances of converts are disputed, especially within a breed of Christianity that emphasizes non-denominationalism. As a result, spiritual kinship can be attached to a variety of other contexts and assemblages, even highly deterritorialized ones as the public sphere. The fact that spiritual kinship might encode both face-to-face and at a distance relations with more or totally inaccessible "men of god" from Ghana and abroad has important implications for charismatic pedagogy, since spiritual growth may be nurtured through print and audio-visual media. I argued that a few of my interlocutors occasionally disentangled those two varieties, the territorialized instructor being designated as a spiritual father or mother, whereas the mediatic reference was addressed as a mentor. Central Bible College student Emmanuel exemplified this trend while comparing his spiritual father to the his mentor Mensah Otobil, ICGC's founder and leader:

If the person shares the Word of God with you frequently, or if this person teaches you how to pray and prays with you and for you, sometimes over the phone. If this person teaches you about Christ and how to grow in Christ, we call him spiritual father. That's the model I look up to during my spiritual growth. I can say Dr. Otobil is my mentor, because I don't have a lot of interactions with him, just during sermons and through his videos and books, and that helps me a lot, but the person who you interact always, the one who knows you very well, and you also know him very well, that's what I call a spiritual father. But maybe another people have a different version of it. Somebody might see our general overseer [Otobil] as a spiritual father, I see him as a mentor.

Emmanuel preferred to build a sharper distinction between the intimacy of the spiritual kinship bond and the relative distance between the mega-church preacher and his flock or audience. In most of my interviews though, this line was interestingly blurred, and the consumption of media artifacts produced by intuitively distant "men of god" was described through a highly personal and affect-ridden language infused by images of love, care, and thankfulness. In sum, spiritual kinship can personalize and embed media consumption, also making it more regular and marked by a more enduring albeit still unilateral allegiance. The public sphere might itself become a space of nurturance, although it is rarely admitted that media can substitute personal mentorship and more situated interactions with a spiritual parent.

Spiritual kinship might also be attached even to primary associations as the biological family. Rev. Ofori, from Fourth Square Gospel Church, and a specialist in marriage counseling with a popular radio program in Accra, exemplified this case. During one of our conversations, he told me about his "family altar", something he encourages his flock and audience to emulate:

When you wake up in the morning, you must be able to gather yourself, your wife and the family and worship the Lord. You are teaching them how to sacrifice to serve god, because waking up at 4:30, 5:00 in the morning can be very hard. They have to do it, force it, stand for it. Even if they don't absorb all, because they are feeling sleepy, it's a culture that they are learning. That is also a form of letting your children know that God is the source of everything, the leader of the house. When there is trouble, they should go to God. You're training your children to know the Bible on their own. You're teaching them how to pray. If they're already 5, 6, 7, you may ask them to participate actively: Can you pray for us? Can you read or quote this passage? Can you break it down and explain? Give



examples of how to apply it? Can you lead praise today? In my case, I learned how to read through the Bible, so that's really my language. It's good to be "soaked" in Biblical understanding for a long time. That's what I call a family altar.

As we may have expected, a "family altar" is not a sacred space or a gathering of objects, but a relatively standardized sequence of practices akin to those performed by most fellowships. It points to how complex can be the link between spiritual kinship and kinship by blood and alliance. Those might represent highly opposed sources of nurturance, as in the case of Evangelist Daniel and pastor Mohammed, who "broke with their past" by literally exchanging their families for Christian networks. But those can also be highly complementary, as with Rev. Ofori and his nuclear family, especially in a context in which Pentecostalism has already shaped many generations. Rev. Ofori is a father to his children in a twofold sense. He is a provider, educator, and caretaker, and a spiritual guide fostering them in the Christian life, thus operating as a proxy for the one who is the ultimate "leader of the house". Similar to Henry on chapter three, his children have been born born-again, although their personal commitment will be eventually tested in the future. The holistic notion of a "Christian family" therefore shows how nurturance in general and Christian nurturance might become closely entangled, revealing how the everyday of kinship as a primary form of human relatedness might disallow strict oppositions between fictive and non-fictive, social and biological (Carsten 2000, 2004).

I was exposed to another telling example of the potentially encompassing social productivity of Christian nurturance and spiritual kinship on my way back from a one week staying at Atwia mountains, in the Ashanti region, one of Ghana's major Christian retreats or "prayer grounds". I went to Atwia with evangelist Agyeman, who I mentioned in chapter two. There I met two young "prayer warriors" of a church from the nearby regional capital Kumasi. We became friends as I observed their long fasting and travelling prayers in the "bush", praise and worship and informal Bible reading gatherings, so I accepted their invitation to meet their "mother" on my way back to Accra. I wound up spending a week in a very welcoming home and church, which was just across the street. Prophetess Priscilla had returned to Kumasi in 2002 after spending 5 years in Italy with her family, which had migrated to Europe on a quest for a better life. In Italy, she gathered some resources and decided she was ripe to fulfill her calling of becoming a full-time minister in her hometown. Jesus is the Answer Family Church was founded in 2008, and today has a membership of about two hundred people.

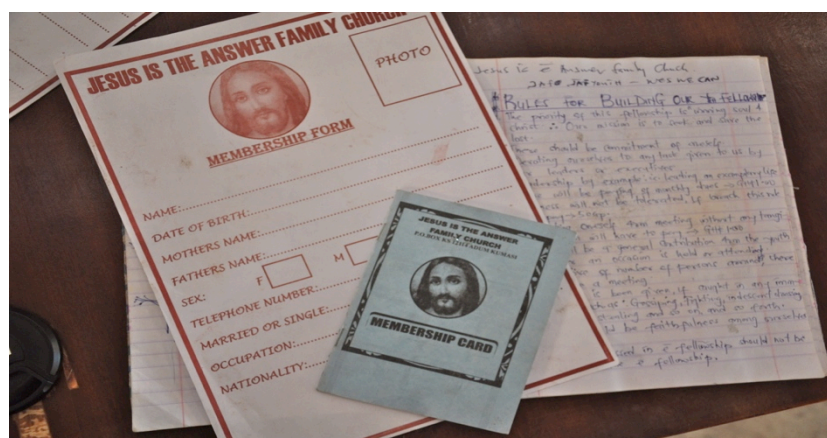




By calling her church a “family church”, Prophetess Priscilla is inviting her audience to join a flock that is also a family in Christ. The prophetess’ “motherly” personality is transpired by her kind behavior, gentle voice tone, and wise way of speaking, preaching, and counseling, qualities that have been encapsulated in her most popular epithet: “Sweet Mother”. But I found out that Prophetess Priscilla’s compound house was also quite literally a “family church”, that is, a spiritual family, inhabited by twelve youngsters she had adopted. The backgrounds of some of her most intimate disciples embody the predicaments of contemporary Ghana: an ex-boxer in his thirties, with golden teeth and a criminal past, a twelve year old from an Ashanti village who was accused of witchcraft and became an outcast, and five young orphans, among them one of the prayer warriors I met in Atwia, who had both parents and his only sibling killed during a road accident on the boarder of Ghana and Ivory Coast. All others had just decided to “serve” the prophetess, moving to her home and making of their shared everyday life an opportunity for the pastoral apprenticeship. They had all been “led to Christ” by Sweet Mother and perform a variety of duties in her church (from evangelism to leading prayer and setting the sound system) and home (cooking, cleaning, and washing). Besides being “prayer warriors”, that is, leading the church’s prayer ministry, my two Atwia friends were responsible for managing the membership paperwork, keeping monthly tithing records, and running the church’s children and youth ministry.



*Five of Prophetess Priscilla’s twelve foster children/spiritual offspring*



Sweet Mother’s spiritual family is a church within the church, one closely bounded to her caring and loving matriarchal authority. She is making use of widespread methods of child fosterage in West Africa (Goody 1973), which, as I showed in chapter one, have been popular tools of

Christian proselytism in Ghana at least since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, as I illustrated in chapter one. Her compound house is a micro Christian settlement, a hierarchical community of nurturance with both spiritual and material dimensions, where her children in Christ sought shelter, salvation, moral guidance, and a better future.

The examples above show how, as a basic cell of Pentecostal ecclesiology, spiritual kinship is extremely modular, dispersing within and across churches and fellowships, and entering the everyday. It may embed charismatic media circulation in less contingent forms of consumption, and dwell upon other associational forms, as the biological family or relations of fosterage. Finally, spiritual kinship can also be institutionalized, and that is how my ethnographic material shifted toward more explicit Pentecostal instances of religious pedagogy, as ICGC and LCI's discipleship structures (chapter two and three), as well as Bible schools, especially Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center (chapter three, four, and five). I argue that as a spiritual father, the man of God is still an intercessory pole, but he often adds to this miraculous dimension the role of an authoritative template for the Christian life and a doorway into a community of practice. In many ways, the regimes of practice and relatedness that converts are submitted to in these pedagogical institutions are not so different from those applied by Rev. Ofori and Prophetess Priscilla to their home-churches: a monitored introduction of disciples into a variety of Biblical frameworks and devotional practices and exposition to more or less peripheral opportunities to act as a shepherd, thus finding one's place in the ecclesia actively. The differences are definitely many, but I understand them as differences of scale, strategy, and emphasis, not necessarily of method.

The same can be said of uses of spiritual kinship among small and large churches and Bible schools. In Prophet Patrick's Compassion Ministry and School of Prophetic Excellence, the parental role of ministers appears in a much more personalized fashion due to the lack of major institutional structures. Nevertheless, apprenticeship through "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave and Wenger 1991: 29) is still highly cherished. Whereas in Compassion Ministry church labor is divided and shared with more spiritually mature members (who mature in part because they assume these functions), the School of Prophetic Excellence expands the man of God's influence into other emerging small churches through discipleship. Spiritual kinship operate here as the "work-net" of religious "net-works" (Latour 2007: 132), weaving the ecclesia together through bonds that are also recursive: Prophet Patrick makes of those seeking learning, impartation, and new contacts in his Bible school his disciples while inviting his own spiritual parents to perform as guest lecturers in the school. These contacts will be mobilized in the future through mutual invitations and conferences, condensing into relatively stable forms of allegiance.

