Gender, Social Change and Spiritual Power

Charismatic Christianity in Ghana

Jane E. Soothill

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On the cover: "'Tehilla-praise' during which the power of God fell mightily on people." This photo is reproduced with permission of Rev. Isaac R. Akorli, Amazing Grace Gospel International.

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For my parents

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PREFACE

Charismatic Christianity is a global phenomenon. Since the late 1970s it has spread from the United States to many parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is the most recent and fastest growing expression of Pentecostal religion in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Ghana, the "new" charismatic churches dominate the religious scene, especially in urban centres such as Accra, the capital. This book is based on research conducted in three of Accra's new churches. Against a backdrop of debate concerning the role of Pentecostalism as a mediator of "modernity", the book examines the interaction between charismatic Christianity, social change and gender in contemporary Ghana.

Ghanaian gender politics are characterised by the concept of "gender complementarity", which is reproduced in the discourses of the charismatic churches. The new churches also introduce an element of "individualism" to discourses on women, which creates tension between women's social roles and their individual trajectories. In charismatic Christianity, however, individualism is complicated by the power and authority of pastors. This book examines the leadership roles of female pastors and pastors' wives. It illustrates how the "big women" of Ghana's charismatic movement both produce new forms of gendered authority and re-legitimise established norms.

The book also considers charismatic discourses on men, marriage and family life. Constructions of family life in the new churches correspond with a broader cultural shift towards the individuated nuclear family system. This is illustrated, in particular, by the churches' focus on the importance of romance, intimacy and conjugal love. The gender discourses of the charismatic churches are also "spiritualised", and the book considers, therefore, the role of spiritual power in interpreting gendered social change. It is argued that the religious practices of the new churches provide believers with access to spiritual power, which sometimes they use to mediate their gendered relationships.

The book concludes that charismatic Christianity represents an instance of "hybridity" in which local and global gender discourses intersect. As a global phenomenon, charismatic Christianity is a source of counter-cultural critique. Its spiritualised discourses, however, remain firmly rooted in Africa's religious imagination.

Many people have contributed to this research. I am especially grateful to Professor Paul Gifford for his guidance and unfailing enthusiasm for the project. Special thanks go also to Professor David Martin, Dr Kevin Ward, Rev Dr Patrick Claffey, Dr Richard Bartholomew, Professor Louis Brenner, the late Dr Julia Leslie, Dr Yumiko Yoko Zeki, Mrs Emily Asiedu ("Aunty"), the late Dr Sue Benson, Professor Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Dr Brigid Sackey, Dr Esi Sutherland, Dr Audrey Gadzepko, and the pastors and members of Action Chapel International, Alive Chapel International and Solid Rock Chapel International.

I would also like to thank my parents, who have helped in so many ways, and Dr James Soothill whose support and encouragement have been invaluable in bringing this project to completion.

ABBREVIATIONS

31DWM	31st December Women's Movement
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AWAG	All Women's Association of Ghana
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAFM	Christian Action Faith Ministries
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHRAJ	Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CPP	Convention People's Party
EATWOT	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
ERP	Economic Recovery Programme
FEGAWO	Federation of Ghanaian Women
FIDA	International Federation of Women Lawyers
GJA	Ghana Journalists Association
ICGC	International Central Gospel Church
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KICC	Kingsway International Christian Centre
MDCC	Musama Disco Christo Church
NCGW	National Council of Ghana Women
NCWD	National Council for Women and Development
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPP	National Patriotic Party
NRC	National Redemption Council
PAMSCAD	Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment
PCG	Presbyterian Church of Ghana
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAJU	Women and Juvenile Unit
WDF	Women's Development Fund
WID	Women in Development
WISE	Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

INTRODUCTION

Ghana and the "New" Churches

Ghana's population of approximately nineteen million people is composed of seventy-five ethnic groups. The largest of these groups are the Akan, the Mossi, the Ewe, and the Ga. Alongside the widespread use of English in urban areas, there are an additional forty-four languages and dialects spoken across the country. Since the turn of the last century Ghana has experienced rapid urbanisation with almost 44 per cent of the population currently living in towns and cities. Those living in Accra, the capital city, number just over one and a half million, whilst Ghana's second largest city, Kumasi, has a population of just over one million.[1] Religious affiliation is divided between Islam (16 per cent), Christianity (60 per cent) and a plurality of "traditional" religions (20 per cent).

For most of the twentieth century Ghanaian Christianity has been divided between four denominational groups, with Catholics representing the largest church, followed by the Protestant "mainline" denominations (Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists), the classical Pentecostal churches (including the Assemblies of God and the Church of Pentecost) and the African Instituted Churches. In the past two decades, however, the fastest growth rate has been among the new charismatic (or "neo-Pentecostal") churches. They have made an enormous impact on Ghana's religious scene, especially in Accra where they now occupy many of the city's disused cinemas, industrial buildings and other formerly secular sites. Posters and fliers advertising upcoming charismatic conventions and conferences are plastered across the walls of Accra and the amplified noise of the all-night prayer services can be heard throughout the city almost every Friday evening.

The largest of the new charismatic churches in Accra is Winners' Chapel, founded in Nigeria by David Oyedepo. Other churches notable for

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[1] This compares with 27,707 people living in Accra in 1891 and 18,853 people living in Kumasi in 1911 (G. K. Nukunya, *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology*, Accra: Ghana University Press, 2003, 141). The population of Greater Accra (including, Tema, Madina and Adenta) is estimated to be about five million.

their size and the prominence of their founders are the International Central Gospel Church (Mensa Otabil), Action Chapel International (Nicholas Duncan-Williams), Word Miracle Church International (Charles Agyin-Asare), Royal House Chapel (Sam Korankye-Ankrah), and Lighthouse Chapel (Dag Heward-Mills). This book is concerned primarily with just three of Ghana's new churches and a brief introduction to them is given below.

Action Chapel International

Action Chapel is the oldest of Ghana's new charismatic churches. Following his conversion by the Acquah sisters at Korle Bu hospital in 1976, Nicholas Duncan-Williams went to Benson Idahosa's Church of God International Bible School in Benin City, Nigeria in 1977. He returned to Ghana in 1979 where he founded Christian Action Faith Ministries (CAFM). The church meets in an imposing building called the "Prayer Cathedral" near the city's airport. Services have been held there since 1992. However, the building was not officially opened until December 2002 and building work still continues (in 2003). Action Chapel's Sunday services attract around 3,000 people of mixed age, sex and social status, although a high proportion of Action Chapel's congregants are middle-class professionals and business people. The church holds two services on Sundays, a mid-week Communion service on Wednesday evenings, a popular deliverance session on Thursday mornings called "Jericho Hour", another smaller deliverance service on Tuesdays ("Demolition Hour"), a women's prayer group on Monday evenings, an early prayer meeting on Saturday mornings, and various other departmental meetings and activities.

Bishop Duncan-Williams (recently ordained Archbishop) spends much of his time in the United States and the church is effectively run by his deputy, Bishop James Saah, and the pastor-in-charge, Rev Clive Mold. It has been suggested that Duncan-Williams' frequent absences, in conjunction with his marital difficulties (his divorce from and remarriage to the same woman, Francisca Duncan-Williams), have led to a decline in church membership.[2] However, Christian Action Faith

[2] Paul Gifford notes that at the time of Duncan-Williams' divorce (March 2001) church attendance had fallen from 6,000 people five years before to 3,000 (*Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy*, London: Hurst & Company, 2004). Since the writing of my book, Nicholas and Francisca Duncan-Williams have announced for a second time that they are to divorce. The effects of this on Action Chapel are yet to be seen.

Ministries remains influential, and many charismatic pastors look to Duncan-Williams as the spiritual father of the charismatic movement in Ghana.

Alive Chapel International

Following his conversion to Christianity, the founder of Alive Chapel International, Prophet Elisha Salifu Amoako—a poor, illiterate Muslim by birth—worked in the Resurrection Power Evangelistic Ministry for Evangelist Francis Akwesi Amoako. After the latter's death, Prophet Salifu came to Accra in 1994 to begin his Jesus is Alive Evangelistic Ministry at the Orion cinema amidst the hustle and bustle of Kwame Nkrumah Circle, in the heart of the city. In 1998 the ministry was established as a church, Alive Chapel International, which now attracts about 1,500 people to its Sunday services. Aside from the church's Sunday service, Alive Chapel holds a mid-week service on Wednesday evenings, the women's fellowship and the youth fellowship meet on Mondays, a deliverance service is held on Tuesday mornings, the choir rehearses on Thursday evenings, and a women's prayer meeting has recently started (June 2003) on Friday evenings. A men's fellowship sometimes meets on Thursdays. When Prophet Salifu is overseas, which is often, the church is run by Pastor Bempah, a law graduate from the University of Ghana.

Solid Rock Chapel International

The Rev Christie Doe Tetteh is also a product of Benson Idahosa's Church of God International Bible School, which she attended with Nicholas Duncan-Williams and Charles Agyin-Asare of Word Miracle Church International. She was working as a receptionist at the Riviera Beach Hotel when she was converted in 1977 at a crusade hosted in Accra by Benson Idahosa. She spent the next twelve years in Nigeria, first attending the Bible School and then working as a secretary for Bishop Idahosa. On her return to Accra she spent a brief period as a pastor at Addae Mensah's Gospel Light Chapel International before establishing her own church, Solid Rock Chapel, at North Kaneshie in 1994.

The church has grown considerably since its humble beginnings as a series of early morning prayer meetings under a mango tree outside Christie Doe Tetteh's house. In April 2003 the church relocated to the "City of Faith" in the Kwabenya Mountains on the outskirts of northern Accra. The branch at North Kaneshie was renamed the "Prophetic Centre"

and Prophet Tony was installed as its branch pastor. Sunday services at City of Faith attract between 300 and 400 people, mainly women, whilst considerably fewer attend the Prophetic Centre. Solid Rock also holds a deliverance service in Achimota Forest on Tuesday mornings,[3] a Wednesday morning "Hotline Service" at North Kaneshie, and an additional deliverance session on Friday mornings at City of Faith. The women's fellowship meets at North Kaneshie on Thursday evenings.

Solid Rock also boasts a Bible school—through which most of the church's predominantly female pastors have passed—which is run by Rev Shaddrack Addei. The senior pastor of the church is Rev Cecilia Mensah. Since the departure, early in 2003, of Christie Doe Tetteh's assistant pastor, Grace Nuah-Mensah, Rev Shaddrack acts as Solid Rock's pastor-in-charge during Christie Doe Tetteh's increasingly frequent and prolonged absences.

The Research

This book is based on research gathered in the course of two fieldwork trips to Ghana, the first between July and September 2002 and the second between April and September 2003. During both of these research periods, I regularly attended services at Action Chapel, Alive Chapel and Solid Rock. I also participated in the women's fellowship meetings of these three churches and attended five national women's conventions. Aside from these activities, I went to weddings, conferences, pastors' wives meetings and any other organised event that I had the opportunity to attend. In addition to these formal research activities, I spent a considerable amount of time in the field conversing and socialising with church members and pastors, sitting with them after services, visiting them in their homes, and hosting their visits to my own home. In conjunction with these informal encounters, having established good relationships with a number of male and female pastors and participants, towards the end of my second fieldwork period I recorded eighteen in-depth interviews.[4]

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[3] Achimota Forest, on the edge of Accra, has become a popular place to hold deliverance sessions and a number of charismatic churches rent "stations" within the forest for this purpose. The sound of fervent prayer and the murmur of spiritual "tongues" can be heard early every morning rising above the tops of the forest's trees.

[4] Where I refer to interviews with lay members, I will use my informants' first names only.

The research data from which I make my analysis is drawn from these interviews, and from notes taken at church services, women's conventions, fellowships and prayer meetings, and from casual conversations, as well as from a large body of books, magazines and pamphlets produced by local and foreign charismatic pastors and collected by the author. Whilst the majority of my research was carried out in the three churches introduced above, I also attended events at other charismatic churches when this seemed appropriate and when the event, such as a women's convention, was relevant to gender-based research.

At each church I presented myself as a participant observer who was interested in attending the activities of the churches with a view to writing about the effects of the charismatic movement on Ghanaian gender issues. In Action Chapel, Alive Chapel and Solid Rock I sought permission from Francisca Duncan-Williams, Pastor Bempah and Rev Cecilia Mensah respectively to work in their churches and talk to church members. Whilst all three welcomed me into their fold—having expressed some surprise that anyone might feel it necessary to seek permission to go to church—I found that my presence was treated quite differently in each church. (This is discussed in Chapter One.) When asked about my religious beliefs, and in particular whether or not I was "born again", I always replied that whilst I had been baptised "in the spirit" (I am an ex-evangelical Christian), the church I was baptised in (an evangelical Baptist church) did not practice *glossolalia* (speaking-in-tongues). The churches' broad acceptance of me as a born-again Christian—even though my views on many things differed substantially from theirs—enabled me to participate in church life in a relatively open and accepting atmosphere.

My "born-again" identity did not, of course, counteract all the difficulties inherent in the production of research about people with whom one does not ultimately share a world-view (a problem addressed in Chapter One). However, as far as possible, during my time in Ghana I tried to immerse myself in the daily lives of Action Chapel, Alive Chapel and Solid Rock. I prayed with them, sang and danced with them, celebrated marriages with them, occasionally was asked to preach to them,[5] and even sang sometimes in their choirs. I joined

[5] The first evening I attended Alive Chapel women's fellowship in August 2002, the fellowship president had apparently been told to expect "a missionary" from London. On my arrival I was led to the stage and introduced as a preacher from the UK. With thirty expectant faces staring up at me I explained who I actually was and why I wanted

their women's fellowships, paid my monthly dues, bought three sets of fellowship cloth and sewed three uniforms. At Alive Chapel I even became an "honorary" member of the men's fellowship. My intention, in taking this approach, was to attempt to produce research that represents accurately the discourses of the charismatic churches, but which reflects also the sometimes complex interaction between discourses and the people who encounter them. Inevitably, this approach to research encounters methodological problems and limitations. These are discussed in Chapter One.

Overview

The book is in two parts. Chapters One, Two and Three establish the intellectual, phenomenological and regional context for analysing the gender discourses of Accra's charismatic churches. The analysis is presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six. In Chapter Seven I make my concluding remarks. Chapter One raises some of the theoretical issues implicit in the study of religion and gender in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa. It establishes an intellectual framework for analysing the religious beliefs and cultural practices of others, and it acknowledges the limitations of the research methods employed.

Chapter Two looks in some detail at the type of Christianity under consideration in the book. This chapter provides an overview of the main characteristics of charismatic Christianity and it discusses in cross-cultural perspective the role of the charismatic churches in promoting social change. In particular, it raises the issue of gender and social change in the history of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity, from the domestic ideology of early nineteenth-century revivalism to the modern "feel good" Christianity of contemporary American evangelicalism. This historical and cross-cultural approach to charismatic Christianity and gender shapes many of the research questions addressed in the main body of the book.

Additional research questions arise from the regional context of the study, which is the subject of Chapter Three. The chapter examines the historical development of Ghanaian gender ideologies. In particular,

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to join them in their fellowship meetings. Once my efforts had been translated into the local language, Twi, the women clapped politely—though their disappointment in my performance was palpable—and I was allowed to return to my seat.

it draws attention to the prominence of "gender complementarity", a concept which characterises pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial gender politics. This chapter provides the cultural context for an analysis of the gender discourses of Accra's charismatic churches, which follows in the second part of the book.

Chapter Four examines charismatic beliefs about femininity and womanhood at the level of discourse. The discussion focuses on concepts of "individualism" and self-development, and it challenges the view that the gender discourses of charismatic Christianity are characterised primarily by female domesticity and the reassertion of "patriarchy". It assesses the extent to which the churches provide a counter-cultural critique of Ghanaian gender norms.

Turning to questions of gender, power and authority in practice, Chapter Five explores the relationship between the female leaders and the female participants of the churches. In particular, the chapter considers to what extent pastors' wives and women pastors appeal to cultural models of gendered authority for sources of power and prestige. It assesses whether these cultural models reflect or undermine some of the charismatic beliefs about womanhood addressed in Chapter Four.

Against a backdrop of broader cultural changes that have affected marital and familial structures in post-colonial Ghana, Chapter Six looks at charismatic discourses on men, marriage and family life. It examines the attitudes of the churches towards the conjugal bond and towards male and female behaviour within marital relationships. In particular, the chapter draws attention to the rise of a spiritualised discourse on male behaviour and family life, which represents men as the victims of spiritual manipulations and women as men's primary saviours.

The concluding chapter draws together the main themes of the book in an attempt to offer some insight into the nature of Christianity, African religiosity, and gender. The discussion in Chapter Seven returns to some of the points raised in the first chapter in order to highlight the often complex relationship between charismatic Christianity and gender politics in contemporary Ghana.

CHAPTER ONE

RELIGION AND GENDER IN AFRICA

Below are a series of discussions concerning the theoretical implications of some of the terms and concepts that recur in this book. The intention is to situate the subsequent chapters in some theoretical context and to establish a framework which underlies the use of these terms and which recognises the inherent fluidity and changeability of them within Western academic discourse. It is in no sense intended as an exhaustive exposition of a broad range of debates, which incorporate a number of theoretical disciplines from gender studies and feminism to poststructuralism and postcolonialism. With this limitation in mind, the chapter is intended to fulfil two functions: first, to introduce some of the key terms used in the book and second, to consider their meaning in the study of religion and gender in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa.

Religion

The meaning of "religion" as it is understood in the West may differ substantially from the meanings it is given in Africa or elsewhere in the non-Western world. It is commonplace to speak of religion in Africa as part of the social fabric of everyday life as opposed to a separate sphere of human activity:

> In African life and thought, the religious is not distinguished from the nonreligious, the sacred from the secular, the spiritual from the material. In all undertakings—whether it be cultivating, sowing, harvesting, eating, travelling—religion is at work. To be born into the African society is to be born into a culture that is intensely religious . . . it has been said that in the traditional African society there are no atheists or agnostics.[1]

[1] Kwame Gyeke, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction*, Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company, 1996, 4.

Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa is no less "religious" than "traditional" Africa is portrayed to have been.[2] Religion remains integral to both the public world of modern politics and the private world of everyday life. In contrast to the perceived state of religiosity in the West—analyses of which are dominated by the secularisation thesis[3]—Africa is said to be experiencing the spiritualisation and "re-traditionalisation"[4] of its social worlds. In fact, some go so far as to suggest that it is simply not possible to understand Africa's current predicament without heeding the resurgence of "traditional" modes of religiosity in political and social life. Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, for example, contend that religious relationships "constitute perhaps the most important way in which Africans interact with the rest of the world".[5] They argue that "it is largely through religious ideas that Africans think about the world today, and that religious ideas provide them with a means of becoming social and political actors".[6]

But what does "religion" in an African context mean? In this book it is understood that religion in Africa is primarily about "power". African "traditional" religions (of which there are many) are informed by a world-view that is common to all. This world-view holds that events in the material world are influenced by the activities of a spirit world with which human beings interact.[7] The spirit world is more powerful

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[2] The terms "tradition" and "modern" are used in this book with some caution. While useful as analytical terms, the dichotomy they imply may not be sustained empirically (see John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, "Introduction", in John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff (eds.), *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Post-Colonial Africa*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993, xii).

[3] The secularisation thesis asserts that religious adherence in parts of Europe has become increasingly individualistic and voluntaristic. It details the retreat of religion from the public sphere, the privatisation of religious belief, the decline of religion's discursive power and its relegation to the status of voluntary association (Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedral to Cults*, Oxford: OUP, 1996). Cautious of secularisation as a grand theory, David Martin suggests that secularisation in Europe has evolved in accordance with "basic patterns". Broadly speaking, patterns of secularisation are determined by the overall "frame" of society; and specifically, by whether religion is characterised by "monopoly" or "some variety of pluralism" (*A General Theory of Secularization*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1978).

[4] Patrick Chabal, "The African Crisis: Context and Interpretation", in Richard Werbner and Terence Ranger (eds.), *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*, London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1996, 29.

[5] Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa*, London: Hurst & Company, 2004, 2.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] Outlining the main features of "African Traditional Religion", Kofi Asare Opoku writes: "The unseen is as much a part of reality as that which is seen; in other words,

than the material world. However, the power of the spirit world can be accessed by those in the material world who possess the necessary skills and knowledge. This spiritual power is morally neutral and can be used for either benevolent or malevolent ends.[8] Those in possession of spiritual power, therefore, are both revered and feared.

Religious practice in Africa, then, is more pragmatic than it is prescriptive or dogmatic; it is "more a matter of personal and social well-being than ecclesiastical structures and creedal formulations".[9] It is also more concerned with the "explanation, prediction and control"[10] of events in this world than it is with the prescription of moral values or norms of behaviour.[11] This concept of religiosity may apply as much to local expressions of Christianity and Islam as it does to "traditional" religions.[12] Furthermore, it might be argued that religion in Africa is less concerned with the prescription and authorisation of gender roles than other forms of religion elsewhere in the world.[13] This is not to

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the spiritual is as much a part of reality as the material, and there is a complementary relationship between the two" (*West African Traditional Religion*, Accra: Fep International Private Limited, 1978, 8).

[8] "[T]he moral nature of spirits traditionally depends on the nature of the relationship between human beings and the spirit world with which they interact" (Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds*, 54). It is noted also, however, that in modern Africa "many have come to see traditional spirits as being harmful by nature" (*ibid.*), which is evident in the rise and preoccupations of charismatic Christianity.

[9] Abamfo Atiemo, "Deliverance in the Charismatic Churches in Ghana", *Trinity Journal of Church and Theology*, 4 (2), 1994–5, 46.

[10] Robin Horton, *Patterns of Thought in Africa and the West: Essays on Magic, Religion and Science*, Cambridge: CUP, 1997, 306.

[11] Gyeke argues that in contrast to Western cultures, the moral values of African peoples are not founded on religion and that it is not religious doctrines that justify moral beliefs: "This is not to deny, however, that religion plays some role in the moral lives of individuals… religion constitutes part of the sanctions that are in play in matters of moral *practice*. Thus, religion cannot be completely banished from the domain of moral practice, notwithstanding the fact that moral values of the African society did not derive directly from religion" (*African Cultural Values*, 56–7).

[12] An important factor in the rise of African Instituted Churches is thought to be the failure of the mission churches to deal effectively with the reality of the unseen world in the lives of Christian converts (David B. Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of 6,000 Contemporary Religious Movements*, Nairobi: OUP, 1968; Inus Daneel, *Quest for Belonging: Introduction to a Study of African Independent Churches*, Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 1987; Allan, H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Instituted Churches in the Twentieth Century*, Trenton NJ: Africa, 2001). Conflict between doctrinal religion and the underlying world-view of African Christians is manifest also in more contemporary controversies, such as that surrounding the ministry of Archbishop Milingo in Zambia (see Gerrie ter Haar, *Spirit of Africa: The Healing Ministry of Archbishop Milingo of Zambia*, London: Hurst, 1992).

[13] It is necessary to draw some distinction here between the relationship of gender to

suggest that religious practice in Africa bears no relation to gender or that participation in religion cannot be used to construct or challenge gender norms.[14] Nor does it suggest that African modes of religiosity are immune to change or adaptation. After all, African cultures are not static. It does imply, however, that even where explicitly prescriptive elements are introduced—in the case of Christianity, for example, which does generate religious and moral doctrines on gender[15]—an underlying emphasis on the explanation, prediction and control of events persists. Access to spiritual power continues to inform everyday religious practices and symbols, and gender relations—though influenced by religion's discursive power—continue to be mediated primarily through perceptions of reciprocity between this world and the world of the spirits. Herein lies the appeal of charismatic Christianity, which according to this book enables people to explain, predict and sometimes control their gendered relationships.

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religion at the level of doctrine and the relationship of gender to religion at the level of the symbolic. Gender theorists within the study of religions have demonstrated the extent to which religion and gender are interrelated concepts that help to shape our social and conceptual worlds (see Ursula King (ed.), *Religion and Gender*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), and insofar as religion informs the construction of gender at the level of the symbolic through its myths, rituals and symbols, this is applicable to African religious cultures. Oyeronke Olajubu, for example, notes that the interdependency of gender relations is "an overriding principle" of African religious symbolism ("Gender and Religion: Gender and African Religious Traditions", in Lindsay Jones (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religions*, London et al.: Macmillan Reference, 2005 (second edition), 3402). However, the authorisation of gender roles and gender identities may be less explicit within religious traditions that are not grounded in a doctrinal or theological heritage.

[14] Studies of African women's engagement with religion, for example, illustrate some of the ways in which religious practices and symbols both construct gender norms and enable women to challenge their personal and structural positions: "Churches, mosques, shrines and cult gatherings are sites in which normative ideals are even more deeply embedded, and arenas from which women can appropriate moral, emotional and material resources to pursue their own projects" (Andrea Cornwall, "Introduction: Perspectives on Gender in Africa", in Andrea Cornwall (ed.), *Readings in Gender in Africa*, Oxford: James Currey, 2005, 11). Dorothy Hodgson and Sheryl McCurdy include spirit possession cults and "other forms of spiritual expression" among the "myriad ways" in which African women express demands and exercise power ("Introduction: "Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa", in Dorothy L. Hodgson and Sheryl A. McCurdy (eds.), *"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa*, Oxford: James Curry, 2001, 5). The use of religion as a political tool has been particularly emphasised by scholars of African Instituted Christianity with Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed going so far as to call the AICs "a women's movement" (*A History of the Church in Africa*, Cambridge: CUP, 2000, 684; see also, Barrett, *Schism*, 150, and Hugo Hinfelaar, *Bemba Speaking Women of Zambia in a Century of Religious Change (1892–1992)*, London: Brill, 1994).

[15] This is apparent in mission Christianity, for example, which is discussed in Chapter Three.

Gender

In the early 1980s, when "gender studies" was beginning to find its feet in the (somewhat reluctant) social sciences,[16] the task of defining "sex" and "gender" was a relatively simple matter of distinguishing cultural "construct" from biological "fact". In their efforts to undermine the biological determinism that had plagued both popular and scholarly depictions of women, feminist researchers highlighted the importance of studying gender as a cultural category that gives social and cultural meanings to sexed bodies. Whilst this conceptualisation of gender as an analytical category did much to broaden understanding of "maleness" and "femaleness"—especially in cross-cultural perspective[17]—more recent theorising on the relationship between gender and sex suggests that all is not as it may have appeared through 1980s spectacles.

Contemporary feminist theorising has made the task of categorising sex and gender increasingly difficult and the relationship between them far more ambiguous than previously thought. Sex, for example, has come to be conceptualised as a socio-cultural construction (rather like gender) as opposed to a biological given,[18] with the attendant implication that individuals are able to "choose" their gendered and sexual identities.[19] In practice, however, the destabilising of sex and gender has not led to their complete collapse as useful categories of analysis. From an empirical point of view, they still provide important markers on the path between extreme voluntarism and biological determinism:

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[16] Gender was accepted as a valid category of analysis in literary studies and the humanities, for example, much earlier than it was in the social sciences.

[17] Anna Meigs' research on the Hua of Papua New Guinea, for example, illustrated the complex and multifaceted nature of gender construction with a description of the "degrees" of femininity or masculinity attributed to males and females at different times in their lifecycles ("Multiple Gender Ideologies and Statuses", in Peggy Reeves Sanday and Ruth Gallagher Goodenough (eds.), *Beyond the Second Sex: New Directions in the Anthropology of Gender*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1990).

[18] "Sex became understood as the product of a regulatory discourse on gender in which the surfaces of bodies are differentially marked and charged with signification" (Henrietta Moore, "Whatever Happened to Women and Men? Gender and other Crises in Anthropology", in Henrietta Moore (ed.), *Anthropological Theory Today*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999, 155).

[19] This position owes much to Judith Butler's theory of gender "performance" (*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990), although others have interpreted Butler's work to mean that bodies simply do not matter and that gender operates purely at the level of individual voluntarism. Such misreading of her ideas prompted Butler to publish *Bodies That Matter* (New York: Routledge) in 1993, which reasserted the importance of sexed bodies in the construction of gender identities.

> The boundary between sex and gender may be unstable, but that does not mean that they can be collapsed into each other. We may be able to enter into multiple constructions of gender and sexuality; we may be able to play with our gender identities and our sexual practices and resist dominant social constructions, but we should not confuse the instability of sexual signifiers with the imminent disappearance of women and men themselves, as we know them physically, symbolically and socially.[20]

Gender identities then, and possibly sexual identities too, are considered to be in some sense "constructions" and, by implication, subject to deconstruction and challenge. However, the question of how sex and gender are constructed and deconstructed remains; though on this point much has been written. A large part of the debate is concerned with the relative significance of social structures and individual agency in determining the influence of gender on people's lives. With the benefit of insights gleamed from cross-cultural empirical analysis, the "anthropology of gender" has contributed much to this debate; not least by revealing discrepancies between the cultural meanings given to gender and the actual experiences of individual subjects in their everyday lives. This has led some scholars to challenge what they describe as a distorting two-tier approach to gender analysis in the social sciences; that is, gender as "symbolic construction" (the symbolic valuation given to maleness and femaleness) and gender as "social relationship" (what males and females actually do).[21] They call for a more integrated approach to gender at an empirical level. Barrie Thorne, for example, advocates linking "structure" (the discursive or the symbolic) with "interaction" (everyday life) in order to give a more adequate account of how social actors are both "constrained" and "enabled" by social constructions of gender.[22]

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[20] Moore, "Whatever Happened", 168. Micaela di Leonardo notes similarly that social constructionism need not "stand against the material world and the exigencies of biology" ("Introduction: Gender, Culture, and Political Economy: Feminist Anthropology in Historical Perspective", in Micaela di Leonardo (ed.), *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, 30).

[21] Henrietta Moore, *Feminism and Anthropology*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988, 13. Barrie Thorne subdivides these further to identify four levels of gender analysis: (1) gender as discourse and ideology; (2) gender as a dimension of social structure and institutions; (3) gender in relationship to individual identity; and (4) gender as a feature of social situations and everyday interaction ("Gender and Interaction: Widening the Conceptual Scope", in Bettina Baron and Helga Kotthoff (eds.), *Gender in Interaction: Perspectives on Femininity and Masculinity in Ethnography and Discourse*, Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2001, 7–8).

[22] Thorne, "Gender and Interaction", 11.

Suspicious of the abstract theorising of poststructuralism, Sherry Ortner tries to balance a "construction" approach to gender (which she defines narrowly as "textual analysis in French theory") with the concept of "making" gender. The latter, Ortner argues, entails a methodology that is ethnographic rather than textual, and descriptive or analytic rather than interpretative or deconstructionist. It entails

> looking at real people doing real things in a given historical moment, past or present, and trying to figure out how what they are doing, or have done, will or will not reconfigure the world they live in.[23]

In other words, studies of the way texts (including the media, religious and political discourses, and other cultural "texts") construct gender identities and categories "are incomplete and misleading unless they ask to what degree those texts successfully impose themselves on real people (and *which people*) in real time" (italics original).[24] This approach to gender analysis enables the empirical researcher to study the lives of real people without losing sight of the way real people's lives are lived out in the context of broader material and discursive forces. For this reason, it is the approach taken in this book, which examines both the content of religious discourses on gender and the impact of those discourses on real women and men in their everyday lives.

Woman

Like gender, the concept "woman" has become increasingly unstable as a useful category of analysis; not least through the efforts of post-colonial feminist theorists, most notably Chandra Talpade Mohanty, who critique the essentialist representations of "third-world" women in Western feminist discourse.[25] The problem with the use of the category "woman" stems partly from the universalising tendencies of 1970s Western feminist scholarship attempting to compensate for the

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[23] Sherry Ortner, *Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1996, 2.

[24] *Ibid*.

[25] See in particular, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Cartographies of Struggles: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism" and "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses", in Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres (eds.), *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991. (The issue of postcolonialism is addressed more broadly below.)

"muteness" of women in anthropological and sociological research.[26] In the effort to give voice to "the voiceless masses"[27]—and inspired by the political project of second-wave feminism—a body of research evolved which made assumptions about the commonalities of women's lives: their social status and cultural roles, their relations with men, and their interactions with each other. In the "anthropology of women", which flourished in the 1970s, maleness and femaleness came to be understood largely in terms of a hierarchical and dichotomous relationship that was predicated on assumptions about the universal validity of Western-derived gender categories.[28]

Attention to "difference" in relation to the identities and experiences of women (and men, as discussed below) has engendered a significant shift in scholarly approaches to gender, especially in cross-cultural perspective. Scholarship has become increasingly aware that gender and the cultural meanings given to gender are complex, subject to change and inseparable from other modes of difference such as race, class, caste, sexuality and age. It is no longer possible, in fact, to write about gender without attention to difference[29] and neither therefore is

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[26] The term "muteness" is a reference to Edwin Ardener's oft-cited article in which he describes women in anthropological research as members of "muted groups"; meaning, those people who are rendered inarticulate by male-dominant models of society, which are derived from male informants and perpetuated by male anthropologists ("Belief and the Problem of Women" and "The 'Problem' Revisited", in Shirley Ardener (ed.), *Perceiving Women*, London: Malaby Press, 1975).

[27] Ardener, "Belief", 3.

[28] See, for example, Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, "Woman, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview", and Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?", in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (eds.), *Woman, Culture, and Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974. The term "patriarchy" also has been subject to this sort of under-theorised universalism. Deniz Kandiyoti critiques what she calls an "overly monolithic conception of male dominance" in some Western feminist scholarship ("Bargaining with Patriarchy", in Nalini Visvanathan, Lynn Duggan, Laurie Nisonoff and Nan Wiegersma (eds.), *The Women, Gender and Development Reader*, London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997, 86).

[29] In fact, Moore questions why gender difference should be privileged over other forms of difference and suggests that the "intersections" between different forms of difference need to be theorised ("The Differences Within and the Differences Between", in Teresa del Valle (ed.), *Gendered Anthropology*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, 195). Ortner agrees with Moore that gender may not always be the most useful analytical construct because women and men of the same social position (or "relative structural position") may have more in common than women of different classes or castes (*Making Gender*, 133). Others argue, however, that despite attention to differences of race and class at a theoretical level, the white middle-class bias of Western feminism continues to prevent scholars from actually seeing difference, and that feminist scholarship is no less plagued by "white solipsism" than it ever was (Candace West and Sarah

it useful, or indeed desirable, to use the universal category "woman" in the study of women's lives.

It is equally important, however, that not only the differences between women be acknowledged but also the differences *within* women, because individual identity, it has been shown, is constructed through the complex interaction of multiple differences:[30]

> While sex category, race category, and class category are potentially omnirelevant to social life, individuals inhabit many different identities, and these may be stressed or muted, depending on the situation.[31]

What this means in practice is that women cannot be researched without reference to men (because gender is a relational construct) or the differences between women, but also that women cannot be researched without reference to the differences within them as individuals. This approach to the study of women's lives produces a better understanding of how the same situation, activity or event may have different meanings and be experienced in different ways by different groups of women, or by individual women at different times. Candace West and Sarah Fenstermaker, for example, argue that race, class and gender mean that what looks like the same activity may actually have different meanings for those engaged in it.[32] They describe the differences between white middle-class and African-American women's experiences of motherhood in the United States, but in the context of this book it might be interesting to consider this point from the perspective of women's participation in religion. Religion, or "world-view" (see "Religion" in this chapter), is a mode of difference; it affects how people view and experience the world. The book will illustrate that the meaning of church activities, and the way these activities are experienced by born-again Ghanaian women, is informed by their interactions with a spirit world that influences events in this world. In other words, though the activities may resemble everyday women's activities participated in by many, for the women studied in this book, experience of them

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Fenstermaker, "Doing Difference", in Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, Doris Wilkinson and Maxine Baca Zinn (eds.), *Race, Class, and Gender: Common Bonds, Different Voices*, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996, 359).

[30] This conceptualisation of individual identity owes much to psychoanalysis—in particular, the work of Lacan—by which "difference feminism" has been greatly influenced. However, a discussion of such things is beyond the scope of this book.

[31] West and Fenstermaker, "Doing Difference", 377.

[32] *Ibid.*, 378.

is informed by a belief in reciprocity between the material world and the world of the spirits.

Men and Masculinities

Since its inception in the late 1980s, "men's studies"[33] has drawn attention to the fact that many of the problems inherent in the study of "woman" are equally problematic in the study of "man". Anthropology, for instance—"the study of man"—has rarely concerned itself with the study of "men" whose roles and identities, in practice, are as multiple, fluid and varied as those of women. This is due in part to the androcentric bias of anthropological and sociological discourses, which have privileged the male as norm whilst ignoring the lives of real men; but responsibility lies also with the traditional orientation of gender studies towards the study of women. Women sometimes have been studied in relation to men but rarely has gender studies been the study of men *as men*. As Matthew Gutmann comments on the state of masculinity in anthropology, the problem is not that men have been invisible from ethnographic work but that research has tended to present "an overly dichotomised depiction of men as men and women as women".[34] There has been little scholarly attention to the diversity of masculinities and in general, he argues, "an absence of systematic theorisation of masculinity".[35]

This failure to recognise difference means that representations of men have tended to be rather homogeneous: all men are depicted as "powerful" or socially "superior" to all women. This tendency has been particularly prevalent in depictions of "third-world" men, as

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[33] For a general introduction to men's studies—its aims and objectives, as well as its indebtedness to the insights of feminist theorising—see Harry Brod, "A Case for Men's Studies", in Michael S. Kimmel (ed.), *Changing Men: New Directions in Research on Men and Masculinity*, London: Sage Publications, 1987, 263–77. Brod describes men's studies, in its most general sense, as "the study of masculinities and male experiences in their own right as specific and varying social, cultural, and historical formations" (264). Stephen Whitehead and Frank Barrett identify three stages in the history of theorising masculinities, which are gender role theory and gender role "discrepancies"; social constructionism; and, most recently, poststructuralism and the theorisation of masculine subjectivity ("The Sociology of Masculinity", in Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett (eds.), *The Masculinities Reader*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001, 19).

[34] Matthew C. Gutmann, "Trafficking in Men: The Anthropology of Masculinity", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26, 1997, 387.

[35] *Ibid.*, 389.

has been highlighted by Mohanty in her critique of the essentialist construction of "third-world" women (and by implication men) in the writings of Western feminists.[36] Others note the "big man bias" of social science analysis, which prevents scholars from seeing the many men who alongside some women are excluded from positions of power and authority.[37] Much of the more recent work on gender analysis and men, therefore, has been directed towards identifying and describing marginal or subordinate masculinities.[38]

Research on men in cross-cultural perspective has tended to focus particularly on social change and the effects of social change on men's roles and gender identities. The recent flourishing of work on men and masculinities in Africa reflects this trend.[39] Much of this research is concerned with exploring the effects of the colonial encounter on indigenous masculinities, while a few studies examine the implications of nationalist politics for the formation and definition of male identity within emerging African states. Rather little of this work addresses issues concerning men and masculinities in contemporary Africa,[40] particularly in regard to the effects of modernity, globalisation and economic crisis, although CODESRIA (an organisation that promotes social science research among African scholars) has announced that the 2005 session of its Gender Institute will address "Masculinities in Contemporary Africa". Among the issues expected to be raised are armed conflict, macho culture, urban violence, the social consequences of structural adjustment, and the influence of transnationalism in the shaping of masculinities in Africa.[41]

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[36] "Under Western Eyes", 51–80. The homogenous construction of "third-world" women, which defines them as victims of violence and patriarchy, argues Mohanty, in turn defines all "third-world" men as perpetrators of violence (58) and benefactors of patriarchy (70).

[37] Ortner, *Making Gender*, 136.

[38] In particular, see R. W. Connell, *Masculinities*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. Though Connell challenges any simple division between hegemonic and marginalised masculinities, arguing that hegemonic masculinity itself is never a fixed character type, but always "a contestable position" ("The Social Organization of Masculinity", in Whitehead and Barrett, *Masculinities*, 38).

[39] Lisa A. Lindsay and Stephan F. Miescher (eds.), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003; Lahoucine Ouzgane and Robert Morrell (eds.), *African Masculinities*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. See also Robert Morrell (ed.), *Changing Men in Southern Africa*, London and New York: Zed Books, 2001.

[40] Elizabeth Schmidt, for example, criticises Lindsay and Miescher's edited volume for its lack of balance between the colonial and post-colonial eras ("Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa", *African Studies Review*, 47 (3), 2004, 242–4).

[41] http://www.codesria.org/Archives/Training_grants/gender/gender05.htm.

However, for the Western scholar writing on masculinities and social change in contemporary Africa a number of methodological difficulties emerge to which this book is subject. The first—raised also in relation to the cross-cultural study of women—is the problem of applying Western-derived social categories to analyses of gender in non-Western contexts. Connell, for example, suggests that modern usage of the term "masculinity" is "a fairly recent historical product" and built on a conception of individuality that developed in early-modern Europe. The concept of masculinity, he argues, "presupposes a belief in individual difference and personal agency". A culture that does not treat men and women as polarised character types, therefore, does not have a concept of masculinity in the modern European or North American sense. For this reason, Connell argues, scholars should avoid making "transhistorical truths" about manhood and masculinity.[42]

Second, in writing about masculinities and "change", it is sometimes tempting, as Connell notes, to speak in terms of a "crisis" in masculinity, especially against a backdrop of a century or more of feminist theorising about "the problem of men". In the context of Africa, this is manifested in discussions about the "crisis" of "traditional" masculinities. These discussions tend to focus on the perceived threat to traditional masculinities by the influence of modernity, as well as their reassertion through modes of religious and cultural fundamentalism. However, not only does this type of approach create a false dichotomy between "modernity" and "tradition", it also makes assumptions about the rigidity of conceptualisations of masculinity, and "change" becomes interpreted as "crisis". Masculinity, however, like femininity, is not fixed; it is linked to fluctuations in the social structures with which it interacts (race, class, national identity and the economy) and subject therefore to constant change and adjustment. It may be more appropriate, as Connell suggests, to discuss masculinity in terms of "disruption" or "transformation" rather than crisis.[43]

The third, and for this book perhaps most pertinent, problem with analysing masculinities and social change in cross-cultural perspective is the risk of essentialising "other" men, especially when writing in

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[42] Connell, "Social Organization", 30–1.

[43] Connell suggests that "the crisis of masculinity" implies that masculinity is "a coherent system" which is destroyed by crisis (*ibid.*, 45). On the contrary, he argues, masculinity is always contestable and "liable to internal contradiction and historical disruption" (*ibid.*, 36).

terms of the "reform" or "transformation" of male roles and identities. In producing research of this kind the scholar risks falling into the essentialist trap, which represents all "third-world" men as violent, promiscuous, and the perpetrators of patriarchy. With this danger in mind, although this book does raise issues of domestic violence and the sexual behaviour of men, it attempts to do this without making implicit assumptions about the "natural" orientations of African men. Where the book raises the issue of "African culture", it does so because the charismatic churches themselves create causal links between African culture and the behaviour of men. Primarily, then, the book is concerned to describe African masculinities as they are represented in the churches rather than as they actually are (assuming that were possible), as well as to examine the ways in which men represent their own masculine identities. The book is interested also in women's perceptions of men, which, again, may or may not reflect the complexities of men's own lived experiences, but as relational categories the study of men and masculinities must include research on women's ideas of and experiences with men.[44]

Otherness

The white, Western (female) scholar who decides to write a book about Africa soon becomes aware (if she was not already) of the burden of history with which she begins her enterprise and continues to carry for the duration of the project. This burden is the history of the West's engagement with the African continent, and in particular, the engagement of Western academia with the African subject. Of all the nations and cultures that constitute "the rest" (as opposed to the West) in postcolonial discourse, Africa perhaps stands alone as the "Other" par excellence of the Western world; not least because it seems to persist in a state of otherness in a way that "the Orient" does not. Marginal to the concerns of the international community and apparently peripheral to the modern world,[45] Africa is defined by economic crisis, failed

[44] As Gutmann notes: "masculinities develop and transform and have little meaning except in relation to women and female identities and practices in all their similar diversity and complexity" ("Trafficking", 400).

[45] By marginalisation I refer to its prioritising in international policy-making, though of course, to define Africa as "marginal" is in itself to make certain assumptions about what is "central", what is "peripheral" and, more importantly, who decides.

democracy and, what Chabal calls, the "re-traditionalisation"[46] of its social worlds. At least since the colonial era, the West, it seems, has tried to define itself by what it is not, and Africa has always provided a useful benchmark; to some extent it still does:

> The general handicap under which we, Western Africanists, labour is our heritage—by which I mean the accumulated weight of what our culture says about Africa. To us in the West, Africa is that part of the world which remains most deeply endowed with the two central facets of the "other": that is, the mysterious and the exotic. Mysterious not just in the sense that we do not understand its reality well but also in that its reality is not really amenable to our understanding. Exotic in that it fulfils in us that most enduring need to find in some (suitably distant) "other" that quality of inexplicability which is both frightening in its apparent irrationality and reassuring in that it highlights our own rationality.[47]

Alongside its engagement with the study of Africa, this book also looks at the lives and experiences of "African women", which requires the researcher to be doubly aware perhaps of the relationship between "Self" and "Other", especially given the history of European women's engagement with their African counterparts. From the early involvement of Christian missionaries, to the political project of second-wave feminism, to the presumptions of modern development discourse, African women have been represented as the oppressed "Other" of the liberated Western woman's world.[48] The act of seeing "Self" through "Other", then, is as characteristic of much early feminist scholarship as it was of the European colonial enterprise itself.[49]

The scholar is required not only to be aware of this relationship but to try to avoid, as far as possible, reproducing it in his or her own work. One way of doing this is to present one's research as an attempt

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[46] Chabal, "African Crisis", 29 (see "Religion" in this chapter).

[47] *Ibid.*, 45.

[48] Representations of West African women have always been a little more complex than this dichotomy between "Self" and "Other" suggests because of the identification of West African women with economic independence and political autonomy (see Chapter Three). The limitations of such representations, however, are discussed below (see "Agency" in this chapter).

[49] Noting that the meaning of "Africa" and the meaning of "the West" are never fixed but emerge only in relation to each other, Rita Abrahamsen argues that the civilisation and legitimisation of colonial rule in Africa depended on the perceived barbarism of Africans ("African Studies and the Postcolonial Challenge", *African Affairs*, 102, 2003, 196). Similarly, "oppressed" and "liberated" have functioned as relational terms in the history of Western feminism.

to "give voice" to those who might otherwise remain unheard in order to challenge definitions of the "Other" imposed "from above" with those that emanate "from below". This approach, however, is tarnished with its own methodological difficulties, not least the degree to which it rests on assumptions about the relative structural positions of the researcher and the researched. This book, therefore, shies away from speaking about "women's empowerment" or posing direct questions about the "empowering" role—or otherwise—of the churches in order to avoid recreating misplaced assumptions about African women's need for empowerment, and privileging, in the process, the ability of the scholar to identify its source.

The relationship between "Self" and "Other", however, raises questions also about theoretical approaches to the study of religion, particularly Christianity, in the non-Western world. Some of these questions—with which this book must contend—are elucidated by debates about the origins and history of anthropology and its relationship to other cultures. Moore writes engagingly of the burden of anthropology's own history, which grew out of colonialism and Europe's interest in other cultures. This interest, she argues, stemmed largely from Europe's interest in itself, and other cultures were of interest only insofar as they told Europe something about itself: its own past, present and, perhaps more importantly, future:

> Other cultures were, if you like, a way of understanding, commenting and reflecting on the peculiarity of western culture. The question was not so much "What are the other societies of the world like?" but rather "Is everybody like us?".[50]

"The refiguring of some people's lives in terms of the salient concerns of others", continues Moore, "is a perennial problem for anthropology" because it turns the subject into an object, "othering them in a permanent relation to an anthropological self".[51] Even non-Western anthropologists, she notes, have to orient their discussions in terms of the debates constructed by the West.[52]

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[50] Moore, *Feminism*, 186. Likewise, Leonardo describes the history of American anthropology as one of "seeing ourselves through seeing others"; a history, she argues, that includes 1970s feminist scholarship ("Introduction", 3).

[51] Henrietta Moore, *A Passion for Difference: Essays in Anthropology and Gender*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, 130.

[52] *Ibid*., 131.

Students of non-Western Christianity might learn from the self-reflection of anthropologists on the problem of seeing self through others, because in analyses of non-Western expressions of Christianity there is a tendency to assess the beliefs and practices of "others" in terms of their similarity to or difference from the beliefs and practices of our Western Christian "selves". Western Christianity tends to be posited as the norm by which all other forms of Christianity are judged. This may be a problem also for African intellectuals—examples, perhaps, of what Richard Werbner calls "the intimate other"[53]—for whom issues of religious identity and cultural "authenticity" meet and sometimes collide. The problem of representation in the work of African feminist scholarship, however, is addressed in the concluding chapter. Suffice it to say for now, the approach taken in this book to the study of Christianity in a non-Western context has been informed by the reflection of anthropologists on the relationship between Western scholarship and the cultures of others. It tries, therefore, to examine the role and activities of Ghana's charismatic churches on their own terms and within a local context that takes seriously the religious world-views of believers; rather, that is, than with reference to a normative, Western-derived construction of what Christianity is or ought to be.

The problems of seeing self through others notwithstanding, this book would produce a somewhat distorted picture of charismatic Christianity in Ghana if it were to ignore the external dynamics of the churches and present them as a wholly "home-grown" or local phenomenon. As Chapter Two illustrates, this form of Christianity—and the social changes with which it is associated—is reminiscent of moments in the religious histories of Europe and North America. It is appropriate, therefore, to explore the external dynamics of the phenomenon whilst remaining mindful of the fact that historical events in the West do not necessarily shape or reflect developments elsewhere. Furthermore, to understand the often complex interaction between charismatic

[53] Werbner draws a distinction between the "distanced Othering of the Rest by the West" and the construction of the other within the postcolony: "the stigmatisation of the intimate by the intimate" ("Multiple Identities, Plural Arenas", in Werbner and Ranger, *Postcolonial*, 20). Werbner refers here to the everyday interactions between peoples and ethnic groups within postcolonial Africa, but one senses a similar "stigmatisation" of the beliefs and practices of some peoples (charismatic Christians among them) by African intellectuals in what appears to be a discursive battle over claims to cultural authenticity and the right to define what is and what is not "African" in postcolonial cultural politics (see Conclusion).

Christianity's local and external forms, it is necessary to address some of the issues pertaining to the relationship between the local and the global in a postcolonial world.

Local and Global

Sceptical of its relevance to Africa's material realities and suspicious of its literary origins, African studies scholars have been reluctant to engage with postcolonialism as a mode of analysis. Postcolonialism is criticised for being too theoretical—too preoccupied, that is, with textuality and discourse[54]—and that, as a cultural product of the West, its orientation towards postmodernism and poststructuralism is simply not relevant to Africa's cultural and socio-political trajectory. Rita Abrahamsen examines these criticisms in an article that challenges Africanists to rethink their judgements on the usefulness of postcolonial theory for understanding Africa's present state.[55] She rejects the portrayal of postcolonialism as overly-theorised Western narcissism[56] as a misrepresentation. Postcolonial theory does not, she argues, signify the end of colonialism (or the triumph of the postmodern as some critics have suggested),[57] but provides a tool for analysing the power dynamics of neo-colonialism without denying the presence of local agency in current engagements between Africa and the West.

This book is not concerned directly with the merits, or otherwise, of postcolonial theory in contemporary African studies. However, it does sympathise with Abrahamsen's position that postcolonialism reveals something about the dynamics of the relationship between the local and

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[54] As a Kenyan "activist", Maria Nzomo, for example, finds little "practical applicability" in postcolonial and postmodern discourse ("Women and Democratization Struggles in Africa: What Relevance to Postmodernist Discourse?", in Marianne H. Marchand and Jane L. Parpart (eds.), *Feminism/Postmodernism/Development*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, 133).

[55] Abrahamsen, "African Studies", 189–210.

[56] Chabal, for instance, asserts that postcolonialism is primarily concerned with the definition of our own identity in the West: "It is, therefore, more a concern about ourselves than about those who do live in actual postcolonial societies" ("African Crisis", 37).

[57] Again, Chabal contrasts Africa's present experience of 're-traditionalisation' with the preoccupations of the Western academy with postmodernism: "in so far as this apparent "re-traditionalisation" is obviously at odds with the causalities implied in the notion of the postmodern, instead of working to understand Africans as they are, we might yet again look at them holding a mirror to ourselves" (*ibid.*, 42–3).

the global; in particular, the extent to which Africa's interaction with the West represents a complex mix of continuities and disjunctures which both shape and challenge cultural (and in this case religious) developments in modern Africa. Postcolonialism provides a way of understanding the relationship of the present to the colonial and the pre-colonial past as "a complex mix and continuation of different cultures and temporalities"[58] rather than a linear process; and in contrast to theories of neo-colonialism—which tend to fall back on "dependency theory" ("as if Western hegemony manufactures the stuff of local sociality . . . as its own invention")[59]—postcolonialism's concept of "hybridity" recognises the ability of local agents to incorporate, appropriate and sometimes resist the cultural products of a globalised world.[60]

> More recently, the notion of hybridity has been invoked as a measure of local agency in the face of globalisation. Hybridity is seen to signify the creative adaptation, interpretation and transformation of western cultural symbols and practices, and shows that formerly colonised peoples are not simply passive victims in the face of an all-powerful western culture.[61]

In many ways the manifestation of charismatic Christianity in Africa is a very postcolonial phenomenon, insofar as it represents a religious form that has spread to Africa from the West (primarily the United States) but is adapted, interpreted and transformed by local appropriations of its practices and symbols. As the next chapter shows, charismatic Christianity is a "transnational" movement: it is both a product of the West (or what Werbner calls "global Americana")[62] and a mode of localised religious and cultural expression.

This book illustrates some of the ways in which local appropriations of this global phenomenon can be used in the production of both cultural continuity and social change. With reference to local gender ideologies, the book shows how the gender discourses of charismatic Christianity are used in multiple ways to challenge old cultural forms, to create new ones, and to generate renewed forms of legitimacy for

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[58] Abrahamsen, "African Studies", 196.
[59] Werbner, "Multiple Identities", 5.
[60] A process sometimes referred to as "glocalisation".
[61] Abrahamsen, "African Studies", 205–6. For traditionalists and nationalists, she argues further, hybridity is perceived as "a regrettable loss of traditional culture and identities", but for postcolonial theorists, hybridity "signifies the failure of colonial power to fully dominate its subjects, and shows their creativity and resilience" (205).
[62] Werbner, "Multiple Identities", 5.

"traditional" gender norms. The analysis of Rev Christie Doe Tetteh in Chapter Five, in particular, provides examples of such moments of continuity and change as the local and the global intersect, producing new forms of gendered authority and re-legitimising established norms. In terms of postcolonial theory, then, charismatic Christianity represents an instance of "hybridity", which reveals as much about manifestations of local agency in the appropriation of external religious discourses as it does about Western hegemony.

Agency

Accounts of the history of Europe's engagement with the African continent have sometimes been slow to recognise the ability of African subjects to exercise individual and collective agency in their interactions with colonial (and postcolonial) forces. Mission history, for example, has tended to be analysed primarily in terms of the "impact" of Christianity on indigenous peoples and cultures, and this is reflected in studies of the role of mission Christianity in the lives of African women, which tend also to portray mission history, unintentionally in some cases perhaps, as something that simply "happened" to women.[63] This approach to women and missions is indicative of a more general view of women in African history as "passive victims" of either colonial or male control.[64]

More recent scholarship has given increasing recognition to the role of local agents in shaping and challenging Africa's colonial experience, which has encouraged revisions of African mission history. These revised analyses illustrate the extent to which the colonial religious experience for many Africans was one of "encounter" rather than imposition.[65]

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[63] J. D. Y. Peel, for example, is critical of *Women and Mission: Past and Present* (Fiona Bowie, Deborah Kirkwood and Shirley Ardener (eds.), Providence and Oxford: Berg, 1993) because of its (unintentional) "impact on" approach to mission history ("Gender in Yoruba Religious Change", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 32 (2), 2002, 137). He is equally critical, however, of the tendency of some African feminists to argue that Christianity "imposed" on Africa's fluid gender systems a European patriarchal ideology, because the argument fails to appreciate the role of women's agency in the missionary experience (*ibid.*).

[64] Cornwall comments on the "woman-as-victim narrative", which permeates the literature on African women, situating them as "powerless" and "inviting intervention on their behalf" ("Introduction", 1).

[65] See J. D. Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.

Recent research on the interaction between African women and European missionaries substantiates this view and demonstrates the importance of affording due recognition to the ability of African women to exercise agency in their dealings with external forces.[66] In my research too, female (and male) informants are recognised to be social actors who exert agency through their participation in religious beliefs and practices. I take issue with the portrayal by some African feminists of charismatic Christian women as the unsuspecting "victims" of a damaging religious discourse, because it denies the agency of African women as acting subjects.[67]

To speak of women and men as "social actors" (as opposed to passive objects or victims) it is necessary to ask: what does it mean to be a social actor? What does it mean to suggest that a person acts with "agency"? Whilst the restoration of women's agency has been a central objective of feminist theorising and feminist anthropology, in Africa, the tendency to "romanticise"[68] women's agency—"the very stuff of feminist fables", writes Andrea Cornwall[69]—has done much to distort the relationship between the actions of individuals and the power of institutional and discursive structures. For this reason, the meaning of "agency", and how it is to be conceptualised in regard to the actions of individuals, requires some further explanation in order that its use in this book be properly understood.

In conjunction with exercising caution about the cross-cultural validity of the idea of "individual agency",[70] the book contends that the

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[66] See, for example, Marijke Steegstra, "'A Mighty Obstacle to the Gospel': Basel Missionaries, Krobo Women, and Conflicting Ideas of Gender and Sexuality", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 32 (2), 2002, 200–30. For an earlier example, see Jocelyn Murray, "The Church Missionary Society and the 'Female Circumcision' Issue in Kenya 1929–1932", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 8, 1976, 92–104.

[67] See Conclusion.

[68] See Hodgson and McCurdy, "Introduction", 16. Ortner argues that when women in ethnography were not seen as "pawns in a male game" they were viewed as "wholly different" from men, and perhaps even "morally better" than men (*Making Gender*, 16).

[69] Cornwall, "Introduction", 1. These representations of African women, she continues, provide "powerful social imaginaries that capture a longing equally rooted in western feminist experience: the possibilities of combining motherhood with career, autonomy with connectedness" (2).

[70] Moore argues, for example, that the representation of women in cross-cultural perspective as "powerful individuals" rests on ethnocentric assumptions about concepts of "the individual" and personhood, which are cultural variables. It should not be assumed, she asserts, that relationships between individuals and society are the same

concept of agency is misleading unless it is recognised that actors are not completely autonomous beings but, rather, individuals who exist always in relation to a complex set of structures and constraints which influence and limit their actions. In other words, whilst women and men as acting "subjects" may resist, challenge or reshape "structures", they can never operate wholly outside them and therefore must inevitably be subject to them. Ortner draws a useful distinction between "autonomous agents", which do not exist because social actors can never position themselves outside social and political processes, and "agency", which does exist, insofar as people act with real "intentions, plans, desires and intelligence" but within the limits set by structures.[71]

In this book, then, it is argued that converts to charismatic Christianity exercise individual "agency", but that they do so within the constraints of a world-view that situates social actors in permanent and reciprocal relationships with a spirit world. Furthermore, though female converts are represented as acting subjects, their actions are understood to occur within the boundaries set by dominant cultural discourses concerning "gender complementarity"[72] and the moral obligations of women to men.