In the case of mega-churches like ICGC and LCI, discipleship programs predicate recent converts' realignment with their church families on a pedagogical engagement with its vision, which varies in intensity and control. Although Gifford above argued with disdain that charismatic churches "have absolutely nothing except the pastor's vision" (2004: 188), the social and spiritual productivity of this notion in churches like ICGC and LCI should make us aware that it might be more than an empty set of words. I argued that "the vision" is part of these churches' attempt to depersonalize without impersonalizing the leader's charisma and establish through it a shared mission, a denominational style of piety, and a set of norms for proper Christianity absorbed as part of the process of "following" the man of God. The levels of absorption of these norms by congregations vary and many converts remain immature and non-participant. However, the evident success of mega-churches like ICGC and LCI in terms of church growth and church planting is impossible to conceive only in terms of the appeal of miracles and media, indicating some level of formal or informal engagement with the church community beyond Sunday services, as well as some degree of ideological saturation. By focusing especially on LCI's apostolic vision and mission, highly centered on expansion through evangelism and the opening of new church branches, I glimpsed

how discipleship, spiritual kinship, and nurturance can give access to an enabling dimension of Pentecostal power.

### 3. Rethinking the politics of the end-times church: apostolic power

Is there a politics in the end-times church? There is no need for a single answer and this dissertation is clearly more interested in untangling discursive threads than continuing lumping a variety of phenomena together into a general idea of “African Pentecostalism”. But it is important at least to reexamine the questions scholars have asked while tackling the important problem of the relations between “the religious” and “the political” in sub-Saharan Africa. First, I believe it is necessary to go beyond the African exceptionalism that characterizes vast sectors of this scholarship, as exemplified by generalist comments like “we wish only to convey the message that religious thought plays a key role in political life [in Africa] because the spirit world is commonly considered the ultimate source of power. To understand politics in Africa it is necessary to understand religion in the terms we have indicated” (Ellis and ter Haar 2004: 6). Although the “spirit world” is part of the problem-space I reconstructed above, it can hardly resume it, especially in such an isolated and mystified form. Second, in order to do justice to the complexity of this problem-space, it is necessary to expand the political itself beyond secular models centered on the state, citizenship, civil society, and the public sphere, and the normative concepts that accompany them, as representation, deliberation, and freedom, a work that has already been initiated in the anthropology of Islam (Asad 2003, Mahmood 2005, Hirschkind 2006, Agrama 2012). “Democratic” or “patrimonial”, we should not forget that the politics of Pentecostalism as a public religion is at the most fundamental level one of restoring broken lives and leading them to salvation through the power of God, his Word and his Spirit. As it might have become obvious, this is also a politics of expansion, of building the Kingdom of God through devotion, enthusiasm, zeal, evangelism, experience, miracles, discipleship, and management.

Even those interested in stressing these churches’ social productivity have all too often forgotten the religious specificity of Pentecostal politics. In a comment that might sound hyperbolic if compared to Paul Gifford’s bleak account of the charismatic movement in Ghana, Charles Piot argues that “the charismatics offer hope and possibility, a phoenix rising from the ashes of afro-pessimism” (2010: 75). As I showed before, Piot deems this spirituality “democratic”, associating conversion to a strong sense of agency and autonomy.

They [converts] walk with their heads held high, proudly refusing the colonial/postcolonial lot they have been dealt. They lead lives of purpose and discipline, and find pleasure in worship. Moreover, the initiative comes not from without of above, but seems entirely theirs. This is a cultural production of stunning proportions. It is not, again ironies noted, an example of project that speaks to what Mbembe (2001: 14) suggests is the central problematic of African philosophy today: “the problem of freedom from servitude and the possibility of an autonomous African subject”? (2010: 76)

The notion of agency rose to protagonism in the social sciences through theories of practice and socio-historical change concerned in rescuing our subjects of research from the merely reproductive fate imposed by hermetic concepts like culture, structure, and social organization (Ortner 1984, 2006). But agency cannot avoid having an inherently political component, not by chance being at the heart of other scholarly notions interested in reclaiming indocility and creativity as qualities to be found among post-colonial others, as “power of the weak”, “creolization”, and “hybridity”. Agency is evoked by Piot as a way of recognizing the empowering effects of Pentecostal conversion on a particular type of social actor whose agentive attributes have often be considered highly reduced, the “post-colonial African subject” figuring centrally in anthropological narratives on

“bare life” and other popular allegories of the “suffering subject” (see Robbins 2013). But as argues Mahmood (2005), “if the ability to effect change in the world and in oneself is historically and culturally specific (...) then the meaning and sense of agency cannot be fixed in advance, but must emerge through an analysis of particular concepts that enable specific models of being, responsibility, and effectivity” (14). In her ethnography of female practitioner of the Islamic Da’wa movement in Egypt, Mahmood warns against the conventional equation between agency and secular liberal notions like resistance, freedom, and autonomy, as this might hinder the anthropologist’s capacity to consider the inner vitality of religious traditions like Islam, in which submission and docility have an enabling role in terms of subject formation. As a result, “what may appear to be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from progressivist point of view, may actually be a form of agency – but one that can be understood only from within the norms and structures of subordination that create the condition of its enactment” (15).

I believe Mahmood’s warning is equally valid to Christianity and global Pentecostalism, although I acknowledge that in the later case the clarity of the religious norms at stake and their distinctiveness from the secular norm have been admittedly affected by variable forms of resonance with the encompassing Spirit of the age. Nevertheless, the question remains: How to equate Pentecostal empowerment with the fact that agency is not the source but the effect of submission? How to recast the agency Piot sees glowing gloriously from his interlocutors as they walked “with heads held high” beyond a conventional notions of freedom as “freedom from servitude” and an “autonomous African subject”? How to admit that Pentecostal agency is in fact the fruit of a deeper, conscious, and freely chosen form of servitude, the result of “giving one’s life to Christ”? Among the scholars of Pentecostalism in Africa, Ruth Marshall (2009) has provided the most careful engagement with this question. She sustains that we should be able to see behind the mist of ungovernability covering this spirituality in contemporary Africa and discern a particular mode of “self-governance” akin to what Foucault (2001) calls “political spirituality”. Different from Meyer, Marshall grounds born-again sociality not only in transposable aesthetic forms, but in the believers’ shared engagement with an “ethics of submission” (2009: 128-165), and her book is concerned with reconstituting the born-again prescriptive apparatus whereby individuals become moral subjects by submitting to specific processes of subjection<sup>120</sup>. She argues that it is in this set of disciplinary practices and in the desired effects they induce and produce that we should find the true politics of the end-times church.

Marshall describes in some detail the bodily techniques and rhetorical genres mobilized by Pentecostalism as an ethical regime - prayer, glossolalia, praise and worship, forms of self-examination and publication, aesthetical styles, and the moral regulation of behavior – although only eventually she addresses their context of cultivation. Much more emphasized in her narrative is the radical performativity of Pentecostal “truth-games”, whose flexible structures of authority she deems frontally opposed to the “quasi-judicial” forms of Christianity that Foucault addressed in his studies on pastoral power. Three main factors justify this radical individualism preventing born-again ethics from becoming stabilized by an authorized “moral code”. First, Pentecostalism’s democratic access to God through the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit dwelling in every born-again subject undermines the regulatory viability of any mode of jurisdiction. This ethical regime is therefore one in which “subjectivation occurs principally through acts of faith that depend largely on experiences of interiority and the techniques of the self” (142). Second, the absolute performativity of born-again

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<sup>120</sup> “I will consider Born-Again Christianity as a specific regime of practice, in and through which particular moral and political subjects are produced. My approach will undertake to evaluate the sorts of political struggles the movement gives rise to, principally through processes of subjection, and their effects on the production of politics in post-colonial Nigeria, without resorting to an a priori notion of either religion or politics” (2009: 34).

“acts of faith” is associated to the movement’s messianic temporality. In this sense: “Born-again do not replace the old distinctions and hierarchies with new ones; rather, through their forms of address and actions, they behave as if they *were not*, reiterating the experience of 1 Corinthians 7, when ‘time is short’ (...)” (144). The anti-traditionalism, equalitarianism, and sense of contingency instilled by this temporality of the event is approached through Agamben’s adequate but highly partial eschatological reading of Paul’s *Letter to the Romans*: “Each revelation is always and above all a revelation of language itself, an experience of the pure event of the word that exceeds every signification” (in Marshall 2009: 162). What Gifford (2004) portrays as empty motivational words here become messianic words of faith uttered in a religious environment that brackets social distinctions, including those of ecclesiastical nature. Third, Marshall claims that early Pentecostal strategies of institutionalizing charisma in Nigeria, such as cell-groups and other sub-ecclesiological bodies, have failed because mass media broadcasting and prosperity preaching detached born-again technologies of the self from predictable norms, rendering its dissemination extremely erratic.

The focus on the messianic and individualistic nature of the born-again ethics of submission and its irreducibility to ecclesiastical norms allows Marshall to acknowledge the Christian particularity of this politics and way of life while simultaneously exploring the resonances between the temporality of the end-times church and the neoliberal epoch of uncertainty and moral indiscernibility.

The messianism and interiority of Pentecostal practices of faith, and the centrality of grace and miracles, all perform an ongoing interruption of processes of institutionalization that might secure the connection between righteousness and authority, between a new mode of self-government and the government of others, a new ontology or ethology of being-together through the embodiment of sovereignty in a community within which the identity of those promising and keeping promises may be verified (2010: 218).

But what about the widely known leaders of this movement? Are they endowed with any degree of authoritative influence, thus also taking part in this political spirituality? Marshall simply argues that “pastors have little real control over their congregations” (2009: 133). The activities of men of god and their churches appear in her narrative in a very reduced form (2009: 233-238). Pastors hold primarily another performative function: they stage miracles, the religious template of political sovereignty, according to Carl Schmitt’s famous account (Marshall 2010). In this sense, unable to convey stable regulatory coordinates, men of god ritualize sovereignty over and over again through revivalistic meetings that display publicly and spectacularly what are otherwise idiosyncratic personal manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Unable to find any empirical connection between a highly individualized political spirituality and any form of pastoral governance, Marshall’s narrative starts as a study of Nigerian born-again ethics only to end as a theopolitical account of its ultimate ungovernability, which has apparently become the Christian way of life in the post-colony.