Knowledge Production (or Doing Research)

This book is not anthropology; nor, strictly speaking, is it an ethnography. The author is a student of the study of religions and the direction of the book reflects this. However, the process of doing fieldwork—as well as subsequent reflection on the experience—has been informed by some of the debates within anthropology and related disciplines, concerning the "production" of knowledge and the politics of representation. In regard to the representation of others in the scholarship of a white Western woman a number of questions arise. These include

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in other cultures as they are in the West; nor that notions of the acting "individual" or "person" are appropriate to other contexts (*Feminism*, 39–40).

[71] Ortner, *Making Gender*, 12. Although the relationship between structures and subjects is described as "a loop" in which structures construct subjects and subjects reproduce structures, Ortner maintains that it is important to look also for "slippages" in the reproduction of structures ("the erosion of long-standing patterns" as well as "outright resistance") to show that culture and structure are only ever "partial hegemonies" (17–18).

[72] See Chapter Three.

the following: how does the researcher represent those she is researching? How does the researcher represent herself in the field? Or, more important perhaps, how is she represented or perceived by those she is researching?

Modern scholarship has come increasingly to recognise that the relationship between the researcher and the researched is founded on an unequal distribution of power and that this relationship has political consequences; not least of which is the authority given to the scholar to "produce" knowledge about a group of people to whom he or she does not belong. In general, this knowledge is "produced" by people from the West about people who live elsewhere in the world, and knowledge about others, therefore, tends to be grounded in Western cultural assumptions about the way the world is or ought to be.[73] Recognising this to be a problem, "the politics of location" challenges the view, once dominant among anthropologists and students of religion (especially of the phenomenological school), that the researcher can "bracket off" their opinions and cultural judgements to produce objective accounts of the lives and beliefs of others.[74]

A founding principle of feminist theory was the exposure of androcentrism in the work of male scholars, and this contributed, consequently, to the destabilising of the whole idea of "academic objectivity". Most feminist theorists took slightly longer to acknowledge that women researchers were no less implicated than their male colleagues in the politics of location. Women researchers, it has been realised, enjoy little advantage over men in the representation of others, even other women.[75] Women researchers, then, are not significantly different from men; they do not, as Moore contends, "float free of their social and historical contexts" or the intellectual context in which they write: "They

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[73] Though Moore makes the useful point that the recognition of ethnocentrism (which she argues is actually "racism") in traditional anthropology does little to challenge the definition of anthropology as a Western discourse. In other words, it ignores the existence of "other agendas" and "other anthropologies", which continue to not be heard (*Feminism*, 189–90).

[74] In the study of religions this view owes much to Edmund Husserl's concept of *epoché* ("suspension" of judgement) and his defence of phenomenology as "presuppositionless" (*Ideas*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982 (1913)).

[75] Beliefs about the advantages of women studying other women rested on assumptions about a universal category "woman", which does not exist. Once the falseness of this category had been realised, women researchers' own ethnocentric assumptions were exposed (see "Woman" in this chapter).

are also historical beings and they cannot necessarily stand outside the discourses available to them for constructing relations between self and other".[76]

With this in mind then, how does the researcher even begin to chart a course through this methodological minefield to produce a piece of research which claims, in some sense, to "represent" the experiences of others? As noted previously (see "Otherness" in this chapter), one approach is to present one's research as an attempt to "give voice" to acting subjects whose agency shapes and informs the work. The scholar has to decide, however, whether to do no more than record these voices—through participant observation, interviews and oral histories—or whether to subject these voices to the rigours of critical analysis. Both approaches are open to criticism: the first because of what Sherry Gorelick calls "the limits of direct experience",[77] and the second because, inevitably, the voice of the "Other" becomes subject to the intellectual categories of Western academic discourse, which may or may not reflect the priorities of those being researched.[78]

A compromise is the best that can be hoped for, perhaps, which means that research includes "both the active voice of the subject and the researcher's own dialectical analysis".[79] However, even this effort towards a dialogical approach to the production of knowledge is open to accusations of elitism and is ultimately, laments Moore, "doomed to disappointment", not least because it can never represent the "multiple

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[76] Moore, *A Passion*, 125. Leonardo draws a useful distinction between the need to attend to the "social location" through which we perceive the world—which includes our position of privilege in the power relationship between researcher and researched—and the larger "intellectual location", which signifies the way knowledge is produced in dialogue with Western traditions ("Introduction", 31–2).

[77] Sherry Gorelick, "Contradictions of Feminist Methodology", in Ngan-Ling Chow, Wilkinson and Baca Zinn, *Race*, 388.

[78] Whilst I tried to conduct relatively unstructured interviews, for example, the overall shape of my interactions with informants was moulded by both my research priorities and my informants' own perceptions of my research interests. Carol Warren and Jennifer Kay Hackney note that informants often impose a role on researchers. Young women, they suggest, may treat the researcher as a "confidante"—and some women did approach me because they wanted to tell me their own "story"—whereas some men, especially those in positions of authority, may see themselves as "experts" concerned to provide the researcher with "correct" information (*Gender Issues in Ethnography*, Thousand Oaks, California and London: Sage Publications, 2000, 36). I found that male pastors, in particular, would sometimes interrupt the interview to check that what they were telling me was "helpful".

[79] Gorelick, "Contradictions", 393.

perspectives" and "inter-personal exchanges" that characterise the fieldwork situation.[80]

A further dimension of the fieldwork situation, which has an impact on the process of knowledge production, is the way the researcher represents herself and, as I said earlier, the way the researched choose to represent and understand her. It has often been noted that women in the field have more access to female spaces than their male colleagues, and young unmarried women in particular may experience easier access to male-dominated spaces too, because their low social status makes their presence less threatening. This observation does not privilege the position of the woman researcher though, because spatial access to male or female domains does not necessarily mean "access to the *meanings* of the worlds of informants" (italics original),[81] which may remain obscured by other characteristics of the fieldworker (age, sexuality, intellectual and social position, and, in this case, religious identity).

The female researcher may also find that her identity as an outsider, and more especially a Westerner, bestows on her the status of "honorary male". The possible ambiguity of her gender identity, however, rarely neutralises her sexuality and encounters between female researcher and male researched nearly always retain their potential to become sexualised:

> Ethnographers have encounters with what the culture deems licit, as well as illicit, sexuality. Indeed, the typical experience of the unmarried, young female anthropologist—especially if she is made further desirable by foreignness, apparent wealth, light skin, and adoption of local dress and appearance norms—is to become the object of marriage proposals.[82]

I experienced at least three marriage proposals and one offer of an adulterous affair. Such encounters remind the fieldworker that she alone is not responsible for situating herself in the world of her informants; her informants, and others with whom she interacts, are equally involved in situating and defining her. She may become

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[80] Moore, *A Passion*, 116–17. Even "new ethnography", which tries to undermine the authority of texts and authors through self-reflexive methods and, in some case, the multiple authorship of texts, fails to challenge "the authority of the anthropological discourse itself" (Moore, *Feminism*, 190).

[81] Warren and Hackney, *Gender Issues*, 6.

[82] *Ibid.*, 27.

> the subject of many interpretations and given a variety of social places—some more comfortable than others—and she may be assigned to what respondents see as her proper place in the social order.[83]

The churches in which I located myself as a researcher assigned to me a variety of roles and identities, some of which I found more comfortable than others.[84]

Students of the study of religions face an additional fieldwork dilemma: how to represent the religious beliefs of others when researcher and researched do not share a world-view; or, what Rijk van Dijk and Peter Pels call the "politics of perception".[85] Researchers aspiring to a dialogical approach to knowledge production may find themselves fundamentally challenged, argue van Dijk and Pels, if they do not agree with their informants on what constitutes proper sources of knowledge; or if researcher and researched each appeal to different—often mutually exclusive—notions of authority. Part of the wider problem of the politics of representation, the social and the intellectual location of the scholar acquire a third, and equally important, dimension in the study of religions; that is, the "metaphysical location" of the scholar. According to van Dijk and Pels, assumptions about how reality (the spiritual and the non-spiritual) is to be perceived are part of a wider question about power relations between the subject and object of research:

> the extent to which one privileges a "natural" over a "supernatural", or a "scientific" over a "religious" conception of the world is the outcome of a struggle over how to perceive.[86]

This book argues that representations of gender and gender relations in the charismatic churches of Accra need to be contextualised within a world-view that perceives the activities of the spirit world to impinge directly on events in the world of the physical. In other words, it may be argued that to understand the experiences of others it is necessary to

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[83] *Ibid.*, 11–12.

[84] My presence in Action Chapel was largely ignored, while at Alive Chapel I was treated as an honoured guest. At Solid Rock I was treated as a "small girl" by the pastors and elders, although the presence of "that one doing PhD" (as she called me) was rarely welcomed by the woman of God herself, Christie Doe Tetteh.

[85] Rijk van Dijk and Peter Pels, "Contested Authorities and the Politics of Perception: Deconstructing the Study of Religion in Africa", in Werbner and Ranger, *Postcolonial*, 245–70.

[86] *Ibid.*, 249.

enter into the "Other's" mode of perception. A further problem arises in the study of religions, however. Religion is primarily an experiential phenomenon; this means that to perceive as the "Other" perceives, the scholar may be required to "perceive" with his or her body as well as his or her intellect.[87] In fact, embodiment,[88] argues Werbner, is the very epitome of the postcolonial scholar:

> Getting in touch, feeling it on and below one's skin, marks that postcolonial anthropologist who—body-tattooed as it were—emerges as the postmodern tribal, the hybrid in perception. Here, in a word, *complicity* is the postcolonial tactic *par excellence* (italics original).[89]

In the practical realities of the fieldwork situation, however, "complicity" is a tricky path to tread. My research experience in Solid Rock Chapel is illustrative, because while my "small girl" deference to the *political* authority of Christie Doe Tetteh certainly enabled me to conduct research there when my presence in the church was not particularly welcomed by her, my inability—or unwillingness—to submit my body to her *spiritual* authority remained a constant source of contention between us.[90] In the end, the scholar's efforts to "embody" the hybridity that Werbner advocates may prove to be as "doomed to disappointment" as other dialogical approaches to fieldwork and the production of knowledge. What follows, therefore, reflects these theoretical and practical limitations.

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[87] Most ethnography, note van Dijk and Pels, is based on "visual observation" but the study of religions often involves studying phenomena that are experiential and therefore better described in terms of "touch" rather than vision (*ibid.*, 249).

[88] Van Dijk and Pels write of the researcher putting one's body at the disposal of informants, especially in the study of religions where the researcher participates directly in rituals which may involve "physical and psychological discomfort" (*ibid.*, 262).

[89] Werbner, "Multiple Identities", 22.

[90] As I will show, Christie Doe Tetteh's authority stems in part from her ability to demonstrate privileged access to spiritual power. As an outside observer I did not respond to her spiritual direction; I did not join the rest of the congregation in speaking in tongues at her direction and I was never taken "with the Spirit". At one service, Christie Doe Tetteh invited those who had never spoken in tongues to gather in front of her so she could minister to them and they would begin instantly to speak in tongues. When her senior pastor, Rev Cecilia Mensah (whom I had consulted about my unwelcome presence) urged me to put myself under the ministration of Christie Doe Tetteh I began to suspect that deference to her spiritual power was expected.

CHAPTER TWO

CHARISMATIC CHRISTIANITY

There is much debate surrounding the appropriate use of terms to identify a growing number of Christians who fit loosely into the categories "charismatic" and "Pentecostal". Both have specific meanings: the former term has tended to be applied to the "Charismatic Movement" within the mainline Catholic and Protestant churches; the latter to the classical Pentecostal churches which stem from the religious revival of early twentieth-century America. Both mainline Charismatic and classical Pentecostal Christians are characterised by a concern with the experience of the Holy Spirit and the practice of spiritual gifts.

Since the late 1970s, however, significant growth has occurred among a group of Christian churches or "ministries", which strictly speaking are neither "Pentecostal" in the classic sense nor "Charismatic" even though they are characterised by the practice of spiritual gifts and the power of the Holy Spirit. These newer groups are not part of the Charismatic Movement proper because they are non-denominational, and neither do they necessarily adhere strictly to the doctrinal concerns of classical Pentecostalism, such as "initial evidence" ("speaking in tongues" to confirm a conversion experience). Sometimes these newer groups are called "neo-Pentecostal" or simply "new" to denote their more recent origins and to distinguish them from classical American forms of Pentecostalism.

Statistics suggest that there may be as many as 500 million Christians worldwide who fall into the Pentecostal/charismatic category,[1] but

[1] Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997, 1. David Martin estimates a slightly more "conservative" 250 million (*Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, 1). The Pentecostal/charismatic phenomenon is global, its influence having spread to large parts of Africa and Asia, especially Korea (Boo Woong Yoo, "Response to Korean Shamanism by the Pentecostal Churches", in *International Review of Missions*, 75, 1986, 70–4; Sung-Ho Kim, "Rapid Modernisation and the Future of Korean Christianity", in *Religion*, 32, 2000, 27–37, which suggests that Korean Pentecostalism is actually in decline). Its rapid growth in Latin America has led some to suggest that the Catholic majority is "turning Protestant" (David Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), and in Europe, its

deciding on satisfactory terms to describe the various manifestations of the charismatic and Pentecostal phenomenon is not an easy task and I tend to agree with Allan Anderson that it is better to speak of "a range of Pentecostalisms" to denote such diversity.[2] However, Walter Hollenweger's three-fold definition, which Anderson also uses, provides a useful guide. Hollenweger distinguishes between (1) Classical Pentecostals; (2) the Charismatic renewal movement; and (3) Pentecostal or "Pentecostal-like" independent churches.[3]

The Ghanaian churches examined in this book fall into the third category, though I do not intend to dwell on the issue of where exactly they should be located on the Pentecostal/charismatic spectrum. It suffices for my purposes to describe empirically the main characteristics of Ghana's Pentecostal-like churches, which hereafter are called "charismatic", "new" and "born-again" interchangeably. Where I speak of the Pentecostal/charismatic phenomenon cross-culturally, as I do in this chapter, unless stated otherwise the terms "charismatic" and "Pentecostal" are used in their broader sense to mean "a range of Pentecostalisms".

The "New" Charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity

Given the difficulties with determining what Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity is, it may be helpful to begin by explaining what it is not. Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity is not religious fundamentalism,[4] even though some Pentecostals may have a "fundamentalistic"

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popularity is evident among diaspora communities (see, for example, Nicole Rodriguez Toulis, *Believing Identity: Pentecostalism and the Mediation of Jamaican Ethnicity and Gender in England*, Oxford and New York: Berg, 1997).

[2] Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity*, Cambridge: CUP, 2004, 10.

[3] Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 1.

[4] Despite earlier references to the spread of "fundamentalist Christianity" in Africa and Latin America (Paul Gifford, *The New Crusaders: Christianity and the New Right in Southern Africa*, London and Concord, MA: Pluto, 1991, 96), Bruce argues that the term "fundamentalist" is so tied to its American roots that it is simply not appropriate in the context of the "third world". This is the case even though the term has been expanded since the publication of "The Fundamentals" in 1920 to include "the most conservative expression of some religious bloc". He adds that the term should be used with some caution because it has often been used as a term of abuse by some liberal strands of religion to denigrate more conservative circles for a perceived lack of intellectual maturity (Steve Bruce, *Fundamentalism*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000, 12). Although Brouwer, Gifford and Rose remark that the terms "fundamentalist",

way of viewing the world.[5] It is also necessary to distinguish "new" or "neo-Pentecostalism" from earlier expressions of classical Pentecostal religion. As stated, these newer churches are Pentecostal-like insofar as they prioritise religious experience (*glossolalia* and spiritual baptism) above theological dogma. However, where Pentecostalism in its classical form was characterised by a retreat from the world and an anti-material or "holiness" stance, the new charismatic churches are most definitely of "this world" and express frequent concern for the health, wealth and general success of adherents in this life time. The Pentecostal-like Christianity that began to emerge in the last quarter of the twentieth century, then, marked a considerable shift away from the ascetic individualism of earlier anti-materialist forms towards what Andrew Walker calls the "thoroughly modern" individualism of the new charismatic type: "Christianity was repackaged so that increasingly there was little emphasis on asceticism—what you could do for God—towards self-gratification—what God could do for you".[6]

What are the key characteristics of the new Pentecostal churches? First, they tend to be noted for their apparent lack of any overarching structure or hierarchically organised governing authority. This is due in part to the increasingly interdenominational nature of this type of Christianity, which is characterised by a growth in transnational networks and para-church organisations, some of which are particularly notable for their size and influence. The Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, for example, an organisation that stems from the United States, now has chapters in at least twenty-nine countries

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"evangelical" and "Pentecostal" are virtually interchangeable in Africa, they too recognise the African context as different from that in the United States. US fundamentalists focus on particular issues—abortion, homosexuality, education, humanism and so forth—that simply are not significant in Africa (Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford and Susan D. Rose (eds.), *Exporting the American Gospel*, London: Routledge, 1996, 154–5). Others have commented that Pentecostalism is more "experiential" than fundamentalist (see David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Pentecostalism in Latin America*, London: Basil Blackwell, 1990; Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century*, London: Cassell, 1996).

[5] Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity*, Cambridge: CUP, 2000, 26. He notes that although charismatic Christians often have a fundamentalistic way of seeing the world, they are not particularly liked by text-based fundamentalists in the United States.

[6] Andrew Walker, "Thoroughly Modern: Sociological Reflections on the Charismatic Movement from the End of the Twentieth Century", in Stephen Hunt, Malcolm Hamilton and Tony Walter (eds.), *Charismatic Christianity: Sociological Perspectives*, London: Macmillan, 1997, 30.

in Africa alone.[7] Another key feature of neo-Pentecostalism's organisational structure is the "evangelism crusade", which normally consists of a combination of preaching and healing. Crusades are most notable for their size, attracting as they sometimes do hundreds of thousands of participants. Other important non-denominational features include conferences, pastors' workshops, local Bible schools and theological colleges.

Second, the role of the media (both print and electronic) is central to the new Pentecostal and charismatic phenomenon.[8] Televangelism has become something of a defining feature of evangelical religion in North America, but in developing parts of the world the prominence of modern media techniques has an additional significance. In countries where the media has often been monopolised by the state and where people experience extreme poverty and semi-literacy, "the overwhelming amount of print, radio, tape, video and television production by Pentecostals is nothing short of miraculous".[9] In poor areas the churches are guardians sometimes of the only locally available telephone or cassette player. Local congregations are encouraged to acquire technical skills in the use of video cameras, PA systems and computers, and the microphone has become something of a *sine qua non* of evangelical services.[10]

Third, some scholars see religious conversion as representing a watershed moment in the lives of charismatic and Pentecostal Christians. A key feature of the conversion process is testimony, often accompanied by *glossolalia* (speaking in tongues), after which converts are described as dividing their lives into pre- and post-conversion periods. Some writers emphasise this point more than others. Droogers, for example, describes the conversion experience as "a primal or proleptic spiritual experience

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[7] Rosalind Hackett, "The Gospel of Prosperity in West Africa", in Richard H. Roberts (ed.), *Religion and the Transformation of Capitalism: Comparative Approaches*, London: Routledge, 1995, 207.

[8] See Rosalind Hackett, "Charismatic/Pentecostal Appropriation of Media Technologies in Nigeria and Ghana", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 28, 1998, 258–77. See also Coleman, *Globalisation* (esp. chapter 2).

[9] André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani, "Introduction", in André Corten and Ruth Marshall-Fratani (eds.), *Between Babel and Pentecost: Transnational Pentecostalism in Africa and Latin America*, London: Hurst & Company, 2001, 8.

[10] Bernice Martin, "From Pre- to Post-Modernity in Latin America: the Case of Pentecostalism", in Paul Heelas, with David Martin and Paul Morris (eds.), *Religion, Modernity and Postmodernity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, 137–8.

that fundamentally changes the parameters of his or her life".[11] Other writers have argued also that the conversion experience symbolises a moment of radical transformation during which the convert is ripped from his or her old life and planted firmly within the bounds of the born-again community.[12] Some, however, are more cautious in their analysis of the conversion process. In a Malawi township, Pentecostal Christians see "second birth" as a gradual process where personal experiences must be publicly ascertained in a person's everyday conduct.[13] In Benin also a central element of the conversion process is testimony followed by a change in behaviour in social life, although this change may not be a permanent one: "Pentecostalism is a stage which may be temporary in their often complex religious development."[14]

Fourth, given the prominence of conversion testimonies in the Pentecostal world, it is oral culture rather than the written word that seems to drive this religious movement. Even the authority of scripture does not surpass the importance of personal testimony in Pentecostal discourse. This has led some to conclude that a "common language"[15] exists in Pentecostal circles, which arises not from biblical narratives (the Bible may feature very little),[16] but from "spoken spiritual biographies".[17] The authority of the Holy Spirit, the gifts of whom are available to all, further undermines the importance of scripture and, some would argue, authoritative readings of scripture. Dorier-Apprill, for example, argues that individual contact between the believer and the Holy Spirit increases the valorisation of personal readings of scripture, and Corten and Marshall-Fratani argue similarly that the emphasis on individual

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[11] André Droogers, "Globalisation and Pentecostal Success", in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 45.

[12] See Martin, *Tongues of Fire*; Sidney Mintz, *Worker in the Cane*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

[13] Harri Englund, "The Quest for Missionaries: Transnationalism and Township Pentecostalism in Malawi", in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 253.

[14] Cédric Mayrargue, "The Expansion of Pentecostalism in Benin: Individual Rationales and Transnational Dynamics", in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 291.

[15] Corten and Marshall-Fratani, "Introduction", 8.

[16] In Brazzaville the emphasis in Pentecostal services is on emotions in praise and intercession in prayers, "the Bible constituting at times no more than a very remote reference" (Elisabeth Dorier-Apprill, "The New Pentecostal Networks of Brazzaville", in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 293).

[17] Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 178. These conversion narratives often follow a fairly standardised form involving some sort of confession followed by repentance.

Bible study means that "the sacred text is more or less 'up for grabs' ".[18] Although Pentecostal readings of scripture tend to follow more standardised forms than the above analyses would suggest, it remains that Pentecostal understandings of scripture differ quite radically from Christian fundamentalism. As Martin observes, fundamentalists defend the Bible because it is inerrant and complete; Pentecostals defend the Bible because it is the bearer of the "good news" that is made manifest through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.[19]

It is within this broad framework of charismatic and Pentecostal-like phenomena that Ghana's new charismatic churches are to be located. There are, however, additional features or "theological motifs" that pertain to the churches in Ghana (and West Africa generally), which I will outline now.

Themes in Ghana's New Christianity

One of the most notable aspects of the new churches, and the first theme introduced here, is the prominence given to concepts of "success", "victory", "winning ways" and the power of the miraculous. The prominence of "success" as a charismatic theme is reflected in the names of churches (Winners Chapel, Victory Bible Church and Power House Chapel International), and in the titles of conventions and conferences ("Breaking Barriers", "Retreat for Promotion", and "Daughters of Destiny"). It is also manifest in the common terms and phrases that are used repeatedly in charismatic services ("your season of success has come", "your month of miracles is here", "yours is a double portion", and "welcome to your season of fruitfulness"). In contrast to some traditional Christian spiritualities, "suffering" is not a virtue. In fact, the concept of suffering features hardly at all in this type of Christianity. Whilst faith is symbolised by "success", "abundance" and "fruitfulness", abstinence and self-denial are virtually absent as theological themes. Born-again Christians are guaranteed "winners" who can expect to enjoy victory over disease, poverty and suffering to achieve success in this world.

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[18] Dorier-Apprill, "Pentecostal Networks", 296; Corten and Marshall-Fratani, "Introduction", 5.

[19] David Martin, *Forbidden Revolutions: Pentecostalism in Latin America and Catholicism in Eastern Europe*, London: SPCK, 1996, 47. (See also Bernice Martin, "Pre- to Post-Modernity", 107.)

One element of this stress on "success" and "abundance" is prosperity teaching or what is known as the "Faith Gospel".[20] In charismatic churches much attention is given to financial matters, even by some ministries known previously for their holiness stance.[21] The Faith Gospel, or Gospel of Prosperity as it is sometimes called, refers to the belief that God intends every Christian to be successful, healthy and wealthy, and the believer needs simply to claim these gifts as his or her right as a child of God. In essence, it means that a true Christian will inevitably enjoy wealth and success. Poverty and suffering on the other hand indicate sin, or at least an inadequate faith or understanding of God's law. The doctrine is justified by scripture[22] and is associated most often with US televangelists like Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland who found in it a valuable source of income to support their million-dollar ministries. The Law of Sowing, or "seed faith", which dictates that whatever you sow (usually in financial donations to evangelism) you will reap, developed largely as a result of the financial needs of televangelism. Expounded by evangelists like Paul Yonggi Cho of Korea and the late Benson Idahosa of Nigeria, as well as US-based preachers, this type of theology has expanded into large parts of Asia and Africa, including Ghana.

A second important theme is "deliverance theology". Deliverance "from sickness, setbacks, torments and other physical infirmities" is understood as a necessary stage through which every Christian must pass following deliverance of the soul through salvation and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.[23] Some see it as a "third stage" beyond being born

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[20] For detailed studies of the Faith Gospel in Africa, see Brouwer, Gifford and Rose, *Exporting*; Hackett, "Gospel of Prosperity"; Paul Gifford, "The Complex Provenance of Some Elements of African Pentecostal Theology", in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 62–5; Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role*, London: Hurst & Company, 1998, (esp. 39–44); Paul Gifford, *Christianity and Politics in Doe's Liberia*, Cambridge: CUP, 1993, 146–89; Paul Gifford, "Prosperity: A New and Foreign Element in African Christianity", *Religion*, 20, 1990, 373–88.

[21] Rosalind Hackett cites the example of William F. Kumuyi's Deeper Life Bible Church in Lagos (Hackett, "Gospel of Prosperity", 205).

[22] The biblical passages that are referred to most frequently are Deuteronomy 28–30, Mark 4 (which is applied to the Law of Sowing) and Malachi 3. However, often the preacher's own testimony, usually a rags to riches story, takes precedence over biblical exposition (see Gifford, "Prosperity", 376–7).

[23] Rev. M. Addae Mensah cited in Atiemo, "Deliverance", 41. The story of the raising of Lazarus in John 11: 1–46 is often quoted to highlight the biblical basis of deliverance.

again and beyond speaking in tongues.[24] Even though a person may be saved they are perceived to be bound by their past and therefore susceptible to demonic influence. Demons, witchcraft and evil spirits dominate Ghanaian discourses on "spiritual warfare".[25] These malignant forces are perceived to enter people's lives through ancestral worship, fornication, homosexuality, adultery and other "demonic doorways".[26] The activities of demons prevent Christians from enjoying the abundance that God has given them. Their influences include persistent illness, long-term unemployment, poverty, infertility, mental instability and marital problems or inability to find a spouse. Deliverance sessions may involve some sort of questionnaire in which people are asked to identify any practices that may have brought them into direct contact with evil forces. A phenomenon known as "prayer camps", which has emerged to address this type of thinking, can attract up to 10,000 people at a time in Ghana.[27] Specialist deliverance ministries have also appeared and most charismatic churches hold regular deliverance services. The growth in the number of churches with "deliverance teams" that specialise in this ministry led Gifford to conclude that "deliverance thinking has now come to dominate many of these churches, reshaping the faith gospel which throughout the 1980s was their characteristic theology".[28]

A third theme is the increasing prominence of the prophetic. The most recent of the theological developments discussed here, the belief in the personal powers of individual pastors, has become an increasingly dominant feature of charismatic Christianity in Ghana and may be said to have overtaken, or at least fundamentally reshaped, deliverance thinking. Rather than endure a lengthy deliverance session, the fortune of an individual believer is seen to be directly dependent on his or her personal relationship with the man or woman of God, only

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[24] Gifford, "Complex Provenance", 65.

[25] Whilst concepts of demonology are easily absorbed into local beliefs about the activities of malignant forces, deliverance thinking in Ghana has been influenced by American and British evangelists such as Rebecca Brown (*He Came to Set the Captives Free*, New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1992; *Unbroken Curses*, New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1995) and Derek Prince (*Spiritual Warfare*, New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1992; *They Shall Expel Demons: What You Need to Know About Demons—Your Invisible Enemies*, Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1998; *Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose*, Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2000, 10th edition), as well as African figures like Emmanuel Eni (*Delivered From the Powers of Darkness*, Ibadan: Scripture Union, 1987).

[26] Atiemo, "Deliverance", 42.

[27] Gifford, "Complex Provenance", 68.

[28] *Ibid*.

some of whom actually call themselves prophets. Commenting on this shift towards the prophetic in Ghana, Gifford writes:

> the fundamental orientation is unchanged; Christianity is still about progress and success, but the crucial means now is prophetic gifts… So by 2000 virtually everything in Ghana had to be prophetic.[29]

As I will show, the shift towards the prophetic described by Gifford is felt also in the changing role of pastors' wives, some of whom now also claim the power of prophetic gifts.[30]

Having outlined the main characteristics of charismatic and Pentecostal-like churches, including the new churches in Ghana, the discussion can now turn to the relationship between Pentecostalism and social change.

Pentecostalism and Modernity

Martin describes Pentecostalism as "a major metanarrative of global modernity" and "a harbinger of modernity throughout the developing world".[31] It has been suggested that the role of Pentecostalism in the modern world is reminiscent of the role Max Weber ascribes to Protestantism in the rise of industrial capitalism.[32] The work of Weber is relevant to the study of contemporary Pentecostalism not least because it recognises the role of religion in generating social and cultural change. However, Martin sees Pentecostalism's role as an agent of modernity to be reflected in Elie Halévy's analysis of nineteenth-century Methodism[33] rather than Weber's study of Calvinism. It is the emphasis on "individuality and inward faith" (rather than "rationalization and bureaucracy") that, according to Martin, links Pentecostalism to modernity:

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[29] Gifford, *Ghana's New*, 90.