In this dissertation I took an alternative path, being more interested in understanding the greatest miracle performed by Ghanaian pastors like Nicholas Duncan-Williams, Mensah Otabil, Dag Heward-Mills, and others: the successful and ordered reproduction and expansion of Pentecostal denominations founded in Ghana, even to a transnational scale. In chapter three, while examining the charismatic nature of a church like Lighthouse Chapel International, I pointed to Marsden’s insight (1991: 81) that evangelical and Pentecostal ecclesiologies are characterized by centripetal and centrifugal dynamics, which map out perfectly to the vertical and horizontal set of relations implied by spiritual kinship as both siblinghood and parenthood. I argued that whereas the centripetal axis implies a democratized dispersion of personal charisma, whose publicity has been analyzed by authors like Csordas (2001) and Harding (2000) in terms of shared rhetorical patterns, the centripetal axis invites a Weberian notion of charismatic leadership, centered on the difference



between innovators and followers. This latter trend invites us to add to the idea of Pentecostalism as a post-modern “religion of the Self” (Csordas 2001) this spirituality’s tendency to condense around strong and publicly recognizable pioneers. The combination of a personal and direct relationship with God and the Holy Spirit and allegiance or loyalty to particular charismatic leaders is observed at its best in one of the offices of the Pentecostal doctrine of the five-fold ministry: the apostle, which I defined as a shepherd of shepherds.

Seth, a student of ICGC’s Central Bible College, told me about the pioneer role of apostles in Ghana’s charismatic scene and warned me that the title has been misapplied since then:

The charismatic movement starts in the 1980s and the person who really championed it was archbishop Duncan-Williams, from Action Faith Ministry. He started the movement, and then Doc [Mensah Otabil], Agyin Asare, and others came in. Those are all apostles. They are the heads of the big charismatic churches here in Ghana. Duncan-Williams, Dr. Otabil, Agyin Asare, from World Miracle Church, Dag Heward-Mills, from Lighthouse, Bishop Tackie-Yarboi, from Victory Bible International, Sam Korankye, from Royalhouse Chapel International. There are others. Those are the apostles. Most of them also started in fellowships, had revelations, prophecies were coming in, so they yielded to their call and started these churches. Duncan-Williams also trained them, Dag Heward-Mills, for instance, Ampiah Kofi, who’s also an apostle, from Global Revival Movement. He trained many others (...) Today, the name is misapplied. Everyone may start a church and call himself an apostle, a bishop, but you have to be ordained in order to assume these offices. Today, people come out of a Bible school and say: “I’m a bishop, an apostle”. They misapply the five-fold ministries. So you see the posters in town with this title everywhere.

Common to all Pentecostal-charismatic apostles Seth listed above is a great capacity of exhorting and attracting masses of followers through miracles, highly persuasive and affective preaching, and enchanting personalities. But those religious virtuosi are also real managerial masters, who have made their churches grow with wisdom and method by giving opportunities for members to mature in their faith within their denominational families. Moreover, apostles have a great capacity to reproduce the mission they embody by training disciples willing to dedicate their lives fulltime it, thus expanding their influence through church branches. Although all these men of God in one way or another have been nurtured by Duncan-Williams, who is the father of the charismatic movement in Ghana, they have their own styles, doctrinal emphases, and ecclesiologies, which are embraced peripherally and/or emulated by those growing from the status of mere miracle-seekers and sermon-hearer to that of disciples, that is, active church members.

Christian discipleship is obviously not a contemporary invention. In fact, the multitude of theological motifs articulated by my interlocutors in order to account for discipleship processes - the five-fold ministry, the difference between spiritual gifts and offices, the notions of the ecclesia as an interdependent body, as well as the organic lexicon of spiritual maturation, including spiritual kinship – all point to the foundational figure of the apostle Paul, as I stressed in chapter two. Moreover, the historical persona they convey is not Paul, the messianic paragon of temporal rupture, as overstressed by authors like Badiou and Agamben, and followed by Marshall. This is rather Paul, the founder of a post-traditional community of faith assembled through a language of intensities, relatedness, mutuality whose ultimate aim is to convey Christian authority. As argues Schutz (1975), Paul’s apostolic authority was based on a specific ideology of charismatic leadership, which overlaps the procedure of “following” (*akolutheia*) Jesus (central to the gospel traditions and a reenactment of the Jewish prophetic and messianic traditions) and “imitating” Christ through the apostle, which appears explicitly in passages like 1 Cor 11: 1 “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (NIV) or “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (ESV).

Castelli (1991) has explored the status of mimesis in the Pauline texts in detail and argued that the notion of following and imitating Christ by following and imitating Paul must be

understood against the historical background of instability that characterized the early church, in many ways a template for the very historicity of miracles and fakery of the contemporary end-times church. These technologies of power and relationality allowed the apostle to assemble and govern over a scattered Christian population through an “authoritative discourse” (1991: 49, Asad 1993). Similar to the Pentecostal ecclesia, the apostolic model of church governance was charismatic and disciplinary, headed and headless. Moreover, as a totality, or a “movement”, this highly deterritorialized Christian community had a variety of apostolic heads carrying forward Christian norms that eventually produced inner friction in the ecclesia, as in the case of Paul and Peter’s disagreements and accusations of insincerity in Antioch (Gal 2: 11-14, see Badiou 2003: 26). I find the same dynamics in course in Ghana. If as a movement, Pentecostalism has often decayed into an ungovernable assemblage of inspired vessels uncertain about norms, from the perspective of apostolic power, denominations lead their flocks through spiritual maturation by allowing them to find the truth about themselves, thus combining government and self-government quite successfully through varieties of governmentality (the combination of technologies of domination and technologies of the Self) grounded on solid ecclesiastical structures.

I am not claiming that it is impossible to become convicted and publicly recognized as an authentic born-again Christian in contemporary Ghana through modes of self-government completely unengaged with a denominational mission, but I do believe that charismatic apostles have been able to craft real islands of normativity in the post-colony by juxtaposing submission to Christ with following a charismatic leader. It is by playing a facilitative role that denominations reclaim their necessity in practice, thus straightening allegiances and advancing an ordered reproduction of their vision and mission by literally nurturing people in their likeness. Those are also communities of flourishing in which the various riddles of the Christian problem-space become stabilized more effectively. I explored the basic operations of apostolic power from chapter three to five through a deeper investigation of Lighthouse Chapel International’s discourses and organizations concerned with discipleship, especially Anagkazo Bible and Ministry Training Center.

#### 4. Apostolic power in Lighthouse Chapel International: a “passion for souls”

During one of our interviews, I asked Anagkazo student Abednegu to lecture me on the differences between his Christian family, Lighthouse Chapel, and the other mega-church family that welcomed my foreign presence while I was in Accra, ICGC. He led me through another narrative about the origins, dispersal, and condensations of Ghana’s Pentecostal-charismatic movement, again reassembling the end-times church through identity and diversity:

If there's a church interested in soul winning and sending out missionaries in this country, that's Lighthouse. We have a passion for souls. ICGC is a great church. They believe in what we believe, but evangelism is not the main doctrine of the house. During the early 80s there was a wave that brought about those churches we see today. All of them were close to Archbishop Duncan-Williams, who's the founding father of the charismatic movement in the country. They all came from him. He went to Archbishop Idahosa's school in Nigeria, and when he came out, he was someone else... Bishop Dag, Ampiah-Kwofie, Tacky Aboye, Dr. Mesah Otabil, Rev. Sam Korankye, all these great ministers look up to him as a father in the country. Any men of God in this country who has associated himself to the archbishop, I respect, because he's been a powerful source of inspiration for evangelism in this country. Every spiritual problem in this country, he's taken them on his shoulders. We appreciate him, we.... we just love him so much. He's a man of prayer. In this country, when you refer to prayer, everybody looks up to the archbishop. When we talk of soul winning, everybody looks at bishop Dag. When you talk about leadership, about doing well in the corporate world, you look to Dr. Mensah Otabil. Everybody has his own area in ministry, so when you mention this area, you're looking to this person. They all came from one person, so prayer is basic!



Abednegu's narrative exemplifies again how the recursive and cumulative nature of spiritual kinship allows the accommodation of a series of differences and repetitions into a single and heterogeneous field, which becomes reticular in both horizontal and vertical ways. Mega-church leaders are fathers who have a common father, Duncan-William, who also has a father, Idahosa, so on and so forth. These men of God are loved, admired, and imitated by vast number of less influential pastors without and without their denominations, who consume their media production in Ghana along with those of international ministers. They set the tone and the tendencies, having become what Gabriel Tarde calls "refractory individuals" (2009: 72), or "poles of imitativeness", a notion applied by the French sociologist in this passage exactly to the replicating role performed by the apostles of Christ.

Abednegu singled out bishop Dag, his church, and disciples by pointing to their unique "passion for souls". As much as prayer, evangelism is a basic duty of all Pentecostals, but Abednegu was right in highlighting the greater effort LCI makes of this score which was also recognized by non-members. In my analysis of LCI's discipleship structures in chapter three, I showed how evangelism figures centrally in this church's scripts for spiritual maturation. In many ways, one matures in the faith in LCI by standing for Christ in the public sphere, interpellating others with the Christian truth and "following" up on their conversions. Evangelism as a proselytistic confession of faith is close to the ethical truth-game Foucault (2008) calls *parrhesia*, which dovetails into two aspects: the courage to tell the truth to others one wants to direct in ethical formation and the courage to manifest the truth about oneself publicly, despite opposition. Foucault argued that, similar to *askesis*, *parrhesia* is a component of ethical equipments, as it produces generative effects on those engaging with it, thus being irreducible to mere communication or information<sup>121</sup>. In LCI this active and expansion-oriented truth-game also unfolds through highly rationalized discipleship structures that transfigure the denomination's vision and mission into what I called a zeal-increasing machinery or what bishop Dag called a "soul-winning industry". By investigating ethnographically LCI's methods of absorbing, reshaping, and sending out disciples into the world, I was able to reach four main conclusions about how apostolic power renders Pentecostalism governable in this denomination. It does so by governing a deterritorialized flock through power relations, desire, loyalty, mimesis, and again the refraction of the leader's charisma. It is within these conditions that the agency of LCI's disciples is both reshaped and intensified, representing their own end-times politics. I elaborate on each of these factors below.