[30] In particular, see the analysis of Francisca Duncan-Williams in Chapter Five.

[31] David Martin, *On Secularisation*, London: Ashgate, 2005, 141.

[32] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Routledge, 1930; Max Weber, "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism", in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, London: Routledge, 1991 (1948). For a critique of Weber's book, see R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, London: John Murray, 1926. In his analysis, Tawney rejects the link between Protestantism and economic development. He argues that the English economy really began to develop only once religious influence had diminished, and was replaced by secular social theory.

[33] Elie Halévy, *A History of the English people in the Nineteenth Century*, London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1938.

> The metanarrative of Pentecostalism is not based on rationalization and bureaucracy but rather on story and song, gesture and empowerment, image and embodiment, enthusiastic release and personal discipline. One has to view this potent combination of empowerment with release as just as viable in terms of advancing modernity as rationalization.[34]

Martin considers Pentecostalism to be linked positively to modernity in terms of a number of "domains", which include "gender, secular law, transnationalism, voluntarism, pluralism, the nuclear family, peaceability, personal release and personal work discipline, consumption, modern communication", and "social and geographical mobility".[35] In this section, I want to consider the role of Pentecostalism in respect of some of these domains; namely, transnationalism (and globalisation), individualism, work discipline, and a personal ethic. In addition, I will consider the more ambiguous links between Pentecostalism and modernity—also raised by Martin—which are "authoritarianism"[36] and what Bernice Martin calls "the gender paradox".[37] The second ambiguity is central to this book and is considered in some depth in subsequent sections.

The global nature of charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity has led to its association with wider processes of globalisation and the spread of "global culture".[38] The concept of globalisation is associated with a growth in the power of mass media, increased levels of physical and economic mobility, and the development of transnational social, political and cultural alliances.[39] In a globalised world, distance is socially constructed and it becomes possible to speak of "world culture" in terms of the interconnectedness of varied local cultures. World society, therefore, is represented as a system of mutual dependency: "People, nations, transnational corporations and religions are all condemned to each other".[40] Thus globalisation refers "both to the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole".[41] In this compressed world the local and the global "leap

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[34] Martin, *On Secularisation*, 142.
[35] *Ibid*., 144.
[36] *Ibid*., 145.
[37] Bernice Martin, "The Pentecostal Gender Paradox", in Richard K. Fenn (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2001, 52–66.
[38] Karla Poewe, *The Charismatic Movement as a Global Culture*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994.
[39] Coleman, *Globalisation*, 50.
[40] Droogers, "Globalisation", 51.
[41] Roland Robertson cited in, Coleman, *Globalisation*, 50.

frogs over the national level"[42] and unitary society or the nation state recede as primary contexts within which identity and community are imagined.

While the emerging global system "corrodes inherited or constructed cultural and personal identities", it also encourages the creation and revitalisation of particular identities as a way of gaining more power and influence in the new global order.[43] It gives rise to what have been variously described as "shadow worlds" or "micro-narratives", in which tensions between the universal and the particular, the global and the local are manifest and local translations of the global are played out.[44] Charismatic Christianity is described by Simon Coleman as an example of such a global "meta-culture". Religious revivalists, he writes, "construct *a* world within *the* world, setting up arenas for action, agency and imagination that invoke a global circumstance in a way that is distinct, even 'sub-cultural' ".[45] In a similar vein, Ruth Marshall-Fratani describes charismatic Christian churches as examples of local "micro-narratives" that facilitate the production of "vernacular globalization".[46] The charismatic movement, then, is described as both a transnational movement that cuts across political and cultural divisions and a religious community, which allows its members to reinterpret the global in terms of the local. "Pentecostalism and other similar movements", writes Martin, "enable marginal people to divest themselves of backward and dissolute stereotypes and leap over the local national environment to embrace a global modernity".[47]

Since the beginning of the last quarter of the twentieth century internationalism increasingly has become the hallmark of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity, and even the most local churches are now keen to make the global claim.[48] This is reflected in religious practice, such as the widespread use of the English language at charismatic events, which extends even to non-English speaking countries.[49] For participants,

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[42] Martin, "Pre- to Postmodernity", 123.
[43] Gifford, *African Christianity*, 320–1.
[44] Droogers, "Globalisation", 51.
[45] Coleman, *Globalisation*, 51–2; 69.
[46] Ruth Marshall-Fratani, "Mediating the Global and Local in Nigerian Pentecostalism", in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 96.
[47] Martin, *On Secularisation*, 149.
[48] Rijk van Dijk, "Time and Transcultural Technologies of the Self in the Ghanaian Pentecostal Diaspora", in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 222.
[49] Even in parts of Francophone Africa, English is increasingly used in Pentecostal events and in the marketing of those events. "English seems to have greater evocative

then, these new churches provide an opportunity to become part of a transnational network through which the global is brought into direct contact with the local.

> They illustrate very clearly one of the processes widely recognised as characteristic of the postmodern global condition. They display a direct connection between the local and the global which leapfrogs over the national level, and is greatly assisted in doing so by (post)modern communications. There is little doubt that an important source of pride and validation among many of the new Protestants is a sense of being part of a worldwide movement of winners, however humble and obscure their particular group may seem.[50]

As Pentecostal and charismatic Christians embrace "global modernity", they also reinterpret and reshape the global through "transnational Pentecostal flows"[51] in which the local accesses the global but also adapts and transforms the global to meet its own needs. Pentecostalism, then, represents an instance of "glocalisation",[52] or "hybridity", whereby theological motifs and religious practices take on new symbolic resonance and new meanings as they are transferred from one context to another.[53]

A second link between Pentecostalism and modernity is the promotion of individualism. Pentecostalism enables converts to make "their break with the rural past and with the extended familial relationships and

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power than French, even though it is not understood by all those who are listening to these messages" (Mayrargue, "Expansion", 286). Similarly, in Brazzaville, Pentecostals introduce the young urban elite into international networks through Bible classes conducted in English, which may be translated into French but never into the vernacular (Apprill, "Pentecostal Networks", 304).

[50] Martin, "Pre- to Post-Modernity", 123.

[51] Corten and Marshall-Fratani, "Introduction", 3. However, Englund argues that in Malawi Pentecostalism hardly provides a truly global space for people's lives. In contrast to Ghana or Nigeria, Malawi's links with electronic means of mass mediation are too poor to have any real impact on people's global awareness. Thus, Englund concludes, "in transnationalism, blockages are as important to understand as flows" ("Quest for Missionaries", 238).

[52] Droogers applies this term, which was coined by Roland Robertson (*Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, London: Sage Publications, 1992), to Pentecostalism ("Globalisation", 51).

[53] Gifford, "Complex Provenance", 63. However, Gifford draws attention to the importance of recognising the cultural appeal of America in the context of transnationalism: "The larger cultural package of the world's superpower is not to be ignored in assessing Christianity's appeal and increase" (Gifford, *African Christianity*, 318). David Maxwell, however, is critical of Gifford's approach to the role of American culture in the spread of Pentecostalism, especially in relation to the Faith Gospel ("In Defence of African Creativity", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 30 (4), 2000, 468–81).

community responsibilities embedded in it".[54] Conversion represents "a turning in a new direction", and that "new direction", writes Martin, "is global modernity".[55] Pentecostalism provides a support network within which the individual might foster this new identity and feel at home in a new community that offers refuge from modern urban life during the transition to modernity.[56] Through these networks individuals attempt to distance themselves from the obligations and constraints of family life. Birgit Meyer, for example, shows how Pentecostalism enables Ghana's prosperous urban residents to deal with the financial demands of the extended family,[57] which are "increasingly perceived as unbearable intrusions in the domestic economy".[58]

According to both Dorier-Apprill and Pierre-Joseph Laurent, the Pentecostal churches remove hindrances to individual development whilst simultaneously building new networks of patronage within which rules of mutual obligation apply. Pentecostal congregations condemn as parasitic "the 'excesses' of demands for help within the lineage setting", to build upon evangelical bases

> a new paradigm of "well-ordered" solidarity, at once more restricted (compatible with the needs and even prosperity of the nuclear family) and occasionally extended (outside the lineage, towards "brothers and sisters in Christ").[59]

Such a project, argues Laurent, is

> inconceivable without the conversion process, which legitimates the transgression which the intervention of individual trajectories implies, and can be used against the defence mechanisms of village communalism.[60]

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[54] Martin, *On Secularisation*, 147.

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] The individual, remarks Martin, "is always part of a community and the disciplined raft the church offers for mutual support and survival" (*Ibid.*, 148). Ruth Marshall argues that relations of reciprocity develop in the setting up of a kind of "rudimentary social security" system ("'Power in the Name of Jesus": Social Transformation and Pentecostalism in Western Nigeria 'Revisited'", in T. Ranger and O. Vaughan (eds.), *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa*, London: Macmillan, 1993, 224).

[57] Birgit Meyer, "'Delivered From the Powers of Darkness': Confessions of Satanic Riches in Christian Ghana", *Africa*, 65 (2), 1995, 247–50.

[58] Dorier-Apprill, "Pentecostal Networks", 302.

[59] *Ibid.*, 302.

[60] Pierre-Joseph Laurent, "Transnationalism and Local Transformations: The Example of the Church of Assemblies of God of Burkina Faso", in Corten and Marshall-Fratani, *Babel and Pentecost*, 261.

Here, continues Laurent, "we are in the presence of individualisation 'African style', which combines the processes of individuation and the recomposition of communal solidarities".[61] In other words, Pentecostalism represents not so much the destruction of traditional society as its reinvention. It offers believers a way of being and an alternative identity based on both individualism and communal solidarity in the new context of global modernity.

A third link between Pentecostalism and modernity is what Martin sees as its inculcation of "personal work discipline", which is particularly suited, it is argued, to the type of economy that functions in many regions of the developing world. A prominent feature of many "third-world" economies is the growth of the service industry and the informal employment sector. The collapse of the welfare state, retrenchment, under-employment and urban migration have been precipitated both by the marginalisation of the nation state and by the external intervention of financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. In this type of informal economy "survival entrepreneurship" is the key to success, or at the very least survival, and this, according to some observers, is what Pentecostalism encourages:

> What this postmodern economy requires from them is micro-entrepreneurial initiative, an individualized and more feminized psyche, a high level of self-motivation, and the flexibility with which to face insecure employment and self-employment, mobility, and the twenty-four-hour working day.[62]

Moreover,

> the absence of externally imposed discipline (other than the threat of starvation), the lack of institutional time frame and of supervision in this work process puts an even greater premium on an internalized discipline. Protestant self-discipline in this dispensation is a distinct survival aid.[63]

There are other features of Pentecostal practice that may have an impact on the economic lives of converts. The practice of tithing, for

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[61] *Ibid.*, 271.

[62] Martin, "From Pre- to Post-Modernity", 129.

[63] Bernice Martin, "New Mutations of the Protestant Ethic Among Latin American Pentecostals", *Religion*, 25, 1995, 110. Martin continues, "It is already a truism among the Latin American middle class (Catholic as well as Protestant) that if possible you should have "believers" as your domestics because they work hard and are totally trustworthy even when you are not there to oversee their work" (*ibid.*).

example, has been described as encouraging "penny capitalism" and may result in some small-scale saving. Edward Cleary highlights the ability of Pentecostals in Latin America to advance from the lower classes to the middle classes by saving money, working hard, and most importantly, sending their children to school. Education is a major element in the advancement to middle social status and Pentecostals tend to stay in school longer. In fact, notes Cleary, "Reading and studying have been the backbone of Pentecostal discipline".[64] Pentecostal habits and values, it is argued, assist economic survival and may in some circumstances even lead to modest success. Thus, concludes Martin, "evangelical religion and economic advancement do *often* go together, and when they do so appear mutually to support and *reinforce* one another" (italics original).[65]

A commonly observed feature of Pentecostal behaviour, and a fourth link between Pentecostalism and modernity, is a renewed sense of morality, or what might be called a "personal ethic". Pentecostal discipline, it is argued, extends beyond the workplace to family life where this personal ethic has the power to transform lives in the domestic sphere. As discussed, Pentecostal converts are perceived to divide their lives into pre- and post-conversion periods, the latter often being associated with the rejection of drink, drugs and tobacco, as well as abstinence from pre-marital and extra-marital sex. Robert Garner's study of Christian churches in South Africa corroborates this view and suggests that Pentecostal churches are the most effective at promoting counter-cultural behaviour. Garner identifies four variables—indoctrination, religious experience, exclusion and socialisation—that determine the capacity of religious groups to effect social change "from below".[66] These variables, he argues, are often highest in Pentecostalism, in particular in the new Pentecostal churches, and in some types of African instituted churches. Drawing on Mann's distinction between "extensive" and "intensive" power—which Mann applies to religious groups in his account of social

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[64] Edward L. Cleary, "Latin American Pentecostalism", in Murray W. Dempster, Bryon D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen (eds.), *The Globalization of Pentecostalism: A Religion Made to Travel*, Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999, 136.

[65] Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 206.

[66] Robert C. Garner, "Religion as a Source of Social Change in the New South Africa", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 30 (3), 2000, 310–43; Robert C. Garner, "Safe Sects? Dynamic Religion and AIDS in South Africa", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 38 (1), 2000, 41–69.

change through history[67]—Garner distinguishes between South Africa's mainline churches and "sectarian" types:

> Extensive power organises large numbers of people, potentially over large territories and across borders; intensive power mobilises a high level of commitment from participants. The nature of things is that religions—or other forms of social organisation—rarely wield both extensive and intensive power simultaneously. Broadly speaking, Mainline Christianity manifests extensive power; other types, especially those which approximate the sectarian, manifest intensive power.[68]

The Pentecostal churches, which manifest intensive power, display a greater power to promote behaviour "which runs counter to perceived self-interest or cultural norms".[69] The involvement of the church in the lives of members and the powerful subjective experience of charismatic faith mean that Pentecostals are more likely to make a complete break with traditional rituals that are economically disadvantageous, and less likely to engage in extra- and pre-marital sexual activity, which reduces the risk of infection by HIV. Thus, "Membership of these groups produces demonstrable change in economically significant attitudes and behaviour, and makes upward mobility more likely".[70] So, although the historical shift in South Africa from minority rule to democratic capitalism was facilitated "by the contribution of the socially and politically conscientised Mainline churches", in the "New" South Africa,

> dynamic and exclusive religious types (which made little or no contribution to its genesis) are effecting social change "from below", of the sort that will strengthen the conditions of democratic capitalism and make its enduring success more likely.[71]

Garner's point, that changes in the attitude and behaviour of individuals signifies the power of the born-again community to become a collective force for social change, is echoed in the analyses of Martin and Marshall, both of whom argue that Pentecostalism symbolises a personal and a social reformation. In Latin America, conversion to Pentecostalism represents

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[67] Michael Mann, *Sources of Social Power*, vol. 1, *A History of Power from the Beginning to A.D. 1760*; vol. 2, *The Rise of Classes and Nation States, 1760–1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, (1993).

[68] Garner, "Safe Sects?", 50.

[69] *Ibid.*, 48.

[70] Garner, "Religion", 337.

[71] *Ibid.*

> a revolution within the self: an ecstasis, a breaking beyond the static. In many cases it literally breaks down and breaks through the structured nature of social boundaries and the settled limits of ordinary received behaviour.[72]

In Nigeria, argues Marshall, born-again communities "see themselves as a part of a dramatic project of both individual and social renewal".[73] Whilst conversion "is experienced as a liberating and empowering personal rebirth", "the new spiritual power possessed by the born-again individual cannot be disassociated from the 'practical' power to transform his/her social and economic world".[74]

In contrast, Gifford's research on the new churches in Ghana leads him to question the role of Pentecostalism as an agent of modernity.[75] In many ways, the differences between Gifford's analysis and that of Martin arise from alternative conceptions of "modernity". For Gifford, modernity is based, to some extent at least, on "rationalization and bureaucracy":

> 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.[76]

Many of the beliefs and practices of Ghana's charismatic churches, argues Gifford, are at best a distraction from and at worse a barrier to economic development and social change. For Martin, however, modernity begins at the level of culture and extends beyond "structures" to "empowerment" and "enthusiastic release":

> the argument construing Pentecostalism as a blind alley, evading the pressing need for structural change in an orgy of irrationality and hysteria, ignores the way in which the future can be prefigured and anticipated at the level of culture.[77]

Gifford is not dismissive of the role of culture or of the potential impact of Pentecostalism on the lives of individuals,[78] but he questions the

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[72] Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 202–3.
[73] Marshall, "Power in the Name of Jesus", 228.
[74] *Ibid.*, 242.
[75] "My study of the religious situation in Ghana has not convinced me that much of Ghana's new Christianity leads naturally to the benefits sometimes suggested, benefits like a new work ethic" (Gifford, *Ghana's New*, 196).
[76] *Ibid.*, 197.
[77] Martin, *On Secularisation*, 149.
[78] The new churches, he notes, "often instil motivation or self-belief" (*Ghana's New*, 196).

link between personal renewal and social transformation, maintaining that, given Africa's economic realities,[79] the role of personal effort in effecting social change must be "extremely limited".[80]

The link between Pentecostalism and moral and social transformation is ambiguous. Despite the suggestion from both Marshall and Garner, for example, that Pentecostal belief inculcates moral reform, the empirical evidence they provide creates ambiguity. Garner notes that although the youth of the Pentecostal church

> are highly socialised, meeting almost everyday, and receive clear teaching on matters such as tithing and evangelism, the sexual ethics normally associated with conservative religious groups are not prioritised.[81]

Similarly, Marshall admits that although sexual morality is one of the most strongly emphasised aspects of living "a life in Christ", it may be "one of the least adhered to".[82]

There are other areas of ambiguity; namely, authoritarianism and gender. The "paradoxical nature of authority"[83] in charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity is manifest in the contrast between egalitarian congregations on the one hand, in which youth in particular experience opportunity "to develop a sense of individual self-worth" and "compete with people who are no longer considered superior simply by virtue of age or wealth",[84] and the authoritarian rule of pastors on the other. Gifford notes that in Ghana "there has been a move away from egalitarian tendencies to a more authoritarian ethos", and that this is manifest in the decline of community-based fellowships and the growth of personality-led mega-churches. The rise of high-status prophets who set themselves apart from their congregations on

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[79] Gifford and other Africanists tend to view Africa's social and economic position as exceptional: "Of all the regions in the world for which economic data are aggregated by the World Bank, none has had a more disappointing economic performance. In the mid-1950s, as has often been pointed out, a relatively wealthy African state such as Ghana had a GNP per capita equivalent to, and an economic structure not vastly different from, those of South Korea or Malaysia. By the mid-1990s, when South Korea's per capita GNP was 18 times Ghana's, and Malaysia's was seven times, these states had economic structures and levels of human welfare that put them into completely different leagues" (Christopher Clapham, "Governmentality and Economic Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa", *Third World Quarterly*, 17 (4), 1996, 809).

[80] Gifford, *African Christianity*, 348.

[81] Garner, "Safe Sects?", 60.

[82] Marshall, "Power in the Name of Jesus", 231.

[83] Martin, *On Secularisation*, 145.

[84] *Ibid*., 224.

account of their special spiritual gifts "has brought this trajectory [from egalitarianism to authoritarian rule] to its culmination".[85] According to Martin, however, one of the "paradoxes of freedom" is that "autonomy depends on heteronomy" while "participation depends on boundaries and rules". Within Pentecostalism the hierarchies of the outside world (gerontocracy or gender, for example) are "abrogated and replaced by a single hierarchy of faith, grace and the empowerments of the spirit as mediated by the pastor".[86] Authority, Martin concludes, is therefore "both reduced and concentrated".[87]

My book considers these ambiguities within a broader framework that examines the gender implications and ambiguities of Ghana's charismatic churches. It is to the historical and cross-cultural dimensions of the relationship between Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity and gender that the discussion now turns.

Pentecostalism and Gender in Historical Perspective

It has often been suggested that the roots of the American women's movement can be traced back to the beliefs and practices of nineteenth-century evangelical religion. This is not to say that the evangelicals of this period were in any way concerned directly with the issues of sexual equality brought to the forefront of American politics by feminist activists during the latter half of the twentieth century. However, there are significant developments in Christian theology in the nineteenth century that contributed to the creation of new images of home, family and the Christian fellowship. At the time these new images sparked debates about the role of women in the church and in American spiritual life. One century later they had laid the foundations for political debates about male power and the role of women in American social life.

According to Janet Everts Powers, both the Pentecostal and the Holiness churches ordained women in great numbers around the turn of the century, although numbers began to decline after 1920.[88] The

[85] Gifford, *Ghana's New*, 186.
[86] Martin, *On Secularisation*, 145.
[87] *Ibid*., 146.
[88] Janet Everts Powers, " 'Your Daughters Shall Prophesy': Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Empowerment of Women", in Dempster, Klaus and Petersen, *Globalization*, 313. In 1995 over 50 per cent of all American women who had ever been ordained were from Pentecostal and Holiness backgrounds. A 1990 report of the National

Pentecostals, using the Bible to justify their argument, affirmed women's ability to "speak for God as fully empowered vessels of the Holy Spirit". What makes Pentecostal hermeneutics unique at this time is the vital role that spiritual experience played in biblical interpretation. Pentecostals argued that women have an experience of the Holy Spirit that is identical to men and therefore they are able to minister. The Pentecostal understanding of *glossolalia* was also central to their understanding of the ability of women to minister. The actions of one baptised in the Spirit were the actions of God, not those of a human speaker. In her study of evangelical women preachers in rural areas of contemporary America, Elaine Lawless observes that although the call to preach far outweighs the fact that women are not normally granted equality in authority outside the church, women preachers are always careful to emphasise in their sermons that the words they are preaching are those of God and not their own.[89] Thus whilst Pentecostalism may empower women as "mouthpieces of the Lord", it does not empower them as women. This hermeneutic inconsistency, argues Powers, meant that discussions of women's ability to minister in the nineteenth century were not carried through to women's position in society. As vessels of the Holy Spirit, women were still considered to be "weaker vessels" and under the authority of men in all matters pertaining to home and government.

> This ambiguity has meant that Pentecostals have expanded the traditional ecclesiastical roles of women and allowed them to preach as ministers empowered by the Spirit and, at the same time, have never been certain if this Spirit-empowering gives women the ability to assume positions of authority.[90]

This "efficient apologetic tactic" allowed the issue of women ministers to be brought under the umbrella of the doctrine of Spirit baptism, which meant that Pentecostals did not have to re-examine cultural assumptions about the role of women and thus were able to leave traditional interpretations of biblical passages about women alone.[91]

Council of Churches noted that the Assemblies of God had led the way in affirming the ministries of women (*ibid.*, 313).

[89] Elaine J. Lawless, *Handmaidens of the Lord: Pentecostal Women Preachers and Traditional Religion*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988.

[90] Powers, "Your Daughters Shall Prophecy", 317.

[91] *Ibid.*, 324.

What did influence changes in social relations and the ability of women to assume public roles of responsibility was the knowledge and skills that evangelical women learnt through their involvement in temperance, moral reform and the abolition movement. Olive Banks demonstrates that whilst evangelical women were not radical feminists, many feminist ideals originated in the evangelical tradition. The moral reform movement, for example, attacked the double standard of sexual morality in American society and the use of alcohol, which was associated with sexual excess. Moral reformers frequently worked in the temperance cause where they campaigned against those aspects of masculine behaviour that were hostile to the family and home.

> Feminists, therefore, were almost always in sympathy with the ideals of temperance, although temperance workers themselves were not necessarily feminist. What is perhaps more worthy of note is the extent to which feminist leaders began as active temperance workers and sometimes moved to feminism at a later stage in their lives.[92]

However, it is in the anti-slavery campaign, argues Banks, that the most important links are found between the evangelical movement and feminism. Here women activists gained valuable experience in fundamental political activities such as fund-raising and petitioning. In Britain and the United States,

> the anti-slavery movement accustomed women to participate, even if in a subordinate role, in a political campaign, and gave them lessons in tactics that some of them were to turn to good account later on in pursuit of specifically feminist goals.[93]

It should be noted, however, that on the whole the evangelical movement was not a feminist one. Women preachers were unlikely to expound feminism from the pulpit, and some scholars have argued that involvement in moral reform and similar activities actually diverted women from seeking change by compensating them for their own subordination.

> To a large extent, therefore, the effect of the evangelical movement on feminism was to be conservative rather than radical, and even when it led women outside the home it was primarily in order to bring the domestic

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[92] Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement*, Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1981, 18.
[93] *Ibid.*, 23.

> virtues into the public domain. There was little desire, in short, to change either the idea of femininity or the nature of domestic life; in so far as it was radical at all, it was in the attempt to "feminize" the public sphere by bringing to it the values associated with the home.[94]

Nevertheless, many women, when they did move from evangelicalism to feminism, took with them the knowledge and skills they had learnt through collective involvement in the anti-slavery campaign and other social reform movements.

Drawing on modern cultural theory, Callum Brown describes the impact of discursive Christianity on constructions of femininity and masculinity in Britain from 1800 to 1963. Brown argues that piety

> was conceived as an overwhelmingly feminine trait which challenged masculinity and left men demonised and constantly anxious. It was modern evangelicalism that raised the piety of woman, the "angel in the house", to reign over the moral weakness and innate temptations of masculinity.[95]

During the social changes of the industrial period, which included the breakdown of traditional social relationships and an increase in "machismo culture", evangelicalism created a domestic ideology that tried to feminise men and provide a forum for the exploration of women's roles, ideals and protests.[96] Women remained institutionally marginalised, "yet really quite suddenly around 1800, women's religiosity became privileged". This gender shift in the centre of religiosity "feminised piety and pietised femininity".[97] Women were presented as the "moral heart of the family" and the "moral linchpin of society", and mothers in particular were ascribed a special role in the moral welfare of their children.

Feminine piety was also perceived to be crucial to moral change in men. After 1800 feminising men was an important evangelical strategy. Evangelicalism demonised men, and a large proportion of evangelical stories focused on the destruction of families by male evils such as drink and gambling, salvation from which came through conversion

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[94] *Ibid.*, 26–7.

[95] Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, London: Routledge, 2001, 9.

[96] Like Banks, Brown highlights the tension between a domestic ideology and the space that women created for themselves through their involvement with religious organisations and the temperance movement, which, he argues, provided a "seedbed for feminism" (*ibid.*, 59).

[97] *Ibid.*, 58.

and the feminisation of born-again men. Even the rise of "muscular Christianity" during the mid-nineteenth century represented an attempt to "contain, capture, restrain and discipline masculinity".[98]

The domestic ideal, which merged evangelical notions of gendered piety with Victorian moral values, was revived after 1945 and persisted until "a remarkably sudden and culturally violent event": the cultural revolution of the 1960s. The immediate victim of this change, argues Brown, was Christianity, which was challenged by second-wave feminism and "the re-crafting of femininity". Feminine identity "was now conveyed by everything other than family, domestic routine, virtue, religion or respectability":

> The distinctive growth in the 1950s of women's dual role in home and work was a major contributory factor, creating a new stress about which model defined a woman's "duty", upsetting the salience of evangelical protocols, and rendering women part of the same religious "problem" as men. The reconstruction of female identity within work, sexual relations and new recreational opportunities from the late 1960s, put not just feminism but female identity in collision with the Christian construction of femininity.[99]

Brown concludes that whilst women sustained discursive Christianity in the age of modernity from 1800 to 1960, Christianity quickly collapsed "when women cancelled their mass subscription to the discursive domain of Christianity" and that the eradication of gendered piety signalled the de-centring of Christianity—its authority and cultural significance.[100]

One of the most comprehensive accounts of the way in which evangelical religion influenced changes in American society during this period is Gregory Schneider's *The Way of the Cross Leads Home: The Domestication of American Methodism*.[101] He charts the development of American Methodism during the first half of the nineteenth century and describes the influence it had on the emergence of a new form of patriarchy less stable than the patriarchy that had gone before it. Schneider describes the dissatisfaction that many people felt with patriarchy and "the culture

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[98] *Ibid.*, 91–109. (See Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880–1920*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001; and Tony Ladd and James Mathisen, *Muscular Christianity: Evangelical Protestants and the Development of American Sport*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.)

[99] Brown, *Death*, 179.

[100] *Ibid.*, 195–7.

[101] Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.

of honor", in particular, the perception of themselves, their society and their families that it fostered. After the sociological upheavals of the American Revolution and the great migration west, people were ready to adopt different practices and views.

Methodism, Schneider claims, changed people; it transformed people's sense of who they were. The growth of a new community, a Christian fellowship, based on mutual affection was central to this change.[102] The foundations of this social religion (the weekly class meeting and the love feast) symbolised a new model of society, which challenged the traditional structures of honour and shame. Methodist ritual and discipline transformed thinking and feeling about family. The metaphorical family of God was a catalyst for change in the meaning of domestic life as Methodists moved towards affection-centred family ties.

> New norms of friendship arose within the family of God, and it seemed clear that these norms belonged to domestic spaces set at a distance from the world. When the Methodist popular press began to elaborate a domestic ideology, it would echo the patterns of sociability found in the family of God.[103]

Within this "new family" women were heralded as "icons of holiness and instruments of morality". Womanhood was "naturally" religious; the home was the woman's sphere and both were sacred. According to Schneider this social religion soon became domesticated and combined with Republican ideology, which valued women's domestic role as "keepers of virtue". "If the survival of republics depended upon the virtue of their citizens, and if women made men virtuous, then women held the fate of the republic in their hands."[104] So, women's domestic role differed little from what it had been a century before, but now it was valued both within Methodist circles and by the Republic itself.

However, women's role as the pious, self-sacrificing wife and mother could not be contained for long within this consolidating ideology. The

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[102] On this point he differs from Weber when Schneider emphasises the importance of a "shared sentiment" that was generated among Methodist groups, rather than the disciplinary dimension. Intimacy, not discipline, linked the early Methodists and symbolised the separation between the religious society and the "world". "Where the Methodists sang of the joy of their communion with one anther and with God, Weber, who described himself as religiously unmusical, heard only a heavy march step" (Schneider, *Way of the Cross*, 82).

[103] *Ibid.*, 124.

[104] *Ibid.*, 15.

way of the cross demanded "strong individual moral agency" as well as self-sacrifice. Two generations on and Methodist women were led to create their own opportunities for moral achievement, many of whom were influenced by the temperance movement. Thus, "the way of the cross could leave home as well as lead there".[105] Nineteenth-century American Methodism was patriarchal, but it had a different aim from the patriarchy that had characterised the culture of honour, which had functioned to sustain a hierarchical cosmic order. Methodist patriarchy aimed to transform the individual and thus the social order through spiritual transformation and personal self-control. However, concludes Schneider, "there was something inherently unstable about the use of patriarchy to inculcate individual self-control".[106]

Pentecostalism and Gender: Contemporary Patterns

This claim—that evangelical Christianity has the power to inculcate a domestic ideology that transforms patriarchal family structures—constitutes the basis of current debates concerning Pentecostalism and the regeneration of the family in the developing world. Research, primarily from Latin America, southern Europe, and to a lesser extent Africa, suggests that Pentecostal Christianity contains within its theology and practices the power to transform gender relations and gender-specific behaviour. It is argued that in developing regions of the world the family tends to be the main source of security for many women. It is thought, therefore, that a movement which is concerned primarily with the regeneration of the family, and with women's and men's roles within it, could engender significant social changes with important gender implications. The theology, structures and social concerns of Pentecostal Christianity are key elements of a religion that is said to challenge the stronghold of "traditional" patriarchies.

Salvatore Cucchiari argues that despite the exclusive use of masculine pronouns, the God of Pentecostalism is a more androgynous figure, a cross-gender God and a maternal patriarch.[107] Jesus also is most frequently painted in androgynous to feminine hues. God is an emotionally vulnerable God, a God who is not afraid to be weak.

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[105] *Ibid.*, xxvii.
[106] *Ibid.*, 200.
[107] Salvatore Cucchiari, "Between Shame and Sanctification: Patriarchy and its Transformation in Sicilian Pentecostalism", *American Ethnologist*, 17 (4), 1990, 687–707.

> This does not exhaust the male images in *culto* discourse: God is also envisioned as the coming judge in the eschatological future, for example. But for the most part, the God of the *culto* is the long-suffering, broken-hearted pursuer of human hearts—lover and mother in one.[108]

Moreover, a judgemental God demands submissiveness and obedience in relationship with Him—qualities that are traditionally associated with women—and thus Pentecostal men also must cultivate some traditional feminine qualities.[109] The feminine attributes of the Spirit and the masculine domain of the Word are not simple opposites in the Pentecostal belief system, but "mutually implicating and mediating realities". The structured authority of the Word is constantly challenged and undermined by the anti-structural liminality of the Spirit. These cross-gendered sub-textual images, Cucchiari argues, contribute to the construction of new models of womanhood and manhood, which imply a greater degree of gender mutuality than the hegemonic model.

> I maintain that the cross-gender God is a gender prototype that opens up new possibilities for gender redefinition within the Pentecostal community. It is still a patriarchal model, to be sure. God is still exclusively male at the explicit level, and other aspects of Pentecostal religious experience suggests that the Word contains or takes symbolic precedence over the Spirit. Nevertheless the cross-gender God is a cultural crucible in which new models of masculinity/femininity are being forged.[110]

Pentecostal communities are both hierarchical and egalitarian. Women may not be given formal authority but they do exercise some power, albeit covertly. In his comparison between the role of women in Catholic base communities and Pentecostal groups, Martin notes that women exercise authority within the limits set by their domestic roles and that primarily they act as "channels of devotion" without the central powers of administrative control.[111] However, Cucchiari's study shows that whilst a key distinction is made in Pentecostalism between "gift" and "ministry", very often this distinction is a fiction, used to distinguish between preaching—a male preserve—and personal testimony, which may be given by a woman.[112] Women also exercise authority through

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[108] *Ibid.*, 690.
[109] Lesley Gill, "'Like a Veil to Cover Them': Women and the Pentecostal Movement in La Paz", *American Ethnologist*, 17 (4), 1990, 708–21.
[110] Cucchiari, "Between Shame and Sanctification", 693.
[111] Martin, *Forbidden Revolutions*, 40–1.
[112] Cucchiari, "Between Shame and Sanctification", 693–4.

participation in counter-hegemonic church groups such as the Mayan widows' group in Guatemala, which seeks to redress social injustices by interpreting the Bible in a radically different way from the main church.[113] Thus, within formal Pentecostal structures women are able to negotiate spaces within which they exercise a power and prestige that is similar, if not equal, to their male counterparts.

Theories concerning the role of Pentecostal churches in generating gender-related social change tend to focus on what might be characterised as a theology of domesticity. This is because in many developing-world economies, where the majority of the poor are employed in the informal sector, the household could be considered the basic unit of social struggle.[114] A religious movement that has as its primary motivation the restoration of the family as "a viable moral, cultural, and economic household",[115] therefore, could offer significant benefits to both men's and women's lives. Elizabeth Brusco demonstrates that in Colombia instead of trying to revolutionise the public realm (which is beyond its scope), Pentecostalism places the private realm of home and family at the centre of both women's and men's lives.[116] Status achievement is reinterpreted in terms of family-oriented values whereby men are encouraged to fulfil the role of the good provider. In other words, Pentecostalism redefines a man's values and goals so that they are realised through his attachment to the family, and the culture of machismo is replaced by evangelical belief as the main definer of expectations in husband-wife relations. The man remains the head of the household, but his aspirations change to coincide more closely with those of his wife.

In middle-class families conversion to Pentecostalism can contribute to upward mobility because the home becomes crucial to the status of men as well as women: "Status becomes acquired cooperatively through consumption and investment strategies for the family as a unit".[117] In poorer households, whilst conversion may not improve substantially

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[113] Linda Green, "Shifting Affiliations: Mayan Widows and Evangélicos in Guatemala", in Virginia Garrard-Burnett and David Stoll (eds.), *Rethinking Protestantism in Latin America*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993, 173–4.

[114] Stoll, *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?*, 318.

[115] Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 75.

[116] Elizabeth Brusco, "The Reformation of Machismo: Asceticism and Masculinity among Colombian Evangelicals", in Garrard-Burnett and Stoll, *Rethinking Protestantism*, 143–58.

[117] *Ibid.*, 149.

material circumstances, women do benefit from changes in male behaviour. Ascetic codes, argues Brusco, reduce forms of consumption that characterise male behaviour in Colombia: drinking, gambling, smoking and visiting prostitutes. Thus, women benefit from a "new man" who is less typically "male".[118]

In the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, Marshall observes that born-again doctrine and practice are transforming the spheres of marriage, family and sexuality in ways that are very attractive to young, urban women in Nigeria.[119] The Pentecostal sexual discourse constitutes a powerful resource in the hands of women, because born-again women are more likely to be able to escape the exchange of sexual favours, for example, and thereby regain a degree of control over their sexuality.[120] Although the woman is subordinate to her husband in the home, he has responsibility to respect her and treat her with consideration. Married couples are encouraged to work like partners in the domestic sphere. The choice of spouse is left to the individual, women are not blamed exclusively for the failure to reproduce, and the stress on individual achievement affords women who take initiative in the sphere of male labour a certain degree of respect.

> They find in these communities an opportunity to construct a space in which they can move with relative freedom and dignity, to gain a measure of control over their sexual and family lives, and from there use their positions to gain more influence in the sphere of labour outside the home.[121]

These communities, however, are not constituted entirely of women, although they may be numerically dominant in many cases. Why do such doctrines and practices that benefit women so overtly appeal also to men? Cucchiari explains that, in the context of the hegemonic crisis, men experience the church community as a haven of non-threatened male honour and prestige and as a revitalisation of a prevailing system of patriarchy. Also feminine religiosity satisfies men's deep psychological

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[118] Gill, "Like a Veil to Cover Them", 717.

[119] Marshall, "Power in the Name of Jesus".

[120] This may be due, to some extent, to the fact that Nigerians tend to respect or fear displays of spiritual power, which born-again Christians are generally recognised to possess. "This is in addition to the more prosaic reason that male non-believers have come to assume most born-again women to be tough nuts to crack, and hence a waste of time" (*ibid.*, 232).

[121] *Ibid.*, 233.

longings, while at the same time "packaging that experience in masculine forms for public consumption".[122] Ambiguity, then, is the key to Pentecostalism's success: patriarchalism in theory and consensuality in practice.[123] Whilst women's actions in the Pentecostal "family" are simultaneously public acts, men's community actions are domesticated and therefore the public and domesticated spheres are merged.[124] Thus, although Pentecostalism is patriarchal, it is said to be a more complex patriarchy and also less viable as a stable order of male control.

Brusco and Cucchiari conclude that the Pentecostal churches open up a space for the negotiation and reinterpretation of gender values. Martin's analysis reflects this conclusion but he goes further to suggest that Pentecostalism is in fact a "women's movement"; a "sisterhood of shared experience":

> After all, this is in a sense, a women's movement, in tune with the undercurrent of Christianity throughout its history from the discovery of the three Marys in the Easter garden right up to today.[125]

He describes a "buried intelligentsia of women" who, as they are brought into the circle of participation, "more and more actively relate to each other and sustain each other".[126]

Pentecostalism, however, does not challenge the structures that reinforce and perpetuate gender inequalities. Lesley Gill's research on Pentecostals in La Paz shows that Pentecostalism's focus on the eternal salvation of all believers legitimises gender inequalities, even as it breaks down aspects of male sex-role behaviour that are harmful to women. Whilst the bonds of the Pentecostal community may enable women to develop a greater sense of self-confidence and personal integrity, Pentecostal conversion does not challenge existing power relations, and it may even obscure them.

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[122] Cucchiari, "Between Shame and Sanctification", 702.

[123] Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 98.

[124] Brusco concludes similarly that in the Pentecostal churches the boundaries of public-male life and private-female life are redrawn and the spheres themselves are redefined. In this way Pentecostalism seeks to redress underlying gender inequalities, but it may be more successful than feminism in the context of the developing world because it accomplishes this through the transformation of male as well as female roles ("The Reformation of Machismo", 148 and 152).

[125] Martin, *Forbidden Revolutions*, 52.

[126] Martin, *Forbidden Revolutions*, 52, and Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 203.

> Religious ideology obscured the class, gender, and ethnic bases of their problems by focusing on sinful individual behaviour inspired by the devil. It displaced the emotional and material basis of their suffering from asymmetrical power relationships to personal deficiencies and the supernatural.[127]

For Pentecostals in La Paz the bonds with the "saved" community override any sisterhood solidarity, so while the churches promote practices and values that challenge aspects of the dominant society,

> neither women nor men have yet questioned the premises of Pentecostal ideology that obscure the common class concerns uniting them with other members of the urban working class and that reinforce women's structural inferiority to men.[128]

Rekopantswe Mate's study of Pentecostals in Zimbabwe suggests also that patriarchy is not destabilised by Pentecostalism. Mate argues that adherence to Pentecostal groups actually reinforces patriarchy, albeit in modernity's guise. Despite some move towards modernity (wealth accumulation and freedom from the burden of kin obligations), the churches encourage female domesticity and female subordination, and ultimately repackage patriarchal control "as 'new' knowledge and some kind of Christian achievement".[129] For Pentecostal women, Mate concludes, modernity means upward mobility tempered by the constraints of a patriarchal home life.

These perspectives on Pentecostalism and gender inform my study, which considers the gender implications of charismatic Christianity in Ghana, and therefore I return throughout the chapters that follow to some of the issues raised here. One final issue remains, however. As discussed, part of the appeal of Pentecostalism is the opportunity it provides to become part of a transnational network through which the global is brought into contact with the local. This book argues that through participation in charismatic Christianity, global gender discourses are encountered, appropriated and transformed by local subjects. In Ghana, these global gender discourses stem primarily from elements within North American evangelicalism, to which the discussion now turns.

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[127] Gill, "Like a Veil to Cover Them", 716.
[128] *Ibid.*, 719.
[129] Rekopantswe Mate, "Wombs as God's Laboratories: Pentecostal Discourses on Femininity in Zimbabwe", *Africa*, 72 (4), 2002, 565.

North American Evangelicalism and Gender[130]

In his study of contemporary American religion, Alan Wolfe[131] responds to concerns about the rise of conservative evangelical Christianity by revealing how America's conservative Christians are more American than they are Christian or conservative, and that "feeling good" is more important than the moral reform of American society. American evangelicalism is regarded as propagating a conservative gender ideology in an attempt to ignore or oppose changes in society and the family associated with feminism and the American women's movement. Conservative evangelicals, for example, officially preserve a gender hierarchy in which women are prevented from exercising authority over men. This has meant that many evangelical churches have been reluctant to ordain women pastors, even when the spiritual gifts of women are recognised and celebrated. In his 1983 publication, *The Woman Question*, Kenneth Hagin, for example, writes:

> In no other churches I know of are women more free to speak, teach, preach, pray, shout, and hold responsible positions than in Pentecostal or Full Gospel assemblies. Yet no louder claim is made to follow the Word of God wholly and solely than the claim of Full Gospel and Pentecostal churches. In fact, that's what is meant by Full Gospel—following the full truth. And in Full Gospel and Pentecostal Bible schools and seminaries, women and girls are found studying the Word of God in preparation for distinctively Christian service as missionaries, evangelists and preachers.[132]

Like his revivalist forebears, evangelists such as Kenneth Hagin justify women's full participation in church life with appeal to Joel's prophecy (Joel 3: 28),[133] which was recalled by the disciples on the Day of Pentecost:

> In the last days, God says, I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women,

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[130] In the context of North American religion, "conservative evangelicals" may be located on the charismatic and Pentecostal-like spectrum.

[131] *The Transformation of American Religion: How We Actually Live Our Faith*, New York and London: Free Press, 2003.

[132] Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Woman Question*, Oklahoma: Faith Library Publications, 1983, 2.

[133] *Ibid.*, 33–8.

> I will pour out my spirit in those days, and they will prophesy (Acts 2: 17–18).

However, whilst Kenneth Hagin acknowledges women's abilities to preach and teach "under the anointing of the Spirit of God", he expresses reservations about women usurping the authority of men.[134] Whilst he celebrates the presence of women as teachers, evangelists, prophets and preachers, in his opinion "it would be a little more difficult for a woman to stand in the office of pastor".[135] If it is necessary for a woman to stand as pastor in the place of a man, Hagin advises that female pastors should not officiate over baptisms.[136]

Despite this reluctance to recognise female authority, Wolfe notes that actually evangelical women are very active in the churches and in practice often do take on leadership roles, with some women acting as pastors "in everything but name".[137] He also compares women's Bible study groups with the "consciousness-raising" groups of 1970s feminism, because they function as support networks where, he argues, women grow in confidence and self-esteem. He goes on to suggest that "having learned something about making one's voice heard in church, conservative Christian women are not particularly submissive at home".[138] Female submission—the cornerstone of a conservative evangelical gender ideology—may find rhetorical support among Christian men and women, but it finds "very little support in the practice of everyday life".[139]

Furthermore, the moral and physical austerity of earlier evangelical forms also finds little support in contemporary American evangelicalism. Wolfe contrasts the views of older Pentecostal denominations on the appropriate appearance of women with the attitudes of modern conservative Christians who encourage women to make themselves beautiful in order to enhance their self-esteem and outwardly demonstrate their new-found faith. Even dieting and weight loss are incorporated into a form of religious expression that perceives a believer's love for God to be reflected in the love and respect they feel for themselves. "Dieting for Jesus" represents the "simultaneous desire to please God and to make

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[134] *Ibid.*, 43.
[135] *Ibid.*, 41.
[136] *Ibid.*, 44.
[137] Wolfe, *Transformation*, 130.
[138] *Ibid.*, 132.
[139] *Ibid.*

oneself attractive".[140] Part of the appeal of this form of Christianity, according to Wolfe, lies in the opportunities it offers for renewal and personal transformation. This is a form of religiosity in which "faith" and "self-worth" work hand in hand: "Once, believers were expected to prove their faith through ascetic withdrawal from the world. These days, it makes more sense to these women to pursue the goal through personal recovery".[141]

This is a central theme in the preaching of the African-American evangelist T. D. Jakes, whose books on women focus in particular on the healing and restorative value of faith in God. He focuses largely on the physical and sexual abuse of women, the effects of which he describes as a barrier to the fulfilment of women's God-given potential. For Jakes, conversion to Christianity is understood as a process of transformation from the self of the past to the self of the future:

> No matter what you have suffered, you can hold up your head. Regardless of who has hurt you, hold up your head! Forget how many times you've been married. Put aside those who mistreated you. You may have been a lesbian. You may have been a crack addict. It doesn't matter who you were. You may have even been molested. You can't change where you have been, but you can change where you are going.[142]

His message is described as "redemptive" but in many ways a traditional Christian theology of salvation and redemption has been supplanted by a belief in "personal empowerment" and accompanying notions of "self-worth" and "self-esteem":

> There is another woman inside of you. She is as smooth as satin, and as strong as steel. Your creativity and self-esteem will be rejuvenated as you give yourself to Christ. Your memory will remain, but your pain will be gone. The scars that have affected your present ambitions will have been mercifully removed. Those whom you touch need you healed and restored![143]

"Giving yourself to Christ" is a key concept in evangelical religion. Wolfe highlights the importance of a "personal" relationship with Jesus for evangelical women who are reassured in their faith "that Jesus loves

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[140] *Ibid.*, 160. See also Alan Wolfe, "Dieting for Jesus", *Prospect*, January 2004, 52–7.

[141] Wolfe, *Transformation*, 159.

[142] T. D. Jakes, *Woman, Thou Art Loosed!*, Tulsa, Oklahoma: Albury Publishing, 1996, 77.

[143] *Ibid.*, 105.

them and they love Jesus, not just in an abstract sense, but in deeply emotional and personal ways".[144] Again, this is reflected in the preaching of Jakes who advises women hurt by their relationships with men that the answer "is not getting another man. It's getting in touch with *the Man*, Jesus".[145]

Women's relationships with men are addressed by evangelical Christianity in terms that are somewhat surprising for a conservative religious movement. Sex—in marriage, at least—is celebrated as a gift from God and female sexuality, in particular, is given considerable attention. Husbands even receive instruction on how to give their wives sexual pleasure, which represents a radical departure from earlier forms of Pentecostalism: "A religious movement that once preached abstinence and restraint", writes Wolfe, "now conducts classes in the best way to achieve orgasm".[146] The emphasis on "pleasure" as opposed to abstinence extends also to evangelical discourses on marriage and family life, which emphasise the importance of love and romance rather than gendered hierarchies or masculine authority. Instruction on "relationship success"[147] and "Understanding the Love Language of Your Spouse", for example, feature prominently in evangelical literature such as the *Enjoying Everyday Life* series produced by the popular American evangelist Joyce Meyer. "Learn to speak your spouse's primary love language", readers are advised, "and you too can live with a smiling mate".[148] This expression of evangelical Christianity encourages people to "feel good" in their marital relationships. Questions about female submission and the divine authority of men are simply not an issue for these Christians.

This counselling and "self-help" approach to marital matters is applied also to issues in men's lives and their relationships with their wives and families. In fact, the whole subject of men and masculinity is approached in a way that bears little relation to older forms of Christianity such as the masculine rhetoric of fundamentalist Protestantism, which has been identified with a reassertion of "religious machismo"[149]

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[144] Wolfe, *Transformation*, 158.
[145] Jakes, *Woman*, 178.
[146] Wolfe, *Transformation*, 133.
[147] See, for example, "Success in Relationships", by Dr. Neil Clark Warren (a psychologist, credited with an appearance on Oprah): "29 dimensions that correlate to relationship success" (in Joyce Meyer, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, February 2004, 22).
[148] Joyce Meyer, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, February 2005, 10–11.
[149] John S. Hawley and Wayne Proudfoot (*Fundamentalism and Gender*, Oxford: OUP,

and what some describe as a need to "control" women.[150] Whilst issues of male leadership and God-given authority are raised by American evangelicals, in many evangelical books on men and masculinity far more prominent than these issues are themes of male identity crisis, low self-esteem and the emotional hurt of growing up without a father.[151] Jakes, for example, writes:

> Many times, buried and suppressed beneath our manly façade and pretence, our fear comes from a trembling, angry, confused child whose frustrations and insecurities are covered with muscles, sweat, and hair…A hurting little boy still lives within. We cannot divorce ourselves from our inner need.[152]

Women are not alone in their need for a personal relationship with God to restore their self-worth and self-esteem. Derek Prince counsels his male readers that men who do not appreciate themselves sufficiently or have "a too low picture of themselves" can discover their self-worth when they comprehend that God loves them "intimately and personally".[153] Even if evangelists like Jakes and Prince believe men to be in a position of divine authority over women, this is not what they write books on. Their books are about the importance of men learning to "feel good" about themselves, whatever their past failings, by healing the wounds of damaged childhoods and confused identities. The concept

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1994) describe three dimensions of the "ideology of gender" shared by fundamentalist religious groups, including American Protestantism, of which "religious machismo"—the belief that "there is a necessity for maleness to reassert itself in the face of manifest threat"—is one (32). On the subject of masculinity and conservative Christianity, see Dane Claussen, (ed.), *Standing on the Promises: The Promise Keepers and the Revival of Manhood*, Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1999; Dane Claussen (ed.), *The Promise Keepers: Essays on Masculinity and Christianity*, London: MacFarland & Co., 2000.

[150] Karen McCarthy Brown, "Fundamentalism and the Control of Women", in Hawley and Proudfoot, *Fundamentalism*, 175–201, though McCarthy Brown makes the point that attempts to control women are a symptom of fundamentalism rather than its primary motivation (175).

[151] A number of books by American evangelicals on the subject of men and men's God-given roles have appeared in the last few years, including Edwin Louis Cole, *Maximized Manhood: A Guide to Family Survival* and *On Becoming A Real Man*; Derek Prince, *Husbands and Fathers: Rediscover the Creator's Purpose for Men* (Prince is British), and Lou Priolo, *The Complete Husband: A Practical Guide to Biblical Husbanding*. Others specifically address the experiences of African-American men: George Bloomer, *The Little Boy in Me: Becoming the Man God Intended*; T. D. Jakes, *Loose That Man & Let Him Go!*; Myles Munroe, *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Men*; and Edwin Louis Cole (ed.), *Man Power: The Call to African American Men for Spiritual Revival*.

[152] Jakes, *Loose*, 10–11.

[153] Prince, *Husbands*, 63.

of "personal recovery" then is at the heart of the North American evangelical movement and applies as much to men as to women. This is a religion in which "feeling good" and "positive thinking" take centre stage. The traditional Catholic preoccupation with the virtue of suffering is gone; and so too has classical Pentecostalism's emphasis on personal restraint and asceticism. This is Christianity "Oprah-style" where successful living and a healthy self-image are open to anyone willing to blend their faith in God with a little positive thinking.[154]

This chapter has raised some of the issues concerning the efficacy of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity as a mediator of modernity. It has considered also the role of the Pentecostal/charismatic phenomenon in the spread of global culture. In addition to looking at some of the domains in which Pentecostalism's role as an agent of modernity might be manifest, the chapter has addressed areas of ambiguity, including "authoritarianism" and the issue of moral change.

Another area of ambiguity, gender, has been addressed at some length. In summary, three strands of thought concerning the gender implications of Pentecostalism have been highlighted. These are, first, that Pentecostal Christianity reinforces patriarchy by perpetuating an ideology of domesticity; second, that Pentecostalism generates a gender ideology that transforms patriarchal family structures and encourages social reform through the changed behaviour of individuals, especially men; and third, that contemporary forms of the North American evangelical movement prioritise "feeling good" and individual self-worth above patriarchal ideologies and the reassertion of gendered hierarchies. Chapters Four, Five and Six examine the gender discourses and practices of Ghana's charismatic churches in light of these strands of thought on Pentecostal religion and gender. The next chapter analyses the historical development of Ghanaian gender ideologies.

[154] "In American religion", writes Wolfe, "God conveys the power of positive thinking because he thinks positively himself" (Wolfe, *Transformation*, 162).

CHAPTER THREE

GENDER POLITICS IN GHANA

The relationship of women to society and the state in Africa is complicated by class and ethnic divisions,[1] the effects of economic failure and state collapse, and increasingly by the intervention of supra-state structures in national social, economic and political processes. In both authoritarian and weak states, women are perceived to be further removed from state structures and state institutions than men. Authoritarian states tend to display high levels of state violence, especially against women who often become targets of government morality campaigns, and weak states fail to provide for the welfare of the majority of citizens.[2] When women have participated in state processes (as members of political and civil society organisations, for example) their participation has frequently been co-opted by the interests of dominant groups.

This does not suggest that women are "victims" of state processes, and nor does it imply that women lack control over resources (though it recognises that access to state resources is gendered). In line with feminist theories of the state, women are recognised as "actors" whose actions sometimes have unforeseen effects on the male-dominated state, though these actions may take place in spaces beyond state control and women's economic interests are more likely to be pursued in a

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[1] There is some dispute over the relevance of class in the formation of African states and in women's relationship to the state. Whilst Margot Lovett argues that both class and state formation are gendered processes that women and men experience differently ("Gender Relations, Class Formation, and the Colonial State in Africa", in Jane L. Parpart and Kathleen A. Staudt (eds.), *Women and the State in Africa*, London: Lynne Rienner, 1989, 23–46), Robert Fatton suggests that class formation is a given, insofar as the ruling class controls the state and excludes virtually all women, but because the ruling class is not yet hegemonic it uses gender to consolidate its control ("Gender, Class, and State in Africa", in *ibid.*, 47–66).

[2] Of course, weak states do not meet the welfare needs of the majority of men either, but women tend to be more burdened with a gap in national provision due to their identification with the domestic sphere. Furthermore, Moore notes that whilst men are increasingly involved in strategies of exit and withdrawal as the modern state becomes ever more exclusive, women's ability to negotiate with the state is often structured by household relations. Men's ability to do so, however, "is rarely structured by their relations with their wives" (*Feminism*, 183–4).

"secondary economy" that functions outside the state, often illegally.[3] In some cases, women choose to "exit" the state, though exit strategies are as much "an implicit statement about the limited legitimacy which they grant the state"[4] as they are about women's marginalisation from it. In their relationship with the state, then, women manipulate and negotiate their positions, "combining various degrees of autonomy and reciprocity".[5]

The following section explores the impact of colonial history and the transition to a capitalist economy on African gender relations, and it examines the interaction between colonial and indigenous gender ideologies in the emerging post-colonial state. The issues raised here will be discussed in more depth in this chapter with reference to Ghana.

Gender Relations in Pre-Colonial History

Many writers have commented on the egalitarian gender relations that are thought to have been pervasive in pre-state African societies. This apparent gender equality is often associated with corporate social systems based on complementary sex roles and underpinned, in West Africa at least, by parallel leadership positions for women and men. According to Margaret Jean Hay, much of this work is linked to the rise of African nationalism and the search for a glorious African past.[6] Some of this work on gender and pre-state African societies both highlighted the relative social and economic autonomy of ordinary women and celebrated the political power of women who belonged to the royal lineages. The subsequent decline in women's status is linked directly to the impact of colonial rule.

This approach to the history of gender relations in Africa may have helped dispel the image of the African woman as a submissive victim or beast of burden, but much of the material was "mythological"[7] and produced an image of the African woman that was as mythical

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[3] Jane L Parpart and Kathleen A. Staudt, "Women and the State in Africa", in Parpart and Staudt, *Women and the State*, 11.

[4] Fatton, "Gender, Class, and State", 6.

[5] Amina Mama, *Women's Studies and Studies of Women in Africa During the 1990s*, Working Paper Series 5/96, Dakar: CODESRIA, 1996, 25.

[6] "Queens, Prostitutes and Peasants: Historical Perspectives on African Women, 1971–1986", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 22 (3), 1988, 433.

[7] Mama, *Women's Studies*, 11.

as the image it sought to undermine.[8] Current research would suggest that egalitarian gender relations were no more a feature of pre-state societies than they were of emerging colonial states, and that the lives of the royal women who were able to exercise political power through their relationships with men did not reflect the ordinary experiences of most African women.[9]

However, most writers also agree that the emergence of the colonial state transformed pre-state kinship relations and changed the position of women from one of apparent political centrality in pre-state African societies "to one of relative subordination under emerging state structures".[10]

Gender and Colonialism

It has often been commented that women living in colonial states faced "two colonialisms":[11] the foreign subjugation of colonial rule and the patriarchal domination of indigenous male elites. Any generalisation across a continent concerning the impact of the colonial era on gender relations is likely to distort as much as it reveals because the level of change varied between different forms and different stages of colonial rule, and depended to a large degree on the state of gender relations prior to an encounter with foreign concepts and values. However, colonial powers did refashion gender relations through both "material" power (such as colonial land policies and marriage laws) and "discursive" power, "by reinterpreting and reinventing the social and political histories of the colonized countries".[12] This process was often

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[8] In his "postrevisionist" study of African gender relations, Emmanuel Konde argues that the romantic notion of equality between the sexes in precolonial African societies is "pure hogwash" and "an historical fiction" ("Reconstructing the Political Roles of African Women: A Postrevisionist Paradigm", *Working Papers in African Studies*, 161, 1992, 14).

[9] Moore, *Feminism*; Mama, *Women's Studies*; Gwendolyn Mikell, "Introduction", in *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, 1–50; and Gabriele Zdunnek, "Research on Gender Relations with Reference to Ghana and Nigeria", in Mechthild Reh and Gudrun Ludwar-Ene (eds.), *Gender and Identity in Africa*, Münster and Hamburg: Lit, 1994, 135–51.

[10] Moore, *Feminism*, 132.