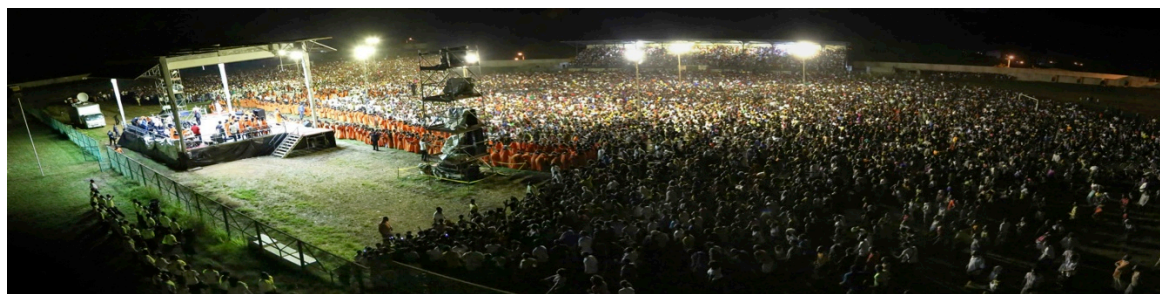
i) *Governing through power relations*. First, LCI's zeal-increasing machinery works through what Foucault calls *power relations*, "a mode of action that does not act directly and immediately on others", but instead, "acts upon their actions: an action upon an action on possible or actual future or present actions" (1997a: 230). The individualized government of a population in LCI is that of a "conduct of conducts" and a "management of possibilities" (1997b: 341). This process appeared in various methodic forms, like "anagakzoing" others, performing "visitations", "interactions", counseling, leading Christian activities, or uttering altar calls and Bible school calls after preaching and crusades. Those are basically procedures of interpellation and pastoral care, and similar methods are also applied to the nurturance of lay and fulltime leaders through apostolic care, as in membership courses, camp meetings, and the Bible school. However standardized and impersonal,

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<sup>121</sup> According to Foucault (2005), an ethical equipment (*paraskene*) is a "form that must be taken by true discourse in order for it to be able to be the matrix of rational behavior". It is "the structure of permanent transformation of true discourse, firmly fixed in the subject, into principles of morally accepted behavior" (326). An equipment is not protected from contingency, but it is itself a way of taming the event. It is utilizable and works as a form of aid when the ethical subject is challenged by her surrounding environment.

these networks are also opportunities for weaving highly personal relations. As spiritual parents, shepherds and pastors are not only professional soul-winners. They are part of singular relations full of vitality: “my shepherd” or “my pastor”. It was through these mechanical and personal networks that Anagkazo students came to find new ways of knowing and caring for their selves while relating to others, thus engaging with a new futurity that is eschatological - centered on matters of salvation – but still thoroughly mundane, unfolding through a personal entanglement with new friends, mentors, and potential marriage partners. It was after immersing themselves into these relations, thus in the practices they transmit, that Anagkazo students found their ministerial vocation, thus making of the whole process simultaneously self-generative and expansive from the point of view of the denomination.

I am not claiming that evangelism and networking are simply reduced to a tool of institution-building in LCI, producing a strong alienation from the Pentecostal ecclesia as a movement. For instance, in chapter four, I showed how bishop Dag’s Healing Jesus Crusades can be interpreted as diplomatic incursions of the apostle into the world. During these events, he manifests through signs and wonders the power of God as he invites the multitudes to give their lives to Christ.



*One of bishop Dag Heward-Mills’s crusades in Ivory Coast*

Most of the souls won during these events will not be “followed up” by LCI. Crusades are primarily aimed at sparking a more encompassing revival able to reinvigorate the local Christian scene, and they are also ways of spreading the bishop’s apostolic influence into other churches through leadership workshops and the habit of “planting”, or donating, his books to local church leaders. Similar diplomatic strategies are seen unfolding during his popular pastoral conference, Iron Sharpneth Iron, a major event happening in Accra every year that attracts a wide variety of local ministers in a quest for teachings and impartation from the bishop and his international guests.



*Truck carrying bishop Dag’s literary “seeds”*



*Billboard advertising LCI’s pastoral conference, Iron Shapeneth Iron 2011*

ii) *Governing through desire*. Second, being pedagogical by nature, apostolic power makes of individuals subjects by equipping them with new skills but also new aptitudes, working through *desire*. Reiterating what we now know is a basic axiom of LCI's discourse, Lady Rev. Adelaide Heward-Mills posted on her public Facebook page in Oct. 4, 2013 a cryptic message for those unacquainted with its background: "God is interested in your desires". It was answered by hundreds of "Amen". We have seen that by equating desire with the call of God, bishop Dag gives a reproducible dimension to his charisma, again making the extra-ordinary mundane. He just followed his heart and acted "as if" he were a minister, and that is how God led him to build an ecclesiastical empire. Similarly, to most Anagkazo students, the process of recognizing and committing to their call started with an assisted form of self-examination amidst practice, having desire as a leading motif. More than a spectacular revelation, the call of God started with a shift in attention toward that which prompts one to action, thus being both more and less than an idiosyncratic mystical experience.

But what is attention if not always already desire? According to Gabriel Tarde, "attention is the desire to specify the incipient sensation, this amounts to saying that it is the desire for an increase of present belief" (1969: 197). Instead of opposing belief to sensations as belonging to autonomous realms – inner values and opinions vs. outer facts and objects – Tarde prefers to establish that "without attention, no sensation" (*idem*) and that attention would be a hybrid of belief and desire, an embodied form of anticipation, which explains the fact that belief itself, just like any sensation, is suffused by intensity. For Tarde, through their reciprocal combination, belief and desire give rise to more permanent forces, as judgment and finally the will (196), an enduring personal orientation. Like Tarde, Bishop Dag and his organization know very well that desire is not the untamed enemy of method, as a more conventional notion of asceticism would have it. Desire is the vital force used by habit to transfigure a disembedded belief (a possibility among others) into a form of volition, a self-generative disposition to act in a certain way.

I believe this pedagogical framing and canalization of desire is also part of LCI's response to the riddle of Christian prosperity, whose solution exemplifies apostolic power's capacity to convert deprivation into vulnerability, and the latter into zeal. In chapter three, I showed how a few of Anagkazo students came from more affluent backgrounds and stable families. Akin to bishop Dag, many of his bishops, reverends, pastors, and 27,8% of Anagkazo students I surveyed had incomplete or complete tertiary education, which is larger than Ghana's average. But as my interviews progressed, I was also exposed to many life stories marked by material hardship (including the well-educated) and lack of prospects. I realized that, different from someone like Joshua, who abandoned a career in engineering to become a pastor, many of the students I interviewed simply did not have much to lose or sacrifice when they decided to join the school. Becoming a pastor was probably a good if not the best possible career opportunity for many of them, especially within a stable and fast growing organization as LCI, which allows room for social mobility within its ecclesiological structure.

This pragmatic component came out forcefully albeit surprisingly during my first interview with pastor Mohammed. I felt I needed more elaboration on his ambiguous claim that conversion remained "a mystery" to him. At first, I thought he was referring to a hidden spiritual factor underpinning the unusual concatenation of events linking his misfortunes, becoming sick with worms, to seeking health care in Tamale, where he found Christ. Was it God working through providence? His answer took a surprisingly different path.

Honestly Bruno, I remember that I just felt: "Maybe this man [the LCI shepherd he followed] can be a help to me". I came in with the wrong motives, but something happened along the way, and I

became committed with my Christian life, and ended up giving my life to Christ fully. I'm blessed for that.

Mohammed's sincere unmasking of his pragmatic will to convert could have only been performed by someone convicted about the temporal discontinuity that Christianity has introduced in his lifeline. When he talked about his past Self, Mohammed was literally referring to someone else, someone whose actions were oriented by a pattern of accountability that had expired. Nevertheless, his confession also exemplifies the decisive influence of material deprivation in the popularity of Pentecostalism in Ghana. Recognizing this pragmatic component, one could simply assume that what drives students to Anagkazo is a quest for soothing different forms of deprivation<sup>122</sup>. But this leaves unanswered the problem of how volition itself is transfigured during the process of religious change, that is, of how the urges of the stomach can be converted into desire for God.

In Mohammed's case, it means understanding the "something" that happened after his self-interested recitation of the sinner's prayer. Was it a sincere albeit belated change of heart? The fruit of posterior acquisition of knowledge about what is conversion and Christianity? Or was it simply a church network that caught him when he was ejected from his kinship network? Maybe the very differentiation between inner commitment, knowledge acquisition, and relationality is artificial from the start, and Mohammed's adoption of Christianity as a way of life and a teleological model for practice developed side by side with his entanglement with actors that provided him with knowledge, care, guidance, but also with new opportunities. In a sense, by reaching commitment through these mediators, Mohammed was not renouncing his deprivation in the name of higher immaterial values, but literally converting, in the dual sense of translating and channeling, his disabling deprivation into an enabling form of vulnerability, whose outcomes were submission and desire for God within LCIs' mission, where he found a new futurity<sup>123</sup>.