[11] Stephanie Urdang coined this phrase to describe women's experiences of Portuguese domination and African patriarchy in colonial Guinea-Bissau, in *Fighting Two Colonialisms: Women in Guinea-Bissau*, New York: Monthly Review, 1979.

[12] Shirin M. Rai, "Women and the State in the Third World: Some Issues for

reinforced by indigenous male attempts to exert control over women through recourse to customary law, particularly at times when women appeared to be taking advantage of colonial structures, or when the exercise of their social, sexual or economic autonomy posed a threat to established male hierarchies.[13]

Women were further excluded from the process of state consolidation by what Gwendolyn Mikell calls "mythical prohibitions" to female leadership,[14] which prevented women from entering the administrative classes, and an increasingly exclusive identification of women with the domestic sphere—an ideology that was propagated by missionary Christianity but reinforced in many cases by indigenous traditions of female domesticity.[15] In other words, whilst it is an exaggeration to suggest that there was any sort of "unholy alliance"[16] between these two (often conflicting) authorities, the assertion of indigenous male control coupled with the development of a capitalist economy (based on individualism), which favoured men[17] and challenged kinship relations,

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Debate", in Shirin M. Rai and Geraldine Lievesley (eds.), *Women and the State: International Perspectives*, London: Taylor and Francis, 1996, 8.

[13] Karen Armstrong, for example, argues that in the colonial period women's sexuality came to be viewed as dangerous and in need of control by both colonial and indigenous authorities, because it represented "tradition" and order. Thus when women stepped outside tradition, into waged labour for example—especially when this was accompanied by increased levels of divorce and non-marriage (Jean Allman, "Rounding Up Spinsters: Gender Chaos and Unmarried Women in Colonial Asante", *Journal of African History*, 37 (2), 1996, 195–214; Penelope Roberts, "The State and the Regulation of Marriage: Setwi Wiawso (Ghana), 1900–40", in Haleh Afshar, *Women, State, and Ideology: Studies from African and Asia*, Albany: SUNY, 1987, 48–69)—it was a concern to both African and European men ("Introduction", in Karen Armstrong (ed.), *Shifting Ground and Cultured Bodies: Postcolonial Gender Relations in Africa and India*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1999, 9). Ann Stewart, however, notes that customary law was not the embodiment of "traditional" culture but a product of the relationship between male clan elders and a colonial state anxious to avoid unrest and curb the activities of women who were finding ways under colonialism to avoid traditional forms of authority ("Should Women Give Up on the State?—The African Experience", in Rai and Lievesley, *Women and the State*, 31).

[14] By "mythical" Mikell refers to the prohibitions to women's leadership that stemmed from beliefs surrounding women's biological characteristics that were present prior to colonial rule but which increased in intensity ("Introduction", 15).

[15] Karen Hansen demonstrates that the concept of female domesticity was not an alien one to most Africans, but colonialism reduced women's responsibilities to just housewifery, often as part of a project to create suitable wives for African men entering into colonial service (Karen Tranberg Hansen, *African Encounters With Domesticity*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers, 1992).

[16] Mama, *Women's Studies*, 13.

[17] This is not to suggest that the colonial authorities favoured men through any sort of gender solidarity, but rather that men's access to state resources was favoured

produced a social order that was more advantageous to males than to females. Thus, the emergence of the colonial state in Africa transformed gender relations and set the dynamic for many of the gender debates that were to follow in the postcolonial period.

The Postcolonial State and the Emergence of State Feminism

In many of Africa's anti-colonial struggles the participation of women changed perceptions of gender roles and produced revolutionary movements which promised to emancipate women and share with them the fruits of liberation.[18] However, many of these revolutionary movements idealised the reproductive roles of women and perpetuated a model of womanhood centred on mothering. With independence came attempts by successive postcolonial governments to re-domesticate women and define the "real" African woman (as opposed to her Western "emancipated" counterpart) as the embodiment of "tradition" and a symbol of African nationalism.[19]

Morality discourses that focused on women's sexuality became central to notions of nationhood and national belonging. Often the motherhood role was idealised to the exclusion of women's other social and economic roles, and issues that challenged nationalist images of women were "prioritised out" by the new nation states.[20] Working women

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because it increased male productivity and thereby contributed to the establishment of a capitalist economy (Parpart and Staudt, "Women and the State", 11–12; Konde, "Reconstructing", 21).

[18] Stephanie Urdang, "Women in National Liberation Movements", in Margaret Jean Hay and Sharon Stichter (eds.), *African Women South of the Sahara*, Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1995, 213–24; Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle*, Harare: Weaver, 2000; Tanya Lyons, *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean National Liberation Struggle*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2004; Cora Ann Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya*, Boulder, Colarado: Westview, 1992; and, Allan D. Cooper, "State Sponsorship of Women's Rights and Implications for Patriarchism in Namibia", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 35 (3), 1997, 469–483.

[19] I. Staunton (ed.), *Mothers of the Revolution*, Harare: Baobab, 1991; Deborah Gaitskell and Elaine Unterhalter, "Mothers of the Nation: a Comparative Analysis of Nation, Race and Motherhood in Afrikaner Nationalism and the African National Congress", in Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias (eds.), *Woman—Nation—State*, London: Macmillan, 1989, 58–78; A. McClintock, "No Longer in a Future Heaven: Women and Nationalism in South Africa", *Transition*, 51, 1995, 104–23.

[20] Rai, "Women and the State", 11. Christine Obbo suggests discourses about the "proper woman" and her "reproductive potential" were crucial to notions of national belonging in Uganda, but these discourses about motherhood were often used to pre-

increasingly became scapegoats for failed economic policies, and urban traders in particular were exposed to derision in the media as symbols of corruption and moral disintegration.[21]

The economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s, and subsequent structural adjustment policies, witnessed a rise in food prices and other basic commodities, reduced opportunities for employment, higher levels of male migration to urban areas and an increase in female-headed households—all of which undermined somewhat nationalist attempts to re-domesticate women.[22] With women now dominating the informal employment sector,[23] increasing numbers became the primary, or even sole, breadwinner in a household. Feminist critics of structural adjustment suggest that it is women who have had to shoulder the heaviest burden of international economic policy, and they level their criticism at macro-level economics, which, it is argued, excludes the unpaid productive and reproductive labour of women and thus encourages what is popularly termed the "feminisation of poverty".[24]

Economic crisis and the implementation of adjustment policies coincided with the climax of the UN Decade for Women (1975–85),

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vent women from equal participation with men as workers and citizens ("Sexuality and Economic Domination in Uganda", in Yuval-Davis and Anthias, *Woman—Nation—State*, 79–91).

[21] Naomi Chazan, Peter Lewis, Robert Mortimer, Donald Rothchild and Stephen John Stedman, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999, 93; Haleh Afshar, "Introduction", in Afshar, *Women, State, and Ideology*, 4; Carolyne Dennis, "Women and the State in Nigeria: The Case of the Federal Military Government, 1984–5", in *ibid.*, 28–47. However, many working women were able to manipulate nationalist gender discourses for their own ends: as Gaitskell and Unterhalter observe, the concept of "motherhood" is a very fluid and manipulable one ("Mothers of the Nation", 58–78).

[22] A. McClintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family", *Feminist Review*, 44, 1993, 61–80.

[23] Men are becoming active in the informal sector also, but as Mama notes, women dominate in areas that are extensions of their domestic and reproductive roles (providers of food and sex) and in times of economic crisis these roles become increasingly "commoditised" (*Women's Studies*, 68).

[24] Uma Lele, "Women, Structural Adjustment, and Transformation: Some Lessons and Questions From the African Experience", in C. H. Gladwin (ed.), *Structural Adjustment and African Women Farmers*, Gainseville: University of Florida Press, 1991, 68; Haleh Afshar and Carolyne Dennis, "Women, Recession and Adjustment in the Third World: Some Introductory Remarks", in Haleh Afshar and Carolyne Dennis (eds.), *Women and Adjustment Policies in the Third World*, London: Macmillan, 1992, 6; Georgina Ashworth, "Politicising Gender and Structural Adjustment", in *ibid.*, 245; and Takyiwaa Manuh, "Ghana: Women in the Public and Informal Sectors under the Economic Recovery Programme", in P. Sparr (ed.), *Mortgaging Women's Lives: Feminist Critiques of Structural Adjustment*, London: Zed Books, 1994, 61.

which catapulted the issue of "Women in Development" (WID) onto the international stage.[25] When, in the following decade, international policy-makers began to emphasise the importance of good governance and the rule of law, they included provision for women's incorporation into the democratisation process. This global-led shift towards development and democratisation in response to state crisis ushered in a new era of third-world gender politics and in Africa gave rise to a new phenomenon: "African feminism".[26]

This global approach to gender politics, however, has come under criticism both from local male elites who accuse those involved in the women's rights discourse of colluding with "external forces",[27] and from scholars who argue that the WID approach is an inadequate response to the material and ideological structures that perpetuate gender inequity.[28] The Nigerian critic Amina Mama, for example, argues that the Decade for Women and the subsequent WID approach targeted women as a group to be integrated into development and called upon governments to mobilise women for their "development agenda" in the name of "national interest".[29] But these are both rather vague notions, and in Nigeria this approach allowed the military state to use gender politics for its own ends: to win international credibility by appropriating the "women in development" discourse whilst simultaneously propagating a gender politics that normalised military rule.[30]

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[25] Arvonne S. Fraser, *The UN Decade for Women: Documents and Dialogue*, London: Westview Press, 1987.

[26] Mikell comments that since the UN Decade for Women, and the economic crisis that coincided, "African women have become more aware of themselves as women" ("Introduction", 28) and she describes this new approach to public and private life as a "distinctly heterosexual, pro-natal" (*ibid.*, 3–4) African feminist response to state crisis and women's multiple situations of crisis (*ibid.*, 32).

[27] Stewart, "Should Women Give Up on the State?", 35.

[28] Sylvia Chant with Lynne Brydon, "Introduction: Women in the Third World: An Overview", in Lynne Brydon and Sylvia Chant (eds.), *Women in the Third World: Gender Issues in Rural and Urban Areas*, Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1989, 6–7; Sylvia Tamale and J. Oloka-Onyango, "'Bitches' in the Academy: Gender and Academic Freedom in Africa", in Ebrima Sall (ed.), *Women in Academia: Gender and Acdademic Freedom in Africa*, Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA, 2000, 2; Tuzyline Jita Allan, "Feminist Scholarship in Africa", in Cassandra Rachel Veney and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza (eds.), *Women in African Studies Scholarly Publishing*, Trenton: Africa World Press, 2001, 83; Amina Mama, "Postscript: Moving from Analysis to Practice?", in Ayesha Imam, Amina Mama and Fatou Sow (eds.), *Engendering African Social Sciences*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 1997, 416.

[29] Mama, *Women's Studies*, 5.

[30] Amina Mama, "Khaki in the Family: Gender Discourses and Militarism in Nigeria", *African Studies Review*, 41 (2), 1998, 1–18.

One of the problems with African state feminism, then, has been its close association with government structures.[31] Women's organisations set up under state patronage to address women's concerns have allowed the government to pay lip service to the gender question whilst defending the interests of the state. Through these organisations the political agenda is often confined to women's welfare projects and manageable legal reforms that limit gender conflict and consolidate the class interests of ruling elites. Mama is not alone in her conclusion that national government machineries created to address gender issues have not been effective vehicles for the articulation of women's collective concerns and needs.[32] African states find it "expedient" to pay some attention to the gender question "as part of a wider post-cold war preoccupation with democratization",[33] whilst state legislation continues to reinforce gender ideologies that confine women to their productive and reproductive roles.

Gender Relations in Pre-State Ghana

When colonial anthropologist R. S. Rattray visited the Gold Coast at the beginning of the last century, he was struck by the central position of Asante women in public and private affairs. The position of women in Asante, he wrote, "is one of great importance"; a position he attributed to matrilineal descent and a communistic society: "We seem to have in these two factors in many parts of Africa the key to the importance of women".[34] Rattray was not alone in his observa-

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[31] Philomina E. Okeke-Ihejirika and Susan Franceschet employ D. McBride Stetson and A. G. Mazur's definition of state feminism as "activities of government structures that are formally charged with furthering women's status and rights" (*Comparative State Feminism*, London: Sage Publications, 1995, 1–2) to argue that the outcome of state feminism is linked to "the strategies and discourses available to women during democratisation" and to feminist access to political institutions ("Democratization and State Feminism: Gender Politics in Africa and Latin America", *Development and Change*, 33 (3), 2002, 439–66).

[32] Mama, *Women's Studies*, 5; Moore, *Feminism*, 153–4; Parpart and Staudt argue that "women's politics also might be class politics in disguise", because political women tend to be part of the dominant class and therefore have little effect on female representation overall or on the broader political agenda ("Women and the State", 9).

[33] Mama, *Women's Studies*, 16.

[34] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 (1923), 78–9. This argument is based on Rattray's observation of the Asante belief that only women can transmit "bogya", the blood of the clan—men transmit "ntoro" (spirit).

tions. When the travel writer Elspeth Huxley journeyed through the Gold Coast in the years preceding independence, her account includes a description of the women traders in Accra, "who hold a position unique, I should think, in Africa". Their husbands—"working, idling or trading too"—are, "in a sense, adjuncts, like male spiders; it is the market women who make the money and call the tune".[35] Thirty years earlier, Rattray had concluded likewise that were it not for certain physical constraints, Asante women under a matrilineal system would "eclipse any male in importance".[36]

In contemporary studies of pre-state gender relations in Akan society, scholars are careful to distinguish between a matrilineal system of descent, in which women are accorded various social, economic and political roles but remain outside the loci of power, and a matriarchal social structure.[37] Most agree that Akan society was not matriarchal; women's structural centrality was not reflected in their legal status, and women were not regarded the equals of men.[38] The status bestowed on certain royal women was not applicable to ordinary Akan women.

Pre-colonial Akan society then, was not a matriarchy, but rather, as Beverly Stoeltje suggests, an example of a hierarchical system based on kinship, of the sort described by Sherry Ortner, in which kinship relations take precedence over the conjugal bond and gender relations tend towards equality.[39] In her study of Akan marriages, for example, Dorothy Dee Vellenga describes the tenuous and fluid nature of the

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[35] Elspeth Huxley, *Four Guineas: A Journey Through West Africa*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1954, 79–80.

[36] Rattray, *Ashanti*, 81–2. In his description of the Stool of the Ohema (the Queen Mother) and the Stool of the Chief, Rattray argued that the male stool would probably not be in existence at all were it not for the fact that women are unable to go to war, due to menstruation and a general physical inferiority (*ibid*., 81).

[37] Mama, *Women's Studies*, 59; Takyiwaa Manuh, "Women and their Organisations During the Convention People's Party Period", in Kwame Arhin (ed.), *The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah*, Accra: Sedco, 1991, 109; Gwendolyn Mikell, *Cocoa and Chaos in Ghana*, New York: Paragon House, 1989, 110.

[38] Although gender relations varied according to caste and status, authority and power were vested in men (maternal uncles, fathers and husbands), and all women remained "perpetual jural minors" (B. Grier, "Pawns, Porters and Petty Traders: Women in the Transition to Cash Crop Agriculture in Colonial Ghana", *Signs*, 17 (2), 1992, 313).

[39] Beverly J. Stoeltje, "Asante Queen Mothers: A Study in Female Authority", in Flora Edouwaye S. Kaplan (ed.), *Queens, Queen Mothers, Priestesses and Power: Case Studies in African Gender*, New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1997, 41–71; Sherry Ortner, "Gender and Sexuality in Hierarchical Societies", in Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead (eds.), *Sexual Meanings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981, 359–409.

marital relationship, which was considered to be "more of a *process* than a state of being" (italics original).[40] Most married couples maintained separate incomes and residences, and the marital bond itself was often strategic and temporary. Much of this fluidity stemmed from conflict between marital and lineage ties,[41] and competition for wives between young and older males, which resulted in high levels of adultery and divorce. Although Lynne Brydon and Karen Legge argue that "an overwhelming contractual and confrontational model of the economy of marital relationships might be rather extreme",[42] it would appear that in most cases the non-lineage heterosexual relationship in pre-state Ghana was not prioritised in the way that it would later become under the influence of colonialism.

Claims to gender equality among the matrilineal Akan stem not just from evidence of women's economic independence and relative autonomy within marriage, however, but also from the existence of dual roles for males and females in Akan politics. As suggested above, the status of royal women reflects little on the lives of ordinary women, but the public offices of Asante women deserve some elaboration here because the political roles played by a minority of elite women reveal much about subsequent notions concerning gender complementarity and the appropriate roles for political women in relation to their male counterparts.

Over the years, numerous theories have been advanced to explain the position of the "queen mother" in African public life. In Africanist scholarship she has been the subject of endless speculation, though "much inaccurate assumption has taken the place of ethnographic observation".[43] In 1911, Roscoe proposed an evolutionary explanation, which suggested that queen mothers were survivals of an earlier

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[40] Dorothy Dee Vellenga, "Who is a Wife? Legal Expressions of Heterosexual Conflicts in Ghana", in Christine Oppong (ed.), *Female and Male in West Africa*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983, 145.

[41] According to Vellenga, the purpose of cross-cousin marriage was to alleviate this conflict (*ibid.*, 146).

[42] Lynne Brydon and Karen Legge, *Adjusting Society: The World Bank, the IMF and Ghana*, London and New York: I. B. Tauris Publishers, 1996, 158. (The authors base their argument on Brydon's work in patrilineal Avatime, where husbands and wives maintain separate incomes, but they work together in production for their children.)

[43] Michelle Gilbert, "The Cimmerian Darkness of Intrigue: Queen Mothers, Christianity and Truth in Akuapem History", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 23 (1), 1993, 5.

matriarchal stage of development in Africa.[44] Decades later in 1958, De Heusch offered a psychological theory that drew on the Oedipus drama to explain society's need for a royal mother-son couple at the apex of the state.[45] In contrast to these earlier works, Ronald Cohen used ethnographic material from eastern Nigeria to assert the need for a *political* theory to interpret the role of the queen mother. He argued that through royal alliance-making the queen mother ensures "continuity, wholeness and integration", and thereby counteracts "the fissiparous quality of non-state systems".[46] In the process of state formation, Cohen described the office of the queen mother as an important bridge between "a kinship-based past" and "a fundamentally distinct political system".[47]

The office of the queen mother has attracted similar attention in studies of Asante history, in which she is commonly characterised as the personification of motherhood and the champion of women's rights. Rattray, for example, was most impressed by the influence of queen mothers over the female population and described them as a tremendous power of good in Asante society, even though he felt they had been "working against us in the past".[48] He was troubled by the impact of British rule on the status of these royal women—"a class for whom I cannot speak without unbounded enthusiasm"[49]—and feared the break up of their "former pride of place in society and the state".[50]

More recent studies echo these earlier observations: feminist writer and theologian Mercy Amba Oduyoye, for example, attributes the survival of matriliny in Asante to the tenacity of queen mothers in administering protective measures for women,[51] whilst Nana Abayie Boaten I attributes the "perpetual inferior position" of women in north-

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[44] John Roscoe, *The Baganda: An Account of their Native Customs and Beliefs*, London: Macmillan, 1911.

[45] Luc de Heusch, *Essais sur le Symbolisme de l'Inceste Royal en Afrique*, Brussels: Université Libre de Bruxelles, Institut de Sociologie Solvay, Etudes Ethnologiques, 1958.

[46] Ronald Cohen, "Oedipus Rex and Regina: The Queen Mother in Africa", *Africa*, 47 (1), 1977, 23.

[47] *Ibid.*, 29.

[48] Rattray, *Ashanti*, 84. (Rattray refers here to those queen mothers who used their role as the chief's advisor to undermine the position of British officials.)

[49] *Ibid.*, 13.

[50] *Ibid.*, 84.

[51] Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995, 93–8.

ern Ghana to the lack of traditional female authority in those areas.[52] And in John Henrik Clarke's work, the celebrated queen mother Yaa Asantewa (who led a campaign against the British in the nineteenth century and won) is attributed with no less than creating "the theoretical basis for the political emergence of modern Africa".[53] However, although these studies acknowledge the social and political significance of queen mothers, they fail to articulate the more subtle ambiguities that are associated with the role.

First, the queen mother of the Akan was also known as *aberewa*, "the old woman", or the personification of wisdom, who was valued first and foremost for her "natural" womanly qualities of wisdom, knowledge, emotion and compassion. She was considered both a moral guardian of society and a conciliator in the political process.[54] Symbolically, however, the queen mother was not a woman: she functioned in a male political sphere and differentiated herself from ordinary women by wearing the clothes of men.[55] Second, although queen mothers were responsible for the affairs of women, Sandra Barnes argues that a primary feature of the office is that it was acquired "by virtue of a broadly defined relationship to someone else", who was invariably male:

> She was entitled and expected to favour and to function on behalf of and in the interests of the very person from whom her position derived or to whom it was otherwise linked… The roles devolving from the status of queen mother involved supporting, advising, defending, protecting, punishing, and nurturing.[56]

The office of queen mother, concludes Barnes, "was both the institutionalisation and magnification of these roles".[57] In other words, the existence of dual-sex roles in pre-state Akan politics indicates, if not gender equality, then certainly some sort of "gender parallelism",[58] but the complementarity of these gendered roles is predicated on the fulfil-

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[52] Nana Abayie Boaten I, "Gender Relations in Traditional Administration: The Case of Discrimination Against Women", *Research Review*, 12 (1 & 2), 1996, 33.

[53] John Henrik Clarke, "African Warrior Queens", in Ivan Van Sertima (ed.), *Black Women in Antiquity*, New Brunswick and London: *Journal of African Civilizations*, 6 (1), 1984, 133.

[54] Kwame Arhin, "The Political and Military Roles of Akan Women", in Oppong, *Female and Male*, 91–8; Gilbert, "The Cimmerian Darkness", 9–10.

[55] Gilbert, "Cimmerian Darkness", 6.

[56] Sandra Barnes, "Gender and the Politics of Support and Protection in Precolonial West Africa", in Kaplan, *Queens*, 13.

[57] *Ibid.*

[58] Stoeltje, "Asante Queen Mothers", 43.

ment by women of a set of values intrinsically linked to females and femaleness. It is this feature of the ideology of gender complementarity that will be returned to in this, and subsequent, chapters.

The Colonial Encounter

A combination of pre-colonial social conditions and an indirect approach to colonial rule meant that the effects of colonialism on gender relations in West Africa differed significantly from the effects of colonial rule in parts of East and Southern Africa. That said, however, by the turn of the twentieth century the Gold Coast was becoming an increasingly "colonially controlled and male-focused" society.[59] The strategic interaction between British and indigenous authorities reduced the political roles of women and redefined the public sphere in exclusively male terms. In addition, the introduction of Victorian moral values and the transition to a cash-crop economy transformed domestic relationships—both kin-based and conjugal.

Although colonial writers like Rattray blame the reduced influence of queen mothers on the lack of official recognition by the British authorities,[60] a number of authors point to indigenous factors to explain the demise of dual-sex roles in Asante public life before and during the colonial period. Mikell, for example, notes that the expansion of *Mmammadwa* ("son's stools"), which were non-traditional, appointed positions created by the Asantehene and passed from father to son, in conflict with matrilineal inheritance, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, threatened male-female complementarity long before the imposition of colonial rule.[61]

Emmanuel Akyeampong and Pashington Obeng's description of the emerging nineteenth-century Asante state reveals that both gerontocracy and patriarchy originated with the war and aggrandisement that characterised the Asante military union of that period, and not with the

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[59] Mikell, *Cocoa and Chaos*, 69. In addition, Mikell notes that, although women seemed to be making little gain from the transition to a colonial society, the status of Asante women had been in question for some time, and that women had begun losing their public status as early as the 1600s (*ibid.*, 67–8).

[60] Rattray, *Ashanti*, 84. Queen mothers, for example, were not recognised on the colonial chief-list as members of the Native Authority Councils or Courts (Arhin, "Political and Military Roles", 97).

[61] Mikell, *Cocoa and Chaos*, 261.

emergence of the colonial state in the following century. The authors argue that within what was a relatively egalitarian society women and junior men gradually became subjugated as the Asante state increased its military power over its enemies. Warfare, which was "a uniquely male preoccupation", elevated senior Asante men over junior males, and elevated all men over Asante women.[62]

However, social and economic changes related to colonial missionary activity, the empowerment of chiefs by indirect rule, and the transition to a cocoa economy during the first half of the twentieth century also had a significant impact on gender relations, especially at the domestic level. The Marriage Ordinance Act of 1884 was an initial attempt by the colonial government (under pressure from missionary organisations) to institutionalise monogamous unions and guarantee the property rights of spouses and offspring within conjugal units.[63] Actions by the colonial authorities to reduce polygamy and end other marital practices such as pawning and domestic slavery, however, were thwarted somewhat by increasing numbers of cocoa farmers who benefited from multiple spouses. The high price of cocoa in the 1920s stimulated more women to enter into the cash-crop economy, with the result that many women

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[62] Emmanuel Akyeampong and Pashington Obeng, "Spirituality, Gender, and Power in Asante History", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 28 (3), 1995, 487–92. The association of war with masculinity relates to Asante conceptions of blood: war involved death and blood-spilling, whereas women were transmitters of blood and providers of life. "The greatest indicator of masculine power was the asantehene's exclusive right to sentence people to death—to let blood flow." In other words, male power (to take life) was "the antithesis" of female power (to give life) (*ibid.*, 496–7).

Akyeampong and Obeng, however, make a distinction between authority and power, which has important implications for women: "[P]olitical authority in no way monopolized access to power, for power originated in the spiritual realm…Access to spiritual power was restricted by knowledge, but Asante awareness of the existence and nature of spiritual forces was general. The historical script, in spite of the state's rewriting of the macro-text, still revealed that wielders of *tumi* (those able to bring about change) were numerous and not limited to state personnel". Although some forms of mystical power, such as witchcraft, were driven underground: "These submerged powers reasserted themselves when state power was compromised, weakened or nonexistent". Thus, in the actual dramatisation of power relations on the ground, "the wielders of power were numerous" (*ibid.*, 507). This is an important point about the notion of power, which will be returned to in Chapter Seven, where it is argued that charismatic Christianity represents the restoration (and transformation) of this non-gerontocratic, gender neutral understanding of spiritual power.

[63] The original Marriage Ordinance Act, which awarded all intestate property to the conjugal unit, was amended in 1909 to ensure that one-third of a man's estate went to his lineage and two-thirds to his widow and children (Vellenga, "Who is a Wife?", 146).

began to opt out of marriage in response to the alternative economic opportunities available to them.

The period prior to the formalisation of indirect rule in 1935, then, has been commonly described as a period of "gender chaos" due to the rapid growth of cocoa farming, which provided alternative economic opportunities to marriage for women, whilst increasing the demand for multiple spouses to meet the production needs of male farmers. Indigenous responses to the crisis included the rounding up of spinsters and unmarried girls over the age of fifteen until a marriage fee had been paid for their release. According to Jean Allman, these arrests were about the struggle for control over women's productive and reproductive labour at a time when women were trying to take advantage of the colonial economy, and chiefs and elders were articulating new meanings of marriage "that upheld the husband's exclusive sexual rights to his wife, while minimizing or discounting completely the husband's reciprocal obligations towards that wife".[64]

With the formalisation of indirect rule in 1935, "chiefs and elders, missionaries and social welfare officers went to work trying to make dutiful wives and 'proper' mothers out of a generation of women"[65] who had tried to negotiate their own spaces within the colonial economy. Jean Allman and Victorian Tashjian remark further that the empowerment of chiefs

> marked an important watershed by creating a centralized context in which custom could be systematically reformulated as a set of unyielding rules—rules that provided a clear mechanism for social control.[66]

The agents of indirect rule (indigenous chiefs and elders) and the Christian missions (through their education and welfare work) functioned "as twin efforts" to address the crisis in gender relations that sprang from the expanding cash economy.[67]

By the end of the colonial period, cocoa, "custom" and Christianity had transformed domestic life in the Gold Coast and dramatically

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[64] Allman, "Rounding Up Spinsters", 201–2.

[65] Jean Allman and Victoria Tashjian, *"I Will Not Eat Stone": A Women's History of Colonial Asante*, Oxford: James Currey, 2000, xxxiv.

[66] *Ibid.*, xxxviii. This reflects Stewart's point that custom was not the embodiment of traditional culture and values but a product of the relationship between male elders and the colonial state "anxious to avoid unrest and curb the activities of women who were finding ways under colonialism to avoid traditional forms of authority" ("Should Women Give up on the State?", 31).

[67] Allman and Tashjian, *I Will Not*, 169–70.

altered kinship relations. Among the matrilineal Akan, young men increasingly moved outside the lineage system in their economic relationships; many paid for the education of their own children and left the matrilineal home to build houses in town for the conjugal family. Although "the declining everyday role of lineage males was accompanied by the increasing strength of the conjugal family and household",[68] the impact of capitalist economic relations engendered a shift from gender complementarity to female inequality and increased marginalisation. The transition to a cash economy increased male control over the labour and property of females and children, but failed to provide any compensating shift in male responsibility for those people. In addition, whilst husbands began to develop conjugal households (in the interests of cocoa production) they retained obligations to their lineage—often at the expense of their wives and offspring. These tensions between kin and conjugal relations, which were engendered by the social changes of the colonial period, extend into the independence era and continue up to the present day.

Gender and Nationalism

Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first president, ruled from the beginning of independence in 1957 until his government was overthrown in 1966 in a military coup. Part of Nkrumah's legacy are his beliefs in black pride, African Unity, and the African Personality. Nkrumah's notion of African womanhood was central to some of these ideas. Women, especially market traders, were strong supporters of Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party (CPP), and many were active in mobilising large sections of the female population. They were rewarded for their efforts when Nkrumah appointed three women ministers to his cabinet in 1958. There were also ten female MPs in the first parliament of the First Republic, who were elected to special women's seats in June 1960.[69] As Takyiwaa Manuh observes, Nkrumah catapulted women onto the political scene in a way that was new to both Ghana and Africa.[70]

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[68] Mikell, *Cocoa and Chaos*, 127.