A final point I want to make about desire is that, as this vital force is produced, encouraged, and expressed within structures of discipleship, it finds specific contours, becoming a shared "passion for souls" in the likeness of that displayed by the apostle himself. Kenyan student Amorine gave us an example in chapter four of the aptitudes and attitudes she acquired in Anagkazo when she mentioned the habit of constantly asking herself if those surrounding her were "saved" and if she should tell them about Christ. This spontaneous personal orientation is one of the effects of greater "zeal", a cultivated form of religious volition that finds expression through religious enthusiasm (lively corporate prayers, worship, and dancing during ritual gathering), piety (the spontaneous and even pleasurable submission to prayer and Bible reading) or church work. Evangelism is a fundamental context for nurturing zeal, especially because it requires making contact with unbelievers, that is, testing one's conviction. In these cases, zeal was also recognized by my

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<sup>122</sup> I believe this component can be also found in many other conversion careers above, including the Scottish Caleb, who was divided between becoming a pastor and a mariner, thus transcending the exceptionalism that has characterized discourses on Africa's post-colonial religious subject.

<sup>123</sup> Dealing with the problem of the will to convert, Robbins (2004b: 84-121) raises a similar issue after locating a conceptual gap in the scholarship on the subject. According to Robbins, whereas utilitarian accounts of conversion tend to ignore its transformative effect on the deprived Self who seeks a new religious framework, intellectualist approaches promptly recognize change by framing conversion as a shift in "world view". As an alternative, he proposes a "two-stage model of conversion" (2004: 87), in which material motivations attract converts to world religions as Christianity, especially in colonial and post-colonial settings, eventually making room to a shift in the subject's cognitive and moral orientation. Robbins' solution represents a desirable step away from the dichotomy of religion as a response to deprivation and religion as a totalizing symbolic system. By making room both to the expected material supplements of conversion and the specificity of the religious project, it helps making sense of Mohammed's belated personal transformation. In my interpretation, I address the shift from stage one to stage two in Robbins' model as a conversion of deprivation to vulnerability, a disability that allows ethical, spiritual, and material flourishing.



interlocutors through a situated feeling of “boldness”, that is, the capacity to speak about Christ and salvation regardless of how ridiculous and inconvenient they might look. Zeal is therefore attuning oneself to oneself and to the world through the eyes of God. It is also finding God in oneself, and being led by desire for God, in a pragmatic and empowering expression of faith that LCI is happy to animate and channel. Zeal might have been what Charles Piot in the passage I quoted above saw glowing from his interlocutors, and I believe this aptitude does entail a heightened sense of agency, but one that is paradoxically achieved through deeper submission.

iii) *Governing through loyalty as a power strategy.* My third point is that LCI’s zeal-increasing machinery works not only through the diffusion of power relations and a pedagogy of desire, but also through a specific *strategy of power*, the core of which is the value of *loyalty*. According to Foucault, power relations are not simply opposed to power strategies, understood as “the totality of the means put into operation to implement power effectively or to maintain it” (1997a: 346). One of the reasons is that although power relations tend to conceal themselves as such by refashioning obedience as persuasion, empowerment, and truth, their implementation inevitably meets confrontation, struggle, contradiction and resistance. In fact, I stressed that one of the marked traits of camp meetings and Bible schools as context of discipleship is a constant incitement to speak about Christian failures and misfires through stories about immature and unengaged flocks, disloyal pastors, and church schisms. Bishop Dag teaches by counter-example even during church services, complementing these anti-testimonies with positive strategies centered on the establishment of what is known in LCI as a “culture of loyalty”.

Bishop Dag’s doctrine of loyalty gives a theological status to the principle that God leads you to and through people, especially spiritual parents, thus instilling in his flock an ethics of caring for relations. As we have seen in Anagkazo, a culture of loyalty is highly spiritualized, and tends to overlap Christian virtues like humbleness with submission to personal and institutional allegiances. It also represents one of LCI’s preferable answers to the Christian riddle of efficacious spiritual power, and the devil tends to appear primarily in Anagkazo as the “Spirit of pride”, a dangerous entity looming over churches and destroying entire ministries by rapaciously feeding upon Christian relations.



*Above: Bishop Dag appears on the background, as a loyal spiritual son and guest of Duncan-Williams to one of his prayer meetings, which was aimed at interceding for Ghana’s electoral disputes in 2013*

*Besides: Duncam-Williams was invited to preach at LCI’s pastors conference and sat in the front row, besides bishop Dag and founding bishop Sackey. Other LCI bishops and reverends are seen at the back.*



Bishop Dag not only preaches and teaches about the benefits of loyalty and spiritual kinship, he also embodies this norm, being himself a loyal son who submits to his spiritual fathers. For instance, he constantly praises Nicholas Duncan-Williams in public, and the two men of God invite each other frequently to their respective churches. Even though LCI is today much bigger than Action Faith, this situation does not change the fact that bishop Dag was fathered by Duncan-Williams, thus being “under” him regardless of the circumstances. This relational model tends to be reproduced across the denomination, and finds another important iteration in bishop Dag’s assistant pastor and founding bishop: E.A.T Sackey, who not only embodies the figure of the loyal assistant, but finds in this position his own niche in the Pentecostal public sphere. His first book is entitled *How to be a Good Assistant*, a Biblical study and a gathering of personal testimonies about how loyalty and humility can lead assistant pastors to a successful pastoral life “under” another minister.

Bishop Dag therefore provides an encompassing exemplum for both the Christian life and the ministerial life. He is a Paul and a Timothy, an apostle and a disciple, a doubling that allows his personal relations to acquire the generality and generativity of a model. After being Biblically legitimized, this model is reiterated across the multitude of spiritual kinship bonds weaved throughout the denomination. This tendency to encode spiritual kinship along its recursive iteration is nowhere clearer as in Anagkazo, where many students arrive through spiritual parents, where they straighten their status of bishop Dag’s spiritual sons by engaging with his various glosses and doctrines, and where they add new figures to their repertoire of spiritual parents, as the instructors and the school head. It exemplifies well how a culture of loyalty can become dispersed across a deterritorialized family in Christ while being simultaneously situated along highly specific personal relations.

During the same camp meeting organized in a church branch in Legon that I discussed in chapter three, bishop Dag admonished his audience about the benefits of spiritual kinship by first establishing that: “It’s important to accept the reality of being fathered by a number of people, not many, but some, who God will bring to your life”. He enumerated the various spiritual and material blessings fathers have brought to his life. Those are both famous ministers he never met personally, but whom he nevertheless “followed” attentively and submissively, and personal mentors, ranging from lay leaders of Scripture Union to Duncan-Williams. He argued that loyalty brings prosperity to everyone and requires a holistic environment that must be cultivated on a daily basis. Disciples should receive God’s gifts and display gratitude toward the human channels used to release them:

I called the archbishop [Duncan-Williams] the other day and I thanked him for taking me to meet the president [now deceased president Atta-Mills, who was a born-again Christian]. We had a close door meeting with him. Archbishop said: “You did well. Thanks for coming with me.” I said: “No daddy! You are training me! Giving me the opportunity. You know all this people...” Since the time he was arrested under Rawlings’ regime, all throughout, each government has said he belongs to the other group... [laughter] Until he breaks through and the rumors continue. Rawlings, Kufuor, Mills, since 1979 it’s like this. He is having an influence and teaching me how to deal with these people, important people. My church is bigger than his, but I’ll be always under him, you understand? He is my spiritual father.

The politics of loyalty is based upon the recognition that Christian achievements are tied to a debt to both grace and those who nurtured you in the faith. This is especially relevant in a context marked by unpredictable religious entrepreneurship like Ghana, as it counters the possibility of making personal charisma a source of instability. In a classic prosperity theology style, bishop Dag also instilled in his disciples the importance of overlapping desire for God (Christianity as the “good life”) and desire for a better life in a balanced way, hence avoiding the error of claiming hastily one’s rewards:

What the archbishop did for me [teaching him how to deal with important people], Yonggi Cho cannot do, Fred Prince, Kenneth Hagin [other spiritual fathers] cannot do for me, you see? All fathers will bring you something. You should not be mad with Yonggi Cho for not taking you to meet the president of Korea [laughter]. He has nothing to do with this! It's the same. You don't get angry with your father for not taking you to a restaurant. Do you? Did your father ever take you to a Chinese restaurant? French restaurant? Italian restaurant? [All considered fancy or simply inexistent in Ghana]. Raise your hands [nobody does]. Are you mad at him? One day I went to an Italian restaurant in South Africa with my pastors and sons, however you call them... I told them: this is carbonara [the excited audience says hey!], fettuccini [hey!], linguini [hey!], tagliatelle [hey!] [laughter]. God will provide through the overall training, see? Don't get mad with your father.

The fact that God will bless you through well-nurtured relations requires patience and the capacity to discern what you can receive from each father. Moreover, a culture of loyalty requires patiently retaining desire for a better life and not letting it simply subsume desire for God. Loyal pastors walk on a fine line of discernment. They can have salvation and eat their carbonara too, but it is important not to submit the first to the latter causally. Bishop Dag is widely recognized in Ghana as a “humble” man of God, a trait that is also transpired by his non-flashy style of dressing, informal way of speaking, and tendency to not display wealth. His prosperity theology is centered on church labor. You will prosper by building the Kingdom. Loyalty can be a challenge, but if cultivated despite human and spiritual oppositions, it will bring spiritual and material blessings when the time and the person are ripe. The testimonies I encountered in Anagkazo and LCI in general do prove the strange efficacy of these teachings as almost self-fulfilled prophecies.

Again, similar to power relations, loyalty as a strategy of power aimed at increasing church solidarity and establishing its institutional authority is also endowed with what I called a diplomatic component, thus transcending the denomination. This is equally observed in Bishop Dag's relation to his spiritual parents, which integrate LCI indirectly into the broader movement, the Ghanaian and global ecclesia. Led by God to deepen his studies on the subject of loyalty and incorporate it as one of the trademarks of his preaching and media production, bishop Dag wants to spread the culture of loyalty beyond his church. Books like *Loyalty and Disloyalty* are among his most successful international bestsellers, and the formula underpinning his most accomplished miracle, his church, is far from secretive, especially because he does not “own” or did not exactly “authored” it. LCI is merely an example of the efficacy of a script for church management and the management of Christian relations that is universal because it is Biblical.