[69] These were not the first female political appointments in modern Ghana: in 1951 Mabel Dove Danquah, CPP, was given a seat in the Colonial Legislature (Manuh, "Women and their Organisations", 114).

[70] *Ibid.*, 115.

In addition Nkrumah's government tried to introduce a number of legal reforms to improve the conditions of women. In 1962 the Party Programme for Work and Happiness, which was part of the Seven-Year Development Plan, stated that the CPP stood for complete equality between the sexes. The practice of polygamy was deemed incompatible with equality, which was a position reflected in the Uniform Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance Bill that had been introduced in the previous year. This Bill was deferred, however, and was never passed into law.[71] The Maintenance of Children Act was passed in 1965 in response to the demands of women who wanted fathers to take financial responsibility for their offspring.[72]

All of these reforms were part of a wider project to raise the status of African womanhood, which, in Nkrumah's view, was fundamental to the task of nation-building and African Unity. In the journal, *The Ghanaian Woman*, Nkrumah wrote: "A strong and reliable womanhood is a firm and worthy foundation for the building of any nation".[73] Nkrumah believed in the need for a new woman—"one of virtue, vision and courage" who was capable of the highest sacrifice—to reflect the African Personality.[74] This new woman was to be truly African: a woman who reflected the heritage of Africa's mothers and grandmothers whilst making her presence felt in the modern nation state. Nkrumah saw women as "the architects of a nation", and as such "the raising of womanhood mentally and morally" was a prime objective of the nationalist government.[75]

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[71] The Bill was primarily a response to the confusion surrounding marriage and inheritance laws that had arisen during the colonial period. It was also an explicit statement of support for monogamy. However, "from the parliamentary debates that followed it is difficult to believe that such a position was actually supported by the majority of politicians", many of whom expressed the fear that women would use the law to their own advantage (Vellenga, "Who is a Wife?", 149).

[72] Again, many male MPs were concerned that women would abuse the law and use it to "trade in children" (*ibid.*, 149). In practice, the law had limited success anyway because there were few resources to enact it and most of the women who would have benefited from it were rural and illiterate.

[73] *The Ghanaian Woman*, no. 18, February 1–15 1962, 14 (cited in Manuh, "Women and their Organisations", 134, n. 114).

[74] Manuh compares this vision of African womanhood with the skin-lightening creams and wigs that were imported into Ghana at this time, and which were used widely by the wives of government officials in particular (*ibid.*, 119).

[75] The Minister for Education, in *The Ghanaian Woman*, no. 15, 1961 (cited in *ibid.*, 132, n. 52).

However, in Nkrumah's view the primary role of women remained one of nurture and support, as it had been to varying degrees in both colonial and pre-colonial society, and they were valued above all for their "natural" feminine qualities of beauty, grace and gentleness. Women were essential to Nkrumah's vision for the influence they could bring to bear "in persuading their brothers, husbands and friends of the importance of African Unity as the only salvation for Africa".[76] Women were mobilised in their numbers as messengers for Ghana's first president and Africa's most enduring son, but the relationship of Nkrumah's government to women's organisations began a pattern of co-option and politicisation that was to endure long after the fall of the First Republic.

In September 1960, the Ghana Federation of Women—a non-political organisation that had begun life in 1953 as the National Federation of Gold Coast Women—was merged with the Ghana Women's League, which for all intents and purposes was the women's wing of the CPP. The merger produced the National Council of Ghana Women (NCGW), a move which was presented by the government as an opportunity for all Ghanaian women to "make their presence felt" in the new nation.[77] However, the NCGW, like its predecessor, functioned as the women's wing of the CPP and the Council's female executives were all party activists. Manuh describes the "petty-bourgeois" character of the NCGW, which was undemocratic and dominated by the class interests of market traders: "the Council was the female version of the petty-bourgeois class in the party, organised to reap the gains of independence".[78] The NCGW collapsed when the CPP was overthrown in 1966 and "the individual women within it were vilified and disgraced" alongside other CPP officials.[79]

The NCGW was not to be the last national women's organisation whose fate rested on the fortunes of a ruling political party. Fifteen years on, the relationship between Jerry Rawlings' PNDC government

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[76] *Ibid.*, 127–8.

[77] The merger led to the marginalisation of all other women's groups, including the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), which refused to merge with the NCGW (Edzodzinam Tsikata, "Women's Political Organisations 1951–1987", in Emmanuel Hansen and Kwame A Ninsin (eds.), *The State, Development and Politics in Ghana*, London: CODESRIA, 1989, 89; Manuh, "Women and their Organisations", 125).

[78] Manuh, "Women and their Organisations", 129–30.

[79] *Ibid.*, 127.

and the 31st December Women's Movement was to follow a remarkably similar pattern.

The Rawlings Regime[80]

Flight Lieutenant J. J. Rawlings came to power, temporarily, in 1979 as the chairman of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). After a brief period of democratic rule by Hilla Limann, a second coup on 31 December 1981 landed Rawlings, and his Provisional National Defence Committee (PNDC), back in power.[81]

Like many revolutionary movements, Rawlings' government expressed extreme, and often contradictory, attitudes towards women. Whilst mass gatherings of women were told that they had been instantly "liberated" by the revolution,[82] market women, in particular, were vilified as enemies of the state whose dishonest trading (*kalabule*) was responsible for the country's economic difficulties. The violent hostility to market traders during the AFRC period culminated in the destruction of Makola Market, the biggest market in central Accra.[83] Women were also abused by the popular press, and young women in particular were accused of prostitution and taking advantage of previous regimes.[84]

Rawlings' response to women and women's groups followed a remarkably similar pattern to that of Nkrumah. The PNDC introduced legal

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[80] In the intervening years notable developments included the founding of the Ghana Assembly of Women in 1969 and the passing of a new divorce law in 1971 by the Busia regime. The National Redemption Council (NRC) set up the National Council for Women and Development (NCWD) in 1975.

[81] For a detailed description of the Rawlings years, see Paul Nugent, *Big Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana: Power, Ideology and the Burden of History 1982–94*, London: Pinter, 1993.

[82] At a rally in Bolgatanga, the PNDC chairman presented a rifle to one of the attendant women to symbolise "the emancipation of the Ghanaian woman" and called on women to accept the challenge to become the equals of men (Tsikata, "Women's Political Organisations", 82).

[83] Makola Market was identified as the "den" of *kalabule* (Takyiwaa Manuh, "Women, the State and Society under the PNDC", in E. Gyimah-Boadi (ed.), *Ghana Under PNDC Rule*, Dakar: CODESRIA, 1993, 180).

[84] This refers to the practice by some young women of entering into sexual relationships with well-connected, older men for financial gain. Manuh traces the emergence of the "sugar daddy syndrome" to the CPP years ("Women and their Organisations", 120). However, it is unlikely that this was a practice confined to the post-independence era. Women in Ghana had long been entering into relationships with older men who were better placed than their younger counterparts to pay a suitable bride price.

reforms to alleviate gender discrimination in the law on the one hand, whilst co-opting and politicising women's groups and associations on the other. In 1985, the Intestate Succession Law (PNDC 111) was passed, which gave women and children in patrilineal and matrilineal communities legal rights to the property of deceased husbands and fathers. The Law abolished both the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children and discrimination against daughters. According to Manuh, however, it did little to relieve gender discrimination and may even have exacerbated existing tension in family relations.[85] More on the issue of gender equality and the law will be discussed below.

In 1981 the 31st December Women's Movement was founded as one of the so-called "revolutionary organs"[86] of the December 1981 revolution. In 1984 it was one of three national women's organisations, which included the Federation of Ghanaian Women (FEGAWO) and the All Women's Association of Ghana (AWAG). By 1987, however, only the 31DWM was operating in any significant way: the work of AWAG had been drastically reduced, and FEGAWO has ceased to function altogether.[87] The National Council for Women and Development (NCWD), which had been established in 1975, was abolished in 1986 and replaced by an Interim Management Committee composed of prominent 31DWM members.[88]

By the end of the 1980s then, the only national women's organisation in the country that had any structural capacity was effectively the women's wing of the PNDC government. The inauguration of Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings as its President in 1984 firmly established the Movement as one of the key pillars of Rawlings' political regime. When it declared itself an NGO in 1987, the 31DWM positioned itself

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[85] Manuh notes that new inheritance rights meant that widows were increasingly being asked by the family of the deceased to bear the costs of funeral celebrations alone—a real financial burden for families in Ghana. Also, many wives objected to a law that abolished the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate children, because they felt it encouraged irresponsible behaviour by granting assets to the children of women who had contributed no labour to the production of household resources (Takyiwaa Manuh, "Wives, Children, and Intestate Succession in Ghana", in Mikell, *African Feminism*, 90–1).

[86] Richard Sandbrook and Jay Oelbaum, *Reforming the Political Kingdom: Governance and Development in Ghana's Fourth Republic*, Ghana: Center For Democracy and Development (CDD), 1999, 21.

[87] Tsikata, "Women's Political Organisations", 73.

[88] Manuh, "Women, the State, and Society", 190.

to play a central role in the promotion of the international Women in Development (WID) agenda in Ghana.

Economic Crisis and its Impact on Gender Relations

In 1983 the Rawlings government was forced to implement the structural adjustment policies of the IMF to alleviate an economic crisis that had been increasing steadily since the decline of the cocoa economy in the 1970s. Although Ghana's Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) was hailed a success story by international policy-makers, it was not experienced in this way by the majority of Ghanaians. Women in particular were confronted with a dramatic rise in the cost of basic commodities such as food and welfare provision. As I mentioned above, feminist scholars have analysed the effects of structural adjustment policies on women as part of a wider trend towards the "feminisation of poverty" and welfare obligations.[89] However, this section is not intended to repeat these arguments, but rather to highlight the impact of ERP on women's productive and reproductive roles in Ghana, as well as the impact of economic failure on gender relations more broadly.

According to the Ghana Living Standards Survey, 24.8 per cent of families in Ghana in 1989 were headed by women, and in Accra this figure reached 33.9 per cent.[90] The dramatic rise in the number of female-headed households during this period has been cited by some as

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[89] See for example, Zdunnek, "Research on Gender Relations", 139 (and page 76 of this chapter). In Ghana, similar to elsewhere in Africa, the burden of welfare provision—made heavier by the rising costs of social services—is increasingly the responsibility of women (Manuh, "Ghana: Women in the Public and Informal Sectors", 64), though both women and men faced reduced chances of employment during the economic crisis of the 1980s. In 1987 PAMSCAD, the Programme of Actions to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment, was implemented to alleviate the negative effects of structural adjustment. The programme, however, did little to help women traders who were suffering from the effects of an ever-widening gap between low and high capital traders—a problem which had been ongoing since independence (Manuh, "Women, the State and Society", 183; Gracia Clark and Takyiwaa Manuh, "Women Traders in Ghana and the Structural Adjustment Program", in Gladwin, *Structural Adjustment*, 234). However, Clark and Manuh also make the observation that traders benefited from the overall improvement in urban infrastructure during this period (*ibid.*, 233).

[90] By 1990 about 25 per cent of the total population lived in female-headed households (John Hodiak Addai-Sundiata, "Family Dynamics and Residential Arrangements in Ghana", in Elizabeth Ardayfio-Schandorf, *The Changing Family in Ghana*, Accra: Ghana University Press, 1996, 73–5).

an indication of women's increasing options for autonomy.[91] Analyses of this type, however, underestimate the extent to which the economic problems of this period contributed further to the weakening of the lineage system and increased women's dependence on their relationships with men.[92] Towards the end of the 1970s, whilst increasing numbers of women responded to the decline of the cocoa economy by migrating to urban areas to trade—trading offered greater autonomy to women who were trying to supplement household incomes—the subsequent rise in the cost of living meant that women migrants were becoming more dependent on males. Urban women were also more removed from the support of the lineage system and were therefore more reliant on the strength of the conjugal bond than their rural counterparts.[93]

Marital relationships, however, were fragile and women increasingly complained about the irresponsibility of husbands in caring for the conjugal unit.[94] Young, urban males, struggling with the impact of retrenchment and unemployment, were reluctant to take on the burden of a wife and offspring. Consequently, there was a rise in the number of men and women entering into informal relationships.[95] Women who were struggling to make a living in the informal economy were increasingly turning to sex as an economic strategy. In these relationships, which remain a common feature of urban life in Accra, women provided sexual services in exchange for gifts or, in some cases, longer-

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[91] C. K. Brown notes that "increasing numbers of women are also choosing to become single mothers to circumvent the daunting inequities of married life" ("Gender Roles in Household Allocation of Resources and Decision-Making in Ghana", in Ardayfio-Schandorf, *Changing Family*, 22, n. 1).

[92] Sylvia Chant, "Gender and the Urban Household", in Brydon and Chant, *Women in the Third World*, 150; Mikell, *Cocoa and Chaos*, 207; Vellenga, "Who is a Wife?", 152; Claire C. Robertson, *Sharing the Same Bowl: A Socioeconomic History of Women and Class in Accra, Ghana*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1984, 224.

[93] For details of the decline of the cocoa economy in the 1970s and its impact on gender, see Mikell, *Cocoa and Chaos*. In rural Asante, Akan marriages became increasingly fragile as young men tried to avoid marriage. Mikell notes, that the matricentric household within a male-controlled lineage "became a common rural phenomenon in the 1970s" (248).

[94] *Ibid.*, 248; Robertson, *Sharing the Same Bowl*, 193; Manuh, "Women, the State and Society", 179.

[95] Vellenga, "Who is a Wife?", 153; Akosua Adomako Ampofo, "Costs and Rewards—Exchange in Relationships: Experiences of Some Ghanaian Women", in Eva Evers Rosander (ed.), *Transforming Female Identities: Women's Organizational Forms in West Africa*, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1997, 178–83; Akosua Adomako Ampofo, "The Sex Trade, Globalisation and Issues of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa", in *Research Review*, 17 (2), 2001, 178.

term maintenance. A relationship of this kind, commonly referred to as an "exchange relationship", was not prostitution as such and many informal unions maintained an appearance of marriage.[96] However, these relationships lacked the security of formal marriage because men could maintain more than one relationship without fulfilling the obligations of customary rites (in contrast to traditional polygamous unions), and women could be easily replaced if they withdrew sexual or other domestic services.

This is not to suggest that exchange relationships were unique to this period. All marital unions were established, to some extent, on the basis of a transaction, insofar as bride price was exchanged for the productive and reproductive labour of a spouse. So although the exchange of sex as a commodity became a necessary "survival strategy" for many urban Ghanaians during this period,[97] there is no reason to assume that heterosexual relationships were exploitative. These relationships were based on a "reciprocal transaction" that provided for basic needs.[98] However there were no rules or customs governing these modern exchange relationships—women could not appeal to members of their lineage if a man failed to meet traditional obligations, for example—and thus women's insecurities about their relationships with men during this period grew proportionately to their economic dependence on them.

The economic crisis of the 1980s coincided with the end of the United Nations Decade for Women (1975–85) and the launch of the international Women in Development (WID) agenda, which emphasised democracy, participation and the economic empowerment of women. In 1985 the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms

[96] Some of these informal liaisons, called "outside wives" or "lover marriage" were a prelude to formal marriage, and in some cases "husbands" were accepted by the woman's family, especially after children had been born (Ampofo, "Costs and Rewards", 183). Prostitution was also a prominent feature of urban life though, and the number of women entering the sex trade had been increasing steadily since the cocoa crisis of the 1970s. Mikell describes the "phenomenal rise" in prostitution at this time, with many Ghanaian women crossing the border into the Ivory Coast or Nigeria to work as prostitutes (*Cocoa and Chaos*, 208). As one prostitute told Ampofo: "my cocoa is between my legs" ("The Sex Trade", 30).

[97] Ampofo, "The Sex Trade", 27–30.

[98] Nevertheless, many women felt compelled to give into the sexual demands of their male partners, including the practice of unsafe sex, because of the support they provided. Also, many schoolgirls exchanged sexual favours with older men to pay their fees (Ampofo, "Costs and Rewards", 189–91).

of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was ratified by the Ghanaian government, and in 1990 the PAMSCAD WID program was launched. It was the last PAMSCAD project to be launched by the PNDC regime, and it was overseen by the 31DWM.

The Gender Discourses of Ghanaian State Feminism

In 1987 the 31DWM had declared itself an NGO, with the prime objective of "restoring the lost dignity of Ghanaian womanhood".[99] It was given financial support by the government through PAMSCAD, though it also received funding from international agencies such as USAID, UNDP and UNPFA.[100] Most of the Movement's development projects were aimed at rural women, such as credit schemes, the promotion of small-scale industries, and the provision of day-care centres. By 1991 it was financing as many as 500 day-care centres throughout the country.[101] However, critics accused the 31DWM of using its control over resources and credit schemes to exclude women who did not support the government,[102] and some international agencies refused to fund the 31DWM due to "its overtly political character".[103]

The transformation of the 31DWM into an NGO did not fundamentally alter the close relationship it had with the ruling party, and it continued to operate as the women's wing of the PNDC. Through its close association with the state and its privileged access to state resources, the Movement monopolised the international Women in Development discourse and stifled other NGOs and women's groups.[104] Kathleen Fal-

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[99] Manuh, "Women, the State and Society", 188–9.

[100] In 1990, it received US$350,000 from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) to fund family life education for women (*ibid.*, 186).

[101] Kevin Shillington, *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*, London: Macmillan, 1992, 154. This is an extremely positive assessment of the work of the 31DWM. Shillington's description of the movement as "an effective pressure group" that benefited all women (157) is quite out of place in the literature as a whole.

[102] Sandbrook and Oelbaum, *Reforming the Political Kingdom*, 22.

[103] Manuh, "Women, the State and Society", 187.

[104] The 31DWM also maintained close links with traditional authority: Nana Konadu declared all queen mothers "patrons of the nation" and called on them to mobilise membership and educate women on government policies (Tsikata, "Women's Political Organisations", 86–7; Manuh, "Women, the State and Society", 188). She also inaugurated a number of Queen Mother Associations, which were championed by Nana Konadu as empowering female leaders, though many saw this move as politically motivated (Boaten I, "Gender Relations in Traditional Administration", 38–9).

lon describes the "either you're with us or against us" mentality of the 31DWM,[105] which did not accept criticism from other groups. Cynthia Nuama, for example, a member of the National Youth Organising Committee, died in mysterious circumstances after raising questions about the finances of the Movement.[106] The close relationship of the 31DWM to the state meant also that its objective of raising the status of Ghanaian womanhood was limited to activities that did not conflict with the policies and priorities of government. Often this meant that the Movement's relationship to the state was maintained at the expense of gender equality, and the concentration of resources into day-care centres and credit schemes ensured that the political empowerment of women was kept off the agenda.[107]

The internal dynamics of the 31DWM are of interest also. The Women in Development agenda advocated good governance and the political participation of women at all levels. The structures of the state institution charged with delivering these reforms, however, were hardly a model of democracy, and the 31DWM contributed more to the consolidation of class interests than it did to broadening participation. Ghana under the PNDC was a classic case of what Lisa Aubrey terms a "femocracy", or First Lady Syndrome. She describes these as "systems in which female autocracies parallel and serve male dictatorships whilst advancing conservative gender ideologies to the detriment of democracy and gender equality".[108] The Babangida regime (1985–93) in Nigeria is another example. It used the public display of a First Lady to mobilise women whilst marginalising any resistant forces. During the latter stage of the regime, the office of the First Lady degenerated "into a forum for the display of power, influence and prestige" of a privileged class of women.[109]

According to Aubrey, the history of the 31DWM, similarly, has been one of "careful calculated political manipulations for women's

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[105] Kathleen M. Fallon, "Women's Non-Governmental Organizations in Emerging Social Movements: The Democratic Transition in Ghana", unpublished paper, Indiana University, n.d., 16.

[106] Zaya Yeebo, *Ghana: The Struggle for Popular Power*, London: New Beacon Books, 1991, 254.

[107] For a comparison between Ghana and Kenya on this point, see Lisa Aubrey, "Gender, Development, and Democratization in Africa", *African and Asian Studies*, 36 (1), 2001, 87–105.

[108] *Ibid.*, 105.

[109] Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet, "Democratization and State Feminism", 452–3.

space in public life without disturbing patriarchal and middle-class interests".[110] The role of Nana Konadu during the Rawlings era is of particular interest. The First Lady herself never adhered to the rules of Ghana's conservative gender ideology—she had more power than many powerful men, and her client networks were well established within a privileged circle of women.[111] Nana Konadu, then, is a classic example of the "exceptional woman" of Ghanaian gender politics, who consolidates her own power base by preserving the position of an elite class of men through whom her political status and access to resources are maintained.

The 31DWM, concludes Manuh, created the impression that women were working "shoulder to shoulder" with men in national affairs, when actually the role of the Movement was to ensure that women "played a complementary role to government in ERP". It did not challenge undemocratic social structures or unequal gender relations. In fact, the incorporation of wives of prominent people into the 31DWM "firmly anchored these conventional values and the hierarchical ordering implicit in many of them". Like other politicised women's groups of previous eras, the 31DWM was "an agent of the gender ideology of men in general and of the [PNDC] regime in particular".[112] If there were any doubts that the Women in Development activities of the 31DWM were motivated primarily by political interests, one need only look at the subsequent state of some of the rural projects that were established during the Rawlings era.[113]

The transition from military dictatorship to democratic rule in 1992, and the opening up of the public arena to political parties and civil society groups, engendered a shift in the relationship between state and society. In the first year of democracy the number of civil society groups, including NGOs, doubled, which generated some optimistic expectations

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[110] Aubrey, "Gender", 103.

[111] Aubrey describes her as "the epitome of a liberated woman and a feminist" who was both hailed and vilified (*ibid.*, 101).

[112] Manuh, "Women, the State and Society", 190–1.

[113] "Defections Hit 31st December Women", *The Chronicle*, 25 June 2003, 4. The writer of this particular article also warns NPP women, many of whom defected from the 31DWM and the NDC after the 2000 General Election, not to play "stomach politics". (On "stomach politics" see Jean-Francois Bayart (trans. Mary Harper et al.), *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, London: Longman, 1993, first published in French, 1989).

of a new political culture and a different gender politics.[114] However, some of the rhetoric was reminiscent of the nationalist gender discourse, which had valued women primarily for the influence they could bring to bear on male relatives. In 1992, women again were advised to help attain a peaceful transition and a sustainable democracy by assisting their husbands in a positive and dignified manner, especially the wives of political leaders.[115]

There was also some optimism, however, that the transitional democratic state would re-negotiate to some extent its relationship with women's groups and women's NGOs and begin to incorporate gender concerns into the formal political process. Fallon's assessment of the role of women's NGOs in civil society is particularly positive. She argues that NGOs, acting as emerging Social Movement Organisations, create a space for women to discuss and pursue their concerns and encourage a democratic political culture "by representing the needs of women at the local level and by encouraging a democratic environment for which women may strive".[116] In other words, by encouraging the participation of women in the formal political process, women's NGOs are actively expanding their focus from social and economic issues at the local level to political concerns.

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[114] Aubrey estimates that the number of civil society groups doubled to about 300 in 1992 ("Gender", 93).

[115] *People's Daily Graphic*, 10 June 1992, 3 (cited in Brigid Sackey, "Evangelisation of Ghana: Historical and Contemporary Roles of Women", *Research Review*, 15 (1), 1999, 53–4). To some extent the attitudes in 1992 towards the conduct of political wives was an implicit critique of the dominant position of Nana Konadu in the Rawlings regime. Similar, more explicit, attitudes were expressed in the 2000 General Election. The editor of *The Statesman* wrote, for example: "This country is on its knees today, in greater part because an unelected, unappointed, unrepresentative, unofficial person appears to be calling the shots in the corridors of power. Nana Konadu Agyeman must recognize and acknowledge her true position—which is the wife of the President and nothing more" ("That's Enough Nana Konadu", Editorial, *The Statesman*, 31 November 2000, 5).

[116] Fallon, "Women's Non-Governmental Organizations", 26–8. Fallon's study does not address the concerns of feminist critics of civil society, however, who are cautious about its benefits for women. They are critical of the liberal view and suggest that civil society organisations are not necessarily democratic and many of them tend to reproduce the hierarchies of the dominant gender politics (Aili Mari Tripp, "Rethinking Civil Society: Gender Implications in Contemporary Tanzania", in John W. Harbeson, Donald Rothchild and Naomi Chazan (eds.), *Civil Society and the State in Africa*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, 149–68). For further discussion on this point, see Chapter Five.

However, whether Ghanaian gender politics have been significantly transformed, either by the transition to democratic rule in 1992 or by the transfer of power from the NDC to the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the 2000 general election, is unclear.[117] The widespread expansion of gender development activities is indisputable—gender workshop reports appear almost daily in the Ghanaian press[118]—but the focus of most of these activities remains local issues of social and economic empowerment. Also, although NGOs in Ghana are working in a fairly positive ideological context—in the sense that there is little outright hostility to women's rights or gender development—they are expected to play a supplementary, rather than oppositional, role to government. Aubrey suggests that the state often uses NGOs to exclude women and issues of gender equality from the formal political process:

> Women numerically dominating the NGO sector fits squarely with the notion of the apolitical woman interested more in the domesticity of the private sphere, and uncomfortable and unefficacious in the highly politicised environment of the public sphere. As such, many NGOs tend to have an overwhelmingly narrow and de-politicized focus and rhetoric, either directly or indirectly linked to development.[119]

In Ghana, although the gender development discourse is no longer linked directly with the politics of a ruling party, issues of women's empowerment continue to be discussed in terms of the wider benefits for men, families, society and the nation.[120] An exception to this might

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[117] John Kufuor of the NPP was elected to the Presidency on 28 December 2000 and he retained the presidency in the 2004 general elections.

[118] See "60 Women Learn Skills", *Daily Graphic*, 10 May 2003, 16; "Brakwa Women Groups End Workshop", *Daily Graphic*, 2 May 2003, 20; "70 Attend Gender Workshop", *Daily Graphic*, 30 June 2003, 16; "Counselling Training Programme for Women", *The Statesman*, 12 August 2003, 3; "Women's Club Holds Workshop", *Daily Graphic*, 25 April 2003, 20; "Workshop on Women's Rights Held in the Western Region", *The Daily Guide*, 28 May 2003, 5.

[119] Aubrey, "Gender", 94.

[120] The NPP's "women's empowerment" initiative, for example—the Women's Development Fund (WDF)—was established in December 2001 in recognition that "women's economic empowerment is a necessary component of national and local level development" ("Women's Empowerment and Education", *The Ghanaian Times*, 24 June 2003, 6). See Mrs Christine Churcher, Minister for Girl-Child Education asserting that "a well educated woman can better serve the family" ("Assist Girls to Climb the Academic Ladder", *Daily Graphic*, 20 August 2003, 6). See also: "Women will become co-partners with their male counter-parts to develop the society…It is now time for women to contribute their quota fully in the development of the nation" ("How Can I Be Empowered?", *The Mirror*, 7 June 2003, 19), and "women should stand up for their rights", but a local chief warns, "they should rather exercise caution because their

be the legal reform organisation, FIDA, which Aubrey describes as an example of civil society organisations that "traverse the apolitical civic association spaces" and champion the cause of democracy and gender equality.[121] Although some question the effectiveness of state legal reforms in Africa, because most people live under a system of legal pluralism (where the state legal system exists side by side with customary law),[122] Mikell's work would suggest that women in Accra are turning increasingly to the legal process to meet their changing domestic needs. It predicts that women's use of family courts will become "a typical response" to the economic crisis and the family pressures caused by the crisis, which were outlined in this chapter.[123]

However, even legal discourses about women sometimes invoke the dominant ideology of gender complementarity and national development. Parliament is debating a draft bill on domestic violence—an issue that has received substantial press coverage since the bill was introduced in June 2003.[124] The Domestic Violence Bill has been received quite positively by the national press—an editorial in the *Daily Graphic* threw its full support behind the bill[125]—and the setting up of a special police unit (WAJU) to deal with violence against women and children,[126] as well as extensive reports on gender violence workshops, has placed

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rights have limits" ("Workshop on Women's Rights Held in the Western Region", *The Daily Guide*, 28 May 2003, 5).

[121] Aubrey, "Gender", 97.

[122] Ambreena S. Manji, for example, argues that the legal centralist discourse ("all law is and should be the law of the state and that such a law is exclusive of all other laws"), which has been adopted by feminist legal reformers in Africa, fails to engage with legal pluralism and therefore excludes the majority of ordinary women from its agenda. In post-colonial states, argues Manji, the legal world inhabited by most women "may be characterised as one of predominantly private rather than state law", meaning that custom and tradition have more legitimacy that the state, and feminist reformers therefore have been "naïve" in their confidence in the law ("Imagining Women's 'Legal World': Towards a Feminist Theory of Legal Pluralism in Africa", *Social and Legal Studies*, 8 (4), 1999, 435–55). Manuh also makes the point that attempts by the state to deal with discrimination in the law are "often piece-meal", and that "most women devise their own solutions to cope with their daily needs for survival" ("Women, the State and Society", 180).

[123] Gwendolyn Mikell, "Pleas for Domestic Relief: Akan Women and Family Courts", in Mikell, *African Feminism*, 116–17.

[124] "Domestic Violence Bill for Parliament", *Daily Graphic*, 13 June 2003, 16; "NCWD to Campaign on Domestic Violence Bill", *Daily Graphic*, 12 August 2003, 3.

[125] "Domestic Violence Law", *Daily Graphic*, 15 August 2003, 7.