During a Pentecostal leadership workshop organized in Sierra Leone in 2012, broadcast through LCI's website, bishop Dag talked extensively about loyalty to an audience of approximate five hundred pastors from various denominations, small and large. At one point, he turned to a young pastor and asked: “Tell me something: Did I train you in the ministry? Pastor: No. Did I ordain you? P: No. Did I marry you and your wife? P: No. Was I at the hospital when your first child was born? P: No. Do you think you should be loyal to me?” Interrupting the man before he answered, the bishop turned to “another gentleman”, coincidentally the current head of all LCI branches in Sierra Leone, and asked him the same questions, which were answered affirmatively one after the other as the audience laughed and shouted hallelujahs. He concluded the scene by going back to the first pastor and asking a more economic set of questions: “Who trained you? Who ordained you? [The man answered] Ok, so always be loyal to this man of God. Amen?”

Pentecostal uses of loyalty as a power strategy should not be read in a provincial manner, as an instrumentalization of Christian discourse. This awareness should prevent us from reducing a figure like bishop Dag to a “big man” accumulating social capital through a patrimonial organization. We might risk this diagnosis, as long as we also include in this Christian patriarchy the



various American ministers bishop Dag quotes extensively in his writings about loyalty and spiritual kinship and even the Apostle Paul himself, thus limiting its African exceptionalism. Nonetheless, although carrying clear patriarchal elements, the type of social and political influence of an apostle like bishop Dag in his disciples is not exactly that of a conventional “big man” for two main reasons. First, he accumulates allegiances and capitalizes upon them, but he also exercises power through exemplarity and likeness. As a result, submission becomes enabling, empowering, and agentive for his disciples. Second, as an apostle, he is not the ultimate source of his personal power. The global apostle is not a totalizing center or the end of a chain of relations, but ultimately a leader-follower, a father-son, an apostle-disciple, that is, a network node pointing both inside and outside of the institution he pioneered. This leads me to my final point: that the social productivity of apostolic power in LCI is heavily indebted to the way it overlaps connectivity with *imitation* and *refraction*.

iv) *Governing through imitation and refraction*. Bishop Dag is an unapologetic imitator. This is not his particularity, and I explored before how imitation and charisma tend to become bound in complex ways in Pentecostalism. Let us examine the case of LCI’s organizational structures. I argued that the success of this denomination indexes and authenticates its founder’s special place in the eyes of God, as he could have never bore fruits with such fertility if it were not for divine grace and the gift of leadership, charisma. And yet, it is impossible to ignore the multitude of borrowings in terms of doctrines, personal styles, and church management techniques mobilized by the apostle and his church, an aspect that is never denied, and not only by the extensive bibliographies of his textbooks. For instance, that is how bishop Dag corroborated his thesis that “just being a good son or daughter will make you a good worker of the beautiful job [the ministry]” during a camp meeting:

Just look to what God has blessed me with in the ministry. You will see things that I have copied properly. Everything about me is coping or following something I’ve seen or heard. It started with preaching. I’d just preach what Papa Hagin preached and people would be blessed. There’s more. Think about Iron Sharpeneth Iron, our conference. That’s Yonggi Cho’s idea I’m taking to Africa! When I go to Korea, I just take my time, walk around every corner of his church, watch everything they do and see if something new inspires me. (...) I see myself as Yonggi Cho’s African child. He’s the father of the church growth movement. 700,000 people in his church on Sundays! One church!<sup>124</sup> Much of what I do, I learned from him. I just copy what I saw in Korea. If you come to Korea with me, you’ll see a lot of things like our church. You’ll say: “Hey! They are copying us!” But we are coping them.

As a confessed imitator, the African apostle achieved protagonism in global Pentecostalism by importing models, which not necessarily contradicts the fact that he was “led” and “anointed” by God and his Spirit as he built his church. How to understand such an unapologetic alliance of mimesis and grace? Preaching might be a good place to start, since nowhere else mimesis appears as visible as in this field. Susan Harding (2000) argues that, by authorizing their communicative styles as the fruit of extemporaneous divine inspiration, evangelical preachers display a propensity to disregard the limits commonly posed by authorship conventions, engaging in intense processes of “speech mimesis” (25). In this sense, it is clear that the transparent and self-authorizing nature of grace is rarely opposed to imitation. In fact, we could claim that charisma indeed facilitates the proliferation of imitation, since it legitimizes appropriations and enables the establishment of a true open source religious culture of global proportion by establishing that leaders have no copyright over that which they embody, say, and do. Who knows from whom Yonggi Cho copied his church growth methods or from whom Kenneth Hagin copied his word of faith doctrine? In Anagkazo,

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<sup>124</sup> David Yonggi Cho is widely known for leading the largest congregation in the world, in his Yoido Full Gospel Church, Seoul.

this dynamic of inspiration and transpiration was addressed explicitly in chapter five through the folk theology of the anointing and the uncanny spiritual exercise called soaking in tapes.

I argued that anointing talk is always a talk about spiritual power. The lexicon of “levels” and “types” of anointing (healing, teaching, prosperity, prophetic, etc.), as well as its ideologies of transmission, point to possible ways of discerning the work of charisma in the world. Different from the more conventional logic of “spiritual gifts”, centered on ideas of circulation and reciprocity, the anointing uses the oil as a qualisign (Munn 1992) of divine presence, enveloping it into a logic of gradation and interpersonal flow. In sum, the anointing indexes the *Spirit-across*, a mystical form of transmission called impartation. In Anagkazo, it is closely related to the practice of soaking in tapes, which reiterates the original epiphany through which bishop Dag received his grace to teach. Although the bishop started his career just being led by desire, his real breakthrough in ministry happened after he received the teaching anointing from Kenneth Hagin while listening to one of his tapes. From the point of view of the politics of spiritual kinship, this scene can be read as a moment of independence, in which bishop Dag found his own preaching voice and style by moving beyond more immediate mentors, like Duncan-Williams. Curiously, this “personal” voice was found through a fuzzy blend of imitation and a technologically induced impartation from an international preacher, through whom he received his grace and from whom he borrowed a variety of doctrinal frames, including his anointing doctrine. With time the bishop indeed developed a more personal style, and yet his status of Kenneth Hagin’s spiritual son remains and is proudly publicized.

But as it tends to be with spiritual kinship, relations are never dead ends, being both accumulative and recursive. That is how Anagkazo student Ebenezer assembled the Pentecostal revival by evoking the anointing flow and situating the bishop in it:

If you watch carefully the history of the Revival, you can actually trace the anointing flow. When you take someone like Kathryn Kuhlman [USA, 1907-1976], you can see how she behaves like Smith Wigglesworth [England, 1859-1957]. When she operates on the healing anointing ... we have Aimee Semple McPherson [USA, 1890-1944]! You know where she is coming from! And that same anointing passed on to Benny Himn [Israel/Canada, 1952-]. When I watch the bishop preaching, I see Kenneth Hagin [USA, 1917-2003]. When he prays, I see Duncan-Williams [Ghana, 1952-]. Duncan-Williams was his personal mentor. He is also an apostle, just like Idahosa [Nigeria, 1938-1998], who was Duncan-William’s spiritual father. When you see bishop Dag on a crusade, operating as a healing evangelist, he flows exactly like Reinhard Bonke [Germany, 1940-]!

Ebenezer presented me with a series of spiritual lineages that demonstrate well the theopolitical role played by the anointing and its inheritance in charismatic imagination. The basic organizational principle of this true spiritual kinship chart is that similitudes in style index impartation. The relation between the vessel and the recipient of the anointing might be of personal mentorship, like that between Aimee McPherson and Benny Himn, or not, for instance between the healing evangelists Smith Wigglesworth and Kathryn Kuhlman. The anointing also animates, empowers and connects the revivalist body of Christ in time by assembling a deterritorialized community condensed around key pioneers. It is a religiously motivated tool of time-space compression, drawing individuals from diverse localities into a transnational ecclesia, which is also a global history of discourse. This chart is also a map, a tool of discernment helping Ebenezer to situate himself in a complex open source culture. In LCI, diverse flows of the anointing pass through bishop Dag before being pumped into its extensive ecclesiastical veins, reaching his disciples. In this sense, the anointing situates. But as free gift of god, this holy substance also inserts the “LCI family” into the universal ecclesia and successfully merges the “trans-” in transnational with the “trans-” in transcendent (Robbins 2009). In sum, by flowing across time and space and by producing similitudes between vessels, the anointing flow normalizes and globalizes charisma.



*A map for the anointing flow: one source, a multitude of tributaries of diverse sizes and levels of affinity*

As I argued before, the ancient technique of laying on of hands is the main authorized Biblical template evoked by the idea that God-given religious capacities can be inherited from other converts<sup>125</sup>. In 2 Timothy 1:6, the apostle Paul exhorts his disciple Timothy: “I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you *through the laying on of my hands*” (my emphasis, NIV). The passage anticipates in an interesting way some of the defining traits of the social productivity that goes along with impartation, since Paul is encouraging his spiritual son to spread religious enthusiasm while simultaneously reminding him in a fatherly tone of his debt to God and to his mentor, who laid *his* hands so he could receive the gift. Impartation therefore establishes an allegiance and a relation of indebtedness through something (grace, gifts, anointing) that none of the parts ultimately owns. The scene summarized the orienting problem to be tackled by any attempt at producing a regional politics of impartation, as LCI’s: How to govern a church through something one does not own and which can be transferred at ease, without loss?

Here, we are back again with Weber’s point about charismatic authority and its reliance on the origins of power. After all, if the anointing had not a transcendental origin, mimesis could never be read as an effect of the flow of presence, and borrowings could never proliferate so easily as they do. As a result, during soaking in tapes students would be worshipping the bishop, and not God, and they know the vessel is not the source, although this confusion has been a fertile place for heresies in Christian history. One of the ways of answering this problem would be: LCI “mediates” spiritual power and normalizes it by establishing clear doctrinal scripts and conditions of felicity to impartation. We have seen in chapter three that Weber himself enumerates exemplarity as one of the ways whereby a charismatic leader exercises authority over his followers. But mediation for Weber means necessarily routinization, that is, a loss of vitality. By mediating presence, institutions prevent their subjects from diving back into originating charisma, which remains a monopolistic attribute of the leader.

I believe that soaking in tapes can be read as a ritualization of the foundational charisma underpinning LCI’s ecclesiastical miracle. It is not a coincidence that it reiterates bishop Dag’s epiphany as a habit. After all, his epiphany was the birthplace of a family, not only of a man of God, which turned his project into a shared resource. In this sense, practicing soaking in tapes is diving back into the flow of grace that made LCI to be what it is, and the man of God one of the discernable global tributaries of God’s grace. Once a model, the apostle operates here preferably as a conduit *refracting* charisma. I believe Gabriel Tarde’s notion of refraction, just like Kirsch’s (2009) notion of dispersal of charisma mentioned in chapter three, points to the “how” of charismatic authority without embracing a narrative of loss and routinization. It provides an interesting tool to

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<sup>125</sup> As I showed in chapter five, another important template is “the mantle”, used by Elijah to impart his prophetic “anointing” upon his servant Elisha as he ascended to heaven.

think the status of charisma in an open source culture like global Pentecostalism, since it admits the fact that charismatic power can be reproducible and non-mediated, finding both capillary and leader-centered expressions.

Whereas a mediating agent tends to be understood either in a semiotic or political sense of representation, that is, as a sign or a proxy, a refractory agent transports the original instead of simply “standing for” it. This optic metaphor retains the possibility of rethinking the man of God as what he is, all and nothing, a mere conduit, but one that nevertheless endows the flow of grace with a specific signature or style as the original flows through him. Accordingly, his mimetic influence (which is never his) is affirmed without claiming any rights of authorship. Receiving the anointing then becomes “tapping” into it or “catching” it, not imitating the vessel per se. It is clear that mimesis is not simply dismissed by soaking in tapes, but reallocated according to a specific pattern of accountability transmitted authoritatively through the anointing doctrine. In an incipient “as if” stage, mimesis is a form of “yielding” to God, that is, submission to the source and a display of desire to receive, as much as repetitive listening. The moment of “catching” the anointing in when mimesis crosses the threshold between “as if” practice and embodied skill, becoming the disciple’s own *habitus*. Moreover, the anointing flow is predicated on a cultivated relationality in Anagkazo, that of discipleship, thus making of this holy substance the substance of (spiritual) kinship (Carsten 2004: 109-135). By governing through power-relations, LCI also governs through a power-substance that “smears” relations, thus making mimesis contagious in an empowering way<sup>126</sup>.

Anagkazo’s capacity to condition impartation at the level of reception explains why soaking in tapes probably has much less visceral effects when it is practiced by LCI members at their homes than it has when it is performed in contexts with more regulatory control of the listeners, as camp meetings and the Bible school. In Anagkazo, this practice can be approached simultaneously as a spiritual exercise concerning the subject-God relation, a method of discipleship [subject-(spiritual father)- God], and a technology of church government [subject-(spiritual father-institution)-God] underpinning Lighthouse Chapel’s impressive organizational stability. In 25 years, the church has thrived in an authoritative desert, having experienced a very low number of schisms, being able to replicate its norms and styles on a transnational scale. Although external regulatory forms of church administration find extensive use in Lighthouse, and are taught too in Anagkazo, normativity is instilled amidst the church’s pastoral body mainly through a pedagogical codification and spiritualization of Christian citationality (Derrida 1988, Butler 1993, Hollywood 2002, Mahmood 2005) that refracts divine power according to a set of pedagogical allegiances. Assimilating this practice into the rich archive of Christian materiality, it is not incongruous to claim that the haptic voice of soaking in tapes is a pneumatic version of the Eucharist at the level of LCI’s pastoral body. It is a denominational sacrament that dispenses with a wafer while converting inspired words into a matter of contact, consumption, and transference. It is a holy feast in the apostle’s haptic voice.

Again, as with power-relations and loyalty, apostolic uses of imitation and refraction are never all-encompassing, and retain the sense that a denomination is only a node within a much broader movement. I believe this is central to avoid a sectarian tendency that may affect Pentecostal churches and other forms of charismatic Christianity, in which exclusive allegiances to a man of God and his vision may produce a gap and finally a detachment between the family and the movement. Bishop Dag knows this, and we might recall that during the description of his epiphany

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<sup>126</sup> I therefore believe the relational still charismatic nature of Anagkazo’s *askesis* problematizes Foucault’s (1997a) marked opposition between power-substance and power-relation: “Power is not a substance. Neither is it a mysterious property whose origin must be delved into. Power is only a type of relation between individuals” (324). In this sense, and again, my project of thinking the “how” of apostolic power in terms of a set of capillary procedures of government does not mean abandoning the question of its origins.

in chapter five, he warned his readers that “Listening to tapes never replaced Bible study and personal quiet time for me. I wasn’t losing my personality! I wasn’t becoming a clone”. By adding impartation among the potential benefits of loyalty to a man of God, Anagkazo is never simply monopolizing the students’ allegiances. First, how to become a blind and exclusive follower of the charismatic leader if he is both anointed and a confessed imitator? Moreover, catching the bishop’s anointing in Anagkazo is always much more than performing soaking in tapes. It is embracing a mission and also leading a certain life, and I showed how this spiritual exercise must be read always as part of a much broader spiritual diet, which includes Bible memorization, meditation, and prayer, that is, moments in which the students have a direct engagement with the Holy Spirit, “the source” and “the original” through intimacy and ecstasy. Finally, we should not mystify soaking in tapes or the place of bishop Dag in the students’ mimetic repertoire and dreams of empowerment. The Scottish student Caleb compared the anointing to water and told me that, just like bishop Dag in Ebenezer’s description above, he was looking for a right blend of graces in order to define his personal style:

The bishop talks a lot about fathers in ministry, you know? The Holy Spirit joining people. This message has been a real blessing to me. My [biological] father is now in ministry, my grandfather, pastor Bernie, has been in ministry for a long time. That's the anointing I'm trying to catch along with bishop Dag's anointing. The anointing is something you can kind of catch. I think it's like water. It's like, you can grab some from here, you can grab some from there, and you can add all on a cup. (...) That's the grace of god.

Caleb’s tendency to accumulate sources of grace-transmission by pointing to diverse but equally spiritualized form of relatedness can be seen even amidst the students who will pastor LCI branches. The Ivorian student Emmanuel has a deep admiration for bishop Dag and did recognize in his own preaching experiences in Anagkazo and during his third year rotations that he was tapping into the anointing of his spiritual father. Emmanuel told me that, at first, he used to find bishop Dag’s preaching style “too cool”, but now he can understand the architecture of his rhetoric, which slowly builds up momentum by traveling through various “temperaments”, thus pleasing a broader audience: “He can address any temperament and he goes through different temperaments. He always starts cool, but in the end he’s very hot! The bishop always starts as a teacher, in a cool manner. Then he begins to move, it’s like an airplane! Other preachers are high all the time.” Emmanuel told me that although his own “temperament” became “cooler” after he joined the school, he is still personally inclined toward more “choleric” preaching, that is, more extemporaneous and with more intensity than the bishop. He nurtures this personal style by listening to the American ministers Noel Jones and T. D. Jakes, as well as Duncan-Williams, whom he called “our father”. I asked him if language will be an issue when he is back to his home country to work as a missionary, since in Anagkazo he was submitted to an intense training in English, including Bible memorization. He agreed with me, and added to his repertoire of personal references an Ivorian preacher, Kacoun Severin, and bishop Dag’s wife, Adelaide Heward-Mills, who preaches fluently during the French service at the Qodesh. Emmanuel was unclear if he was actually imitating these other preachers or actually “catching” their anointing, and the accountability of impartation does remain blurred in practice. Nevertheless, his comments show how within this open source religious culture, mimesis-only cannot secure loyalty and vice-versa. In this sense, governing through loyalty, mimesis, and the refraction of grace is always a way of navigating within a movement and through a flow of grace with a vast number of tributaries.

##### 5. The prophet and the disciple: finding oneself in a movement

Similar to new political movements, the decentered publics weaved together by new media, and other forms of deterritorialized identities that characterize the contemporary, global Pentecostalism has become an invitation to reshape conventional anthropological categories as society, community, and culture, often deemed overly contextual, thus unable to account for the overall contingency, mobility, and technological saturation that characterize sociality today. This spirituality would belong to a grammar of multitudes, networks, assemblages, transposable language ideologies and rhetorics, notions taken as more adequate to actually translate Pentecostal notions like the “outpouring of the Spirit”, the “fire of God” and the tendency to define itself as a “movement”, thus transcending conventional notions of congregation or church.

The world of the charismatic Christian appears to embody much that Hardt and Negri (...) described as emblematic of the contemporary global movement. The born-again Christian inhabits a world of post-national sovereignty, of non-state centric idioms of belonging, of horizontal networked forms of sociality, of non-linear modes of temporality, of global immanence, of affect and intensity (Piot 2010:75).

Much of this diagnostic has been predicated on this spirituality’s radical individualism. According to Ruth Marshall:

Pentecostalism perhaps more than other forms of Protestantism provides the contemporary archetype of Christianity as “a community without an institution,” but a community of a new type, proper to the forms of diffuse, individualized, and nonisomorphic forms of connectedness in our globalized world. Thus, with respect to structures of political authority of form of collective association or action, the decisive factor remains the spiritual state of the individual (2009: 208).

It is clear that, considering the distinctions I presented in this dissertation, Piot and Marshall are uttering general assessments about Pentecostalism as a dispersed movement. As observed by the very low representativeness of trans-denominational organizations as the Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council or the National Association Charismatic Christian Churches, Pentecostalism as such is hard to grasp both politically and theologically, and any transition from token to type tends to be seen as highly partial, thus with suspicion. A movement is not an object, with clear contours, and if Pentecostalism is to be objectified, this conceptual and political work is more in line with something like defining a kaleidoscope, an entity that can only be totalized as a logic of variability, thus unlikely to be captured by an all-encompassing picture.