[126] The Women and Juvenile Unit of the Ghana police force was established in October 1998 to deal with issues of crime affecting women and children. (See "WAJU Records 68 Cases", *Daily Graphic*, 23 June 2003, 20.)

the issue firmly on the public agenda.[127] Emerging discourses about violence against women tend to focus on women as individuals more than other gender development debates, which, as I have suggested, emphasise the social roles of women.[128] However, even advocates of the Domestic Violence Bill have been careful to stress that women are not trying to usurp the rights and authority of men, and that the bill is not just there for the sake of women but "to enhance development generally in Ghana".[129]

It is too soon to assess the impact of the NPP government on gender, but current activities and rhetoric suggest that it has not deviated significantly from established patterns. The NPP parliamentary candidate and gender activist Hajia Halima Mahama, for example, declared in her acceptance speech: "The presence of a woman in politics is not to hijack power and responsibilities of the man but to supplement their efforts instead in order to build good society".[130] The government's gender development projects are overseen by a special Ministry for Women and Children's Affairs, which was established by the government in 2001. Although the Ministry does not monopolise gender politics in the way that Nana Konadu's 31DWM did, it does contain the agenda within a social welfare ministry of relatively low priority.[131]

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[127] "Handle Domestic Violence with Dignity", *Daily Graphic*, 10 May 2003, 12–13; "Report Abuse Cases to Police", *Daily Graphic*, 26 June 2003, 23; "Women at Risk from Acquaintances", *The Statesman*, 28 May 2000, 9; "Violence Against Women Still Critical", *The Statesman*, 9 April 2000, 9.

[128] See also Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceschet, "Democratization and State Feminism", 460.

[129] Mrs. Obeng-Ofori, spokesperson for the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (*Daily Graphic*, 13 June 2003, 16). The Minister of Women and Children's Affairs, Mrs. Gladys Asmah, also cautioned against "promulgating a law that will create more problems than it intends to solve: 'We need to remind ourselves of the high rate of divorce in some of the countries with domestic violence law, with particular reference to provisions like marital rape'" ("Govt Won't Promulgate Bad Law—Mrs Asmah", *Daily Graphic*, 3 June 2003, 23).

[130] "Women in Politics", *The Statesman*, 10 September 2000, 7. Comments like this may also reflect a strategy used by some female public figures to gain acceptance.

[131] Kathleen Staudt critiques the practice of governments that contain political women and their agendas within women's bureaus, ministries and advisory committees ("Women's Politics, the State, and Capitalist Transformation in Africa", in I. L. Markovitz (ed.), *Studies in Power and Class in Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, 205. The NPP has also revived the NCWD, which had been marginalised by the 31DWM. Gender activists and women's groups called for the new ministry to be non-party political ("Women's Ministry Should be Non-Partisan", *The Dispatch*, 12–18 January 2001, 5).

The image and conduct of President Kufuor's wife bears little resemblance to the "First Lady Syndrome" of the Rawlings years, but Mrs Teresa Kufuor is a somewhat conservative figure who does not challenge existing gender ideologies. For the most part she is engaged in social welfare projects for women and children and, increasingly, in the public campaign against HIV/AIDS.[132] Despite the presence of a number of high-profile women in public life,[133] women in Ghana continue to be valued above all for the complementary roles they play to men in national development.

This chapter has established the cultural and political context for examining the gender discourses of the charismatic churches in Accra. It has been shown that gender relations in pre-colonial Ghana were characterised by "gender parallelism"—manifest in dual-sex roles and the presence of some women in political office—but that the complementarity of gender roles was predicated on the fulfilment by women of a set of values linked intrinsically to femininity. Changes in economic and social organisation during the colonial period engendered a shift from gender parallelism to the increased marginalisation of women, and created enduring tension between kin and conjugal relations.

Following independence, women were portrayed as fundamental to the task of nation-building in nationalist rhetoric, but they continued to be valued above all for their "natural" feminine virtues. The pattern of co-option and politicisation that characterised the relationship between women's organisations and the nationalist government was repeated and intensified under the leadership of the First Lady of

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[132] Mrs. Kufuor runs a Mother and Child Community Development Programme, the rhetoric of which seems to focus primarily on the problem of "indiscipline" in Ghanaian society. This is something of an obsession in Ghana—the Deputy President heads an entire "Campaign Against Indiscipline". Emerging gender discourses about the spread of HIV/AIDS also are focused increasingly on this issue ("First Lady Unhappy About Condom Adverts", *Daily Graphic*, 18 April 2003, 16; "Show Compassion to those Living with HIV/AIDS", *Daily Graphic*, 13 August 2003, 20). National newspapers also contain references to Mrs Felicia Mensah, Co-ordinator of HIV/AIDS Fighters, a community-based organisation, who advises women to "make their marital homes attractive to their husbands to prevent them from going wayward". She advises women to look neat and attractive at all times and cautions them not to deny sex to their husbands or fiancés, since that could also make them go wayward (*Daily Graphic*, 30 May 2003, 20; *Daily Guide*, 26 May 2003, 1–2).

[133] Mrs. Gladys Asmah, Minister for Women and Children's Affairs; Mrs Christine Churcher, Minister for Girl-Child Education; Mrs. Gifty Dadzie, former President of the Ghana Press Association; Mrs. Joyce Ayree, Executive Secretary, Ghana Chamber of Mines.

the Rawlings' regime. As women's politics was becoming increasingly defined by neo-patrimonialism and clientalism, the economic crisis of the 1980s contributed to increased material hardship and marital instability. The response of state feminism to social and economic pressures in subsequent decades has been dominated by the ideology of gender complementarity.

The chapters that follow assess the extent to which Action Chapel, Alive Chapel, and Solid Rock Chapel International reflect or challenge the gender politics and gender ideology outlined here.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEFINING WOMANHOOD

In the previous chapter, I sought to establish the cultural and political context for examining the gender discourses of the charismatic churches in Accra. In this chapter, I want to consider the key themes in charismatic discourses on womanhood and assess the extent to which they reflect or challenge the gender politics and gender ideology outlined in Chapter Three. The primary aim of this chapter is to challenge the assumption that born-again Christianity is concerned, overwhelmingly, with female domesticity and the familial roles of women.[1]

It is argued here that domesticity is not the defining feature of charismatic discourses on womanhood and that, whilst the concept of female domesticity occurs, the domestic ideal is complicated by an alternative approach to femininity, which in part transcends local gender categories. Further, it is argued that the churches preserve an ideology of gender complementarity whilst introducing an element of individualism to Ghanaian discourses on womanhood, which seems to value personal development and individual success above what might be described as the self-sacrificial roles of women.

The prime objective of this chapter is to examine church attitudes towards women at the level of discourse. Of less concern, at this stage, are questions of gender, power, authority and democracy in practice; these are considered in Chapter Five. Neither is consideration given here to the way in which female believers employ, challenge or indeed ignore church discourses in their everyday lives. This is addressed in Chapter Six, which examines the significance of mutual constructions of gender in the context of local ideas about marriage and modernity.

Below is a description and some analysis of the central themes within born-again Christian discourses that refer specifically to women and their spiritual, social, and familial roles. Much of what follows stems from my attendance at women's fellowships, women's conventions and other female-directed activities at Action Chapel, Alive Chapel and

[1] See, for example, Mate, "Wombs as God's Laboratories", discussed in Chapter Two.

Solid Rock. Where it is relevant, I have referred also to local written sources and the women's activities of other churches in Accra.

Women's Fellowships and Women's Conventions

To include a section on "women's activities" is not to imply that women are not visible or active in the mainstream of church life.[2] In fact, women are probably less marginal in charismatic churches than in many other denominations in Ghana, at least in terms of the variety of functions they fulfil. This point is returned to below, with reference to the spiritual status of female believers.

The women's fellowship is a common feature of church life in the charismatic movement,[3] and whilst there are many aspects of the movement's activities and style of worship that diverge significantly from the mainline churches, women's fellowship meetings tend to function along similar lines to their mainline counterparts. This does not mean, however, that women's fellowship meetings in charismatic churches occupy a position of importance akin to their position in the diary of the mainline churches,[4] and the women's fellowships at Action Chapel, Alive Chapel and Solid Rock tend not to attract women in great numbers.

Action Chapel attracts on average around eighty to 100 women to its "Women in Action" evening prayer meeting, compared with Alive Chapel's "Women for Jesus" meeting, which attracts around twenty five to thirty women, and Solid Rock's "Daughters of Zion", which rarely attracts more than twenty. With the exception of Action Chapel, where the women's fellowship involves women of all age groups, the other two meetings tend to be formed of middle-aged, married, divorced or widowed women. Younger women are more likely to attend youth groups, where membership is mixed and the meetings tend to

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[2] Compare this with Green's study of Evangelicals in Guatemala, where women exercise authority only within counter-hegemonic church groups, such as the Mayan widows' group ("Shifting Affiliations", 173–4).

[3] The wife of a young pastor who had recently established a new church described her plans for a women's fellowship. When I questioned whether the church was ready for a women's fellowship (there were very few regular congregants), she told me that the church would not be established and she would not be a proper pastor's wife until a women's fellowship was in place.

[4] The reasons for this are explored in more detail in Chapter Five.

be livelier. Also, the attitudes of older fellowship members suggest that certain topics of conversation—men, marriage and sex—are the reserve of married women and that it would be inappropriate for unmarried women to discuss them.

Both "Daughters of Zion" and "Women for Jesus" are organised by a women's fellowship president. At Solid Rock this is Mrs Ama Bonsu Abbah and at Alive Chapel, Aunty Mavis who, incidentally, is the only woman at Alive Chapel to have attended Bible School. "Women in Action" is overseen directly by Francisca Duncan-Williams, though Pastor Allen, a young male pastor who functions as her personal assistant, leads many of the meetings. The fellowships at Alive Chapel and Solid Rock have both a secretary and a treasurer; at Solid Rock, these women are also pastors.[5] Charismatic Christianity has been noted for the prominence of the English language in its music and services.[6] With the exception of Action Chapel, however, the women's fellowship meetings are conducted in Twi,[7] reflecting perhaps that many older Accra residents, especially women, tend not to be proficient in English or feel more at ease in the vernacular. The structures of the meetings are slightly different and so each fellowship is considered in turn.

The two-hour "Women for Jesus" meeting always begins with ten to twenty minutes of praise and worship, with all songs sung in Twi. One member is often asked to lead the singing while others join in with clapping and dancing. The prayers that follow usually include a prayer of thanksgiving, a prayer for forgiveness, prayers for the women's fellowship, church elders and pastors, and a prayer for the Prophet Salifu. There is sometimes time for two or three women to give testimonies, but the majority of the meeting is taken up with an address given either by the fellowship president, Aunty Mavis, or Prophet Salifu's wife, Mrs Moha Amoako. The subjects of these talks range from lectures on nutrition and health care (normally given by Aunty Mavis or occasionally an outside speaker) to motivational speeches about the importance of faith and self-determination (a favourite topic for the talks given by Mama Moha). One offering is taken and the meeting concludes with

[5] Many of the women most closely involved in "Daughters of Zion" are pastors, which is a reflection of the number of female pastors at Solid Rock Chapel.

[6] Gifford, *African Christianity*, 77, 88; Gifford, *Ghana's New*, 43. (See Chapter Two.)

[7] These meetings were translated for me into English by a member of each fellowship.

announcements about fellowship members who are unwell, forth-coming weddings and funerals, and other church events. The women are asked to pay monthly dues of 2,000 cedis (about twenty pence).

The Thursday evening meeting of the "Daughters of Zion" rarely begins before seven o'clock, though officially it begins at six-thirty, and the majority of the meeting is taken up with administrative tasks, such as reading the minutes of the previous week's meeting, noting any corrections, and recording absentees. This, and a short period of praise and worship, normally precedes a teaching session led by the fellowship president, Mrs Ama Bonsu Abbah, covering such topics as parenting, women's health, and the importance of regular exercise. Like Alive Chapel, the meeting concludes with a single offering, and here also the women pay 2,000 cedis a month in dues.

Action Chapel's "Women in Action" meeting differs significantly from the women's fellowships of either Alive Chapel or Solid Rock. The Monday evening meeting, which is called a "women's prayer meeting" rather than a fellowship, is conducted almost entirely in English, with virtually no Twi spoken at all. The meeting itself consists mostly of prayers; there is no praise and worship session, no testimonies, and very little in the way of teaching. Occasionally a guest preacher conducts the meeting, but even then the preaching is structured around prayers, with little in the way of "instruction" of the type heard at Alive Chapel or Solid Rock. The offering is a central feature of the Action prayer meetings, and Pastor Allen in particular tends to place great emphasis on the importance of sowing a good seed in accordance with the principles of the Faith Gospel.[8] In contrast to either "Women for Jesus" or "Daughters of Zion", the women at Action Chapel do not pay monthly dues and no register of attendance is kept.

Again, with the exception of "Women in Action" perhaps, women's fellowship meetings tend to lack many of the features that are commonly associated with charismatic Christianity. The leader of the meeting is not elevated on any sort of platform, as would be the norm at most charismatic services, even when the leader is a pastor or the wife of a pastor. The meetings are not video-recorded, there are no microphones

[8] For an explanatory note on the Faith Gospel, see Chapter Two. At the end of one meeting (30 June 2003) Pastor Allen told the women to check their neighbour's offering to ensure that they were sowing a seed of sufficient value. In contrast, many of the women at Alive Chapel and Solid Rock make no offering at all.

or sound system,[9] and the women's voices are accompanied by no more than the clapping of hands and the beat of a tambourine. As indicated above, women's fellowship meetings tend to be small, intimate gatherings of little more than a handful of women.

Women's national conventions, on the other hand, contain all the elements of a classic charismatic church service, including large choirs, instrumentalists, sound systems, video-recorders, and a host of pastors and VIPs. Accra is a city awash with posters and banners advertising forthcoming national women's conventions and other women's programmes. Some of the larger conventions are announced on television and radio. Most conventions run for about seven days and tend to be divided into morning and evening sessions, which differ somewhat in terms of format. Morning sessions open with an hour or so of prayer, praise and worship, as do most charismatic services, though large-scale praise teams are not present during these morning sessions and the congregations are generally smaller in the mornings than in the evenings. They also tend to be exclusively female, whereas evening congregations include significant numbers of men. The sermon, which in the morning is aimed specifically at a female audience, often climaxes with some sort of deliverance or healing session. At some conventions, following the offering, the women are divided into groups for different workshops, which deal primarily with marital and relationship issues.

Evening sessions also open with a period of praise and worship, but in the evening this part of the service may extend to two hours or more, involving choirs from a number of churches as well as individual singers and musicians; sometimes these are minor celebrities.[10] This section of the service often includes some sort of choreography, sketch or moral tale performed very often by members of the youth fellowship. At least two offerings are taken at each evening service and it is not unusual to have three or even four separate offerings during one session. These normally take the form of "seed faith" and, in general,

[9] Microphones seem to lend status to some women's meetings, however. At the first meeting of a new women's ministry ("Women in the Gap Ministries", 23 September 2002) a microphone was used even though the room was small and only eight or nine women were present. A microphone is used at most "Women in Action" meetings.

[10] The high-life turned gospel singer, Akosua Adjepong, for example, performed at Solid Rock's and Action Chapel's conventions. Gifford comments that because young Ghanaians do not have the money to attend nightclubs and concerts, the "churches provide a new forum for a parallel music scene" (*African Christianity*, 90).

constitute both the warm-up and the climax to the sermon, which is the highlight of the evening.

Some other important features of women's conventions include: first, overseas guests and speakers, the majority of whom tend to be either Nigerian or African-American women;[11] second, visiting churches and para-church organisations, including more traditional Pentecostal groups such as Women's Aglow;[12] and third, the attendance of women from country branches who stay at the church's headquarters for the duration of a convention, so that they often have something of a camp meeting atmosphere. Also worthy of mention is the intensity of some of the meetings. The combined length of morning and evening sessions may equate to more than ten hours a day spent in church for the duration of the week. More on this will follow in the next chapter. Suffice it to say for now that these women's activities are prime locations for the construction and reiteration of charismatic discourses on womanhood.

The Spiritual Equality of Believers

As discussed in Chapter Two, the evangelical and holiness movements of Britain and North America were remarkably innovative in their ordination of significant numbers of women into leadership positions as pastors and evangelists during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Also noted in Chapter Two was the similar line concerning the roles and positions open to women in the organisation of church life followed by the American neo-Pentecostals of the late twentieth century, even though Kenneth Hagin's generation express reservations about the ability of women to be pastors. At the level of discourse at least, these reservations about the role of women as pastors are not shared by the Ghanaian churches under consideration here. In practice, the number of male pastors in Accra's churches far outweighs the number

[11] The status of the speaker can reflect the status of the church. Christie Doe Tetteh, for example, told her congregation that Solid Rock was "moving to a new level" because the speakers at the 2003 convention were coming from the United States: "Last year we had Nigerians ['Funke Adeteberu preached at the 2002 convention]. This year they are coming all the way from the United States of America!".

[12] At the opening night of Action Chapel's "Women of Worth" convention (1–7 June 2003) as many as ten churches were represented, including the Assemblies of God, an older Pentecostal denomination. At Solid Rock's "The Real Woman" convention (10–17 August 2003) choirs from four visiting churches performed.

of female. It is to be expected, perhaps, that Solid Rock has a higher proportion of female pastors than most churches, though none of its branch pastors is a woman. Action Chapel has six women pastors at its main branch[13] and Alive Chapel has none. In principle, however, there are no barriers to women becoming pastors, prophets, healers and founders of their own churches, and charismatic Christianity is explicit on the spiritual equality of believers.

The new churches cite two biblical references in particular to explain, first, woman's relationship to God, and, second, her relationship to men. In contrast to the early holiness movements, or even the Pentecostals of Hagin's generation, Ghana's charismatic Christians are less likely to quote Joel's prophecy to explain the status of women than they are to quote Genesis 1: 27 to explain the position of women in the spiritual order, and Genesis 2: 21–4 to explain women's place in the social order.[14]

> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Genesis 1: 27).
>
> So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man". For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh (Genesis 2: 21–4).

More on the relationship of women to men will be said below, but in terms of the spiritual status of men and women it is a widely held view within the born-again churches that women, as well as men, were made in the image of God,[15] and thus share with men all the fruits of

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[13] Rev Clive Mold, the resident pastor at Action Chapel, told me that the number of female pastors is quite low because women have what he called "procreational problems", meaning that many of Action's female pastors are of childbearing age and therefore want to take time off to take care of young children. According to Rev Mold, this upsets the running of the church: they are becoming "a bother to the system" (interview, 2 September 2003).

[14] Though James Saah, in his Preface to Francisca Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, Accra: Great Eagle Publications, 2003, does refer to the Azusa Street Revival as being responsible for the breakdown of walls between gender, race, social and economic levels in society (5).

[15] Evelyn Obeng Darko, *Womanhood: Blessing or Curse?*, Accra: Journagrafix, 1999, 25; Christie Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, Accra: Journagrafix, 2003, 15; Marilyn Opoku-Acheampong, *The Essence of a Godly Woman*, Accra: African Christian Press,

creation and "equal heritage with all men in the Royal Priesthood".[16] It is common to hear such phrases as, "God is no respector of persons" and "in Christ there is neither male nor female". Whilst more complex questions of gender, power and authority are considered in Chapter Five, here it is important to make clear that in charismatic Christianity, "success" does not depend on gender, because men and women are created equally in the image of God:

> From the above Scripture [Genesis 1: 26–8], we see that God has put the potential to be successful (in every facet of your life) inside of you. The Scriptures make it clear once again that your success in life does not depend on gender difference. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth."
>
> 1. Please note that both man and woman were created by God and in His image.
> 2. Both man and woman are blessed by God and are given the same opportunity to be successful and excel in life (emphasis original).[17]

In other words, in terms of spiritual experience and the relationship of humans to the divine, as well as the worldly success of believers with which this form of Christianity is so concerned, charismatic Christians do not differentiate between male and female believers. This does not mean, however, that born-again men and women are not subject to norms of behaviour that are governed by what are perceived as innate gender differences, and which distinguish one sex from the other. It is to these gender differences that the discussion now turns.

Male and Female Difference

The previous chapter highlighted the way in which gender relations in Ghana have been characterised by an ideology of complementarity, predicated on the fulfilment by men and by women of a set of values intrinsically linked to the "natural" attributes of maleness and femaleness. Similarly, in charismatic Christianity, men and women may

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2001, 7. (Opoku-Acheampong even advises her readers to substitute "her" for "him" and "woman" for "man" when reading the Bible, "making the verse feminine", 9.)

[16] Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 12.

[17] Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 54.

be "one in Christ" on a spiritual level, but within the social order the sexes are perceived to be imbued with certain inherent biological and psychological differences, which distinguish one sex from the other and govern social relations between them.

Women, for example, are thought to be more "emotional" than men and are described as thinking "intuitively", which means that women understand things that men do not. Conversely, although men think with only one side of the brain while women use both sides of theirs, men tend to act on "logic" rather than emotion. At Action Chapel's "Women of Worth" convention (1–7 June 2003), for example, Nicholas Duncan-Williams described women as "90 per cent emotion and 10 per cent reason" and men as "90 per cent reason and 10 per cent emotion". This theme is expanded in his book, *The Incredible Power of the Praying Woman*:

> Also, it has been biologically proved that women think with both hemispheres of their brain at any given time. Women are able to cook, talk on the phone, feed the children and watch television at the same time. Men, on the other hand, think and concentrate on one thing at a time.[18]

Christie Doe Tetteh expresses a similar view: "Women can handle a lot of things. A man thinks with one side of his brain, but a woman thinks with two sides of her brain. Women are wonderful".[19] Francisca Duncan-Williams, likewise, stresses women's equal status in Christ whilst celebrating their uniqueness as "sensitive and intuitive", "life-sustainers" and "natural peacemakers", who are not dominated by "aggressive drive".[20] Whilst this seems largely to reflect the gender discourses of influential African-American evangelists such as T. D. Jakes,[21] an essentialist discourse of male and female difference, which values women primarily for their "natural" qualities of gentleness, nurture and intuition, is characteristic also of indigenous constructions of gender. This was shown in Chapter Three.

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[18] Lanham, Maryland: Pneuma Life Publishing, 2002, 6.

[19] "Women of Worth" Convention, Action Chapel, 2 June 2003.

[20] Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 18.

[21] Jakes writes: "Male and female are one in Christ. Yet they are unique, and that uniqueness is not to be tampered with. Let the male be masculine and the female feminine!" (*Woman*, 22). On the uniqueness of women, he continues: "By nature a woman is a receiver. She is not physically designed to be a giver. Her sexual and emotional fulfilment becomes somewhat dependent on the giving of her male counterpart", and while men tend to act out of what they perceive to be facts, "women tend to act out of their emotions" (*ibid.*, 23).

Given what has been said about the spiritual equality of believers—that the relationship between humans and the divine is not mediated by gender—it is interesting to note that the inherent nature of women as more emotional than men seems to grant them privileged access to God. Nicholas Duncan-Williams hints at this when he suggests that women receive "incredible results" when they channel their "intuition" into prayer, but the view is expressed more explicitly elsewhere:

> Women are emotional beings and when we come before God we come with our emotions, our hearts, our feelings. That is how we touch the heart of God. That kind of prayer brings results.[22]

The full implication, however, of what appears to be the privileging of feminine religiosity requires more analysis than can be given here and therefore is returned to at a later stage.[23] At this point, I am more concerned with the way in which beliefs about male and female difference inform the construction of gender roles within born-again Christianity, as well as the extent to which these beliefs are continuous with indigenous gender ideologies.

According to Accra's charismatic Christians, the Genesis account sanctifies the concept of gender mutuality and the inter-dependence of the sexes. When man was created, for instance, he was not "self-sufficient" and he lacked certain features that were unique to the woman. Woman was created, then, with certain feminine qualities—care, nurture, tenderness—that met a particular "need" in the man, and made him "complete".

> The primary purpose of the women in the life of the man was to meet a particular need. The man can only be effective in his responsibility of keeping and tilling the garden if he is complete and sound, so God has ordained the woman to play that vital role and meet that need in the man.
>
> Second, the woman was not created only to meet a need in the man's life but also to make the man complete.[24]

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[22] Moha Amoako, Alive Chapel women's prayer meeting, 9 May 2003.

[23] See Chapter Six.

[24] Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 15. That a man is not complete without a wife is not accepted by all. When Eastwood Anaba, founder of Broken Yoke Foundation Ministries, preached at Action Chapel, "Your husband or wife divorces you and you feel like dying…If God meant for you to have an inability to live without marriage you would have come out of the womb with your wife!", it was greeted with a resounding "Amen!".

Furthermore, woman is accorded a privileged position in God's scheme as the climax of creation:

> Providing Adam with a helper indicated that Adam was inadequate and not complete; that he had his shortcomings, imperfections, weaknesses and deficiencies. He was not self-sufficient. The presence of the woman, who is the crown, was to make him whole or complete. God crowned his creation of man, Adam, with a woman called Eve. Therefore a crown signifies completion, conclusion, perfection, the finale.[25]

The primary purpose of a woman, then, is to be a "helpmeet" to a man (Genesis 2: 18). This does not mean that women, necessarily, are to be subservient to men and most believers, male and female, are keen to draw attention to Eve's creation from the rib of Adam, as opposed to his feet. Woman, therefore, is meant to stand at the side of man and is not to be trodden under foot. However, women are expected to submit to their husbands in marriage, a concept that is familiar both to Christianity and to indigenous traditions of conjugality.

The Concept of Submission

> Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church . . . Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything (Ephesians 5: 22–4).

It is this requirement, for wives to submit to their husbands, which is frequently alluded to in African feminist critiques of the new churches' conservative approach to women.[26] However, it may be worth pausing

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[25] Opoku-Acheampong, *The Essence*, 53.

[26] The Regional Programme Manager for ABANTU For Development—an African NGO working in gender and development—for example, expressed concern that if women in born-again churches are taught to call their husbands "master" and "lord" they have little power to negotiate decision-making within the marriage (interview, 7 August 2003). Dr Esi Sutherland (Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana) was critical of the charismatic churches' insistence on male headship (interview, 25 July 2003), and Dr Audrey Gadzepko (School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana) described the churches' views on women in marriage as "Victorian" (interview, 15 July 2003). Both Dr Sutherland and Dr Gadzepko expressed disappointment at the number of charismatic Christians on the university campus and blamed the new churches for the lack of radicalism among female students, which Esi Sutherland in particular had hoped would be greater in the current generation than her own. The social context within which such critiques are made is complicated, however. Esi Sutherland's own daughter is a born-again, for example, and at the Gender Studies

here to consider, in a little more detail, how the concept of "submission" is understood in the context of not only charismatic discourses on gender, but also broader charismatic concerns. First, in comparison with fundamentalist Christianity, where ideally women are expected to submit to men at home, in the church, and in society,[27] female submission within the charismatic churches applies only to women in marriage.[28] Second, as described above, even within the marital relationship women retain their spiritual independence, which creates some tension between the demand on women to obey their husbands and the call for believers, male and female, to submit to Christ.[29]

However, in this regard, the born-again churches do not differ significantly from Ghana's mainline churches, or indeed the African instituted churches, which tend to share this somewhat conservative approach to women and the family.[30] I would argue, therefore, that what distinguishes charismatic Christianity from other types of Christianity,

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and Human Rights Documentation Centre (a resource facility for NGOs and other women's rights groups)—where a project manager was complaining that the new churches' teaching on the submission of women in marriage is contrary to the gender sensitisation projects of NGOs (interview, 6 August 2003)—a female administrator was busy surfing a dating agency website for born-again singles.

[27] Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Bible Believers: Fundamentalists in the Modern World*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987, 125. Ammerman notes also, however, that "such comprehensive male authority does not go completely unchallenged", either in the church (126) or in the home (134–46).

[28] Kenneth Hagin writes: "That's where many have missed it. They've made it a man-and-woman proposition—when it is not. It is a husband-and-wife proposition" (*Woman Question*, 65). See also Jakes, *Woman*, 167; Darko, *Womanhood*, 106–11.

[29] Again, Hagin calls on the examples of Sarah (Genesis 21: 10–12) and Abigail (1 Samuel 25: 32) to illustrate situations in which women should disobey their husbands in order to obey God's laws: "Abigail was a wise woman whose husband was a fool. (There are some cases like that)" (*Woman Question*, 20). He continues: "*A wife must be true to her convictions even at the cost of losing her husband if he will not endure her true devotion to Christ*" (italics original, 25). As suggested in Chapter Two, the call for all believers to submit themselves to Christ has implications also for men and the deconstruction of hegemonic masculinities (Gill, "Like a Veil to Cover Them"). This point is returned to in Chapter Six.

[30] David Dartey (General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana, 1989–98) writes: "The woman who knows when to smile, when to say yes, when to say no, when to make a contribution to a discussion, and when to keep quiet, wins the affection of her husband" (*How to Make Your Marriage Work*, Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990, 12). See the opinions of other mainline church representatives: "Husbands must love their wives and wives must submit to their husbands out of reverence for the Lord" (Fred Deegbe, *Building a Christian Home (Lessons from the Home of Isaac and Rebekah)*, Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2000, 26), and "A committed Christian would be submissive to her husband in spite of her accomplishments" (Opanin Kwadwo Kyere, *Choosing Your Life Partner & The Place of Sex in Marriage*, Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1990, 30).

on this point, is the extent to which female "submission" is linked to the concept of "success".[31] In the born-again churches, the submission of women in their domestic relationships is presented, not simply as a feminine virtue, though it is this, but also as a strategy for achieving individual success.

This is demonstrated in the choice of the biblical figures commonly used to illustrate the virtue of women who submit. Esther (Esther 2: 4–18) is a particular favourite. In some charismatic interpretations of the story, she submits to the will of her uncle Mordecai, pleases King Ahasuerus, and in place of Vashti—the queen who loses her royal position through "insolence and pride"[32]—the slave girl, Esther, comes "out of obscurity to become a queen".[33] In the end, of course, Esther's submission gives way to defiance as she disobeys the King in order to save the nation of Israel. Another favourite is Hannah (1 Samuel 1: 1–19), who is not only barren but also has to face insults from her rival in a polygamous