Nevertheless, Marshall’s (2009) representation of Pentecostalism in Nigeria exemplifies well what might be a scholarly analysis of the unbounded entity described above, with moments of spectacular and highly mediatized publicity through “signs and wonders” and deep-seated, intimate affects, with no intermediary agent but a “prescriptive apparatus”, a set of practices and technologies of the Self whose normative limits, as I argued, are extremely porous. Her narrative is not centered on any church or fellowship in particular, and its fragmentary style, diving here and there in ethnographic scenes before jumping back to broad conclusions, is the only way of conveying what is Pentecostalism as such: a patchwork of church service scenes drawn from different denominations, moments of personal piety by faceless believers, and long transcriptions from books and videos produced by African ministers. The movement is indeed this patchwork. But if at an emic level, born-again Christians persistently claim consistency without ever really achieving it, the anthropologist has the privilege of flying above and capturing the movement as it is.

Even more surprising though is that finding oneself by seeking the will of God in the “Pentecostal movement” individually and directly, as suggests Marshall, is possible in practice. This is exemplified by one of my acquaintances, Prophet Salomon, which in a place like Anagkazo would

fall in the category of untutored, “self-professed”, and “self-ordained” popular charismatic prophet. It is not that Prophet Solomon has no mentors. His mother is a devout born-again Christian, a prophet and lay leader at the Church of Pentecost who works as a petty trader in La Paz, the Accra neighborhood where they live. During her pregnancy, she received the revelation that her future son was called by God to be a prophet like her. Solomon was raised according to the disciplines of the Christian life to fulfill his providential mandate, a potentiality he eventually embraced as his own. He was born born-again and called by God, having persisted in this path.

Solomon is a frequent visitor of ICGC Odonkor. The head pastor has tried to tutor him, and even paid his fees, so he could attend ICGC’s non-denominational Bible school, Living Word School of Ministry. ICGC Odonkor members find his occasional presence disconcerting, some even entertaining and laughable, for he approaches people randomly whenever he is led by the Spirit, prays for them extemporaneously, and delivers prophetic “words of wisdom” or “words of knowledge”. That is how we met. I visited a development project run by this church during my first visit to Accra in 2009 and Solomon stopped me and told me he had to pray for me and “speak words in my life”. Through his prayer and declarations we connected. We lived close to each other, and Solomon invited me to meet his mother and five sisters, who sing marvelously and were about to record a gospel CD when I left Accra in 2011. I was welcomed to his home many times since our first meeting and started following some of Solomon’s everyday activities, which gave me a glimpse of the life of a popular charismatic prophet.

Solomon had abandoned secondary school six years earlier, and since then had been living his life day by day. When there is food, he eats, when money is drying up, he “fasts”, sometimes for whole weeks, having a single meal in the morning. He makes piety of poverty and it is difficult to tell when he is being led by the Spirit, and when by his stomach. He makes a modest income by organizing prayer meetings in a construction site in Kaneshie and receives more regular alms from two businessmen he counsels and for whom he periodically prays. Prophet Solomon has “clients” and uses his gifts in an oracular manner in order to solve their problems. As many charismatic prophets tend to be, Solomon developed no deep allegiance to any church, although he attends many of them, from Monday to Sunday, most of the times as a congregant, sometimes as an invited guest. His personal doctrine is a bricolage of the various books by international charismatic ministers he owns and famous Ghanaian preachers who have “blessed him” with their messages, including ICGC’s Otabil. He believes in prosperity, the end-times, the power of faith, and especially in the Holy Spirit and a full-fledged set of spiritual gifts. He adds to these an influence from his mother’s church, and is certain that the Bible prescribes that women should wear headscarves in church and preferably outside of it.

From the point of view of the ethical and spiritual “equipment” (Foucault 2005) he operates, Solomon is not so different from Anagkazo students. He fasts and prays, hears God, meditates, keeps records of his revelations in notebook, and knows the Bible as a second language. He “thinks Biblically” and can make of any everyday event a token of a Biblical type. He even receives electronic impartations from a mediatic spiritual father. He considers himself a spiritual son of the Nigerian preacher Christian Oyakhilome, popularly known as pastor Chris, and consumes his CDs and DVDs periodically by buying or borrowing them. Pastor Chris is one of his main models for preaching, and Solomon borrows themes and entire sermons from the Nigeria man of God. He even speaks with a similar accent and shares a dressing style, as shown in the picture below, which he gifted me with. His friends and neighbors playfully call him “pastor Chris”.





*On the left, Prophet Joshua. On the right, his mediatic spiritual father, Pastor Christian Oyakhilome, from Christ Embassy, Nigeria*

Solomon's desire for God runs almost untamed. To be sure, he is held accountable by his mother, who tries to follow his spiritual development, but she is just too busy most of the time, trying to make a living, since her husband abandoned her when their children were still young. As a zealous Christian, Solomon lives in the world without belonging to it, and takes the streets as his parish, helping building the Kingdom of God in his own way. Solomon is awkwardly free, even autonomous. At night, he might sleep or be out praying for five hours. His schedule is erratic and is itself "led". He submits only to God and his Spirit as he embraces "the Pentecostal movement". As a result, Solomon also embraces Ghana's Christian problem-space mostly alone, navigating it without a guide, or with far too many guides to keep any degree of consistency. Solomon is a self-employed entrepreneur of the end-times church, and his religious agency is both heightened and erratic. His politics is either of short-term survival or long-term salvation. It is either intensely within the now or oriented toward a far future, the near future having receded into a temporal frame Guyer (2007) calls "punctuated time", which she considers the overarching spirit of our days.

What makes Solomon so different from Anagkazo students -- the prophet from the disciple? I believe apostolic power becomes generative when it inhabits the near futurity of its subjects-disciples. It is from this temporal zone that desire for god moves from untutored to tutored, where relations, communities, and institutions grow, and where the Spirit-led prophet may become the disciple, who is still Spirit-led, but in a different way. From this perspective, the politics of the end-times church is primarily a politics of realignments, of building mediating bodies and bonds that can both hold zeal accountable by embedding it in communities of discernment and give to desire for God a more stable orientation. This is therefore a politics of reterritorializing global flows, and not only through highly personal and aestheticized bricollages, as in Solomon's case, but through a methodic engagement with relatively stable norms and structures of exemplarity. In this sense, apostolic power addresses the problem Ferguson (2006: 155-175) deems the most central to any debates on African globality today: how ideologies of global flows become or not a path to membership and belonging.

It is curious that I started unveiling this dimension of Pentecostalism by engaging not with multitudes, networks, and travelling affects per se (although those were always there), but by tracing the diverse uses of the most basic form of relationality, probably the subject most exhaustively tackled by the anthropological tradition: kinship, understood as a figure of nurturance. This figure points exactly to moments in which subjects question their own authority to decide if what they believe, feel or desire is truly a good. According to MacIntyre (1999), this process of recognizing

one's vulnerability while locating oneself in a shared life is the basis for other forms of legitimate authority that both transcend and extend kinship's primary role as a means of nurturance:

What is or would be good or best for me is something on which, apart from the fact that generally and characteristically I know more about myself than others do, I may in many and crucial respects be no more of an authority than some others and in some respects a good deal less of an authority than some others. My physician, or my trainer, if I am an athlete, or my teacher, if I am a student, may well be better placed to make judgments about my good than I am. And so on occasion may my friend. About both goods in general and our own good in particular we have to learn from others, if we are to be able to judge truly for ourselves, and the others whom we first encountered as teachers are such persons as parents, aunts, nurses, and the like (71).

MacIntyre undertands that the process of delegating authority over oneself is the beginning of the cultivation of what he calls the "virtues of acknowledge dependence" (1999: 119-128). In the case of Pentecostalism, spiritual kinship is uncanny because it partially submits the converts' very submission to God, their desire to be reshaped anew and be led by his will and Spirit, to the guiding influence of a human other, and that is how it becomes suffused by power. By recognizing vulnerability, the born-again subject may flourish qua baby, daughter, son, member, before flourishing qua entrepreneur, finding him or herself in a walking alongside a companion or a mentor. As I argued, this joint walk can be attached either to highly capillary relations, as in Rev. Ofori or Prophetess Priscilas' families, or to institutions and ecclesiastical machineries, such as churches, fellowships, and Bible schools. Solomon might put a face to the Pentecostal movement when he follows Christ by following pastor Chris, but this relation is not reciprocal and cannot hold him responsible. It cannot authenticate the copy in an enduring manner.

In LCI, we saw that spiritual kinship is endowed with an impressive recursivity whose main virtue is to convey a sense of situatedness to the Christian life. It therefore draws the head of the church closer to its deterritorialized fringes through a chain of citations connecting micro and macro, thus populating authoritatively exactly the mid-range area that so blatantly is absent in Solomons' prophetic lifestyle. As a result, the more situated my analysis became by following the tread of spiritual kinship, the less particular and the more global it became, even including non-Ghanaian interlocutors. Although someone like Solomon exhudes globality, the general lack of embededness of his Christian lifestyle tends to make it closer to Ferguson's hypothesis of a global mimesis that hides deep disconnection, whereas Anagkazo globalizes because it knows how to situate. Similarly to any global culture, Pentecostalism is always performed locally: it not not require mobility as such. But it does require scaling up the local to the global through imagination, mimesis, connectivity, and belonging.

The most unique trait of Anagkazo's disciplinary complex is the effort made to reshape the disciple's agency by submitting it to an ethical and spiritual equipment that includes relationality as one of its key components, adding layers of submission and conditionalities to what would be Solomon's Spirit-led agency. By doing so, agency emerges anew within structures that allow its authentication. Those are also structures enabling the rise of a more conventional near futurity, making of the walk with Christ a form of progress, at once religious and material, in the form of spiritual maturation and social mobility within an instituton-family guided by a shared mission. The differences between Solomon and Anagkazo students -- the prophet and the disciple -- point to the impotence of further exploring the varieties assumed by Pentecostalism in a place like Ghana, and tracing its various forms of deterritorialization without ignoring how this global movement can still be captured and condensed around leaders and institutions, large and small, with variable forms of taming and being drawn into Ghana's Christian problem-space. In this sense, the question we all share, anthropologists and Pentecostals alike - What or who is a Pentecostal Christian in Ghana

today? - has become predicated on yet another pressing question: Who do you follow in your walk with Christ?

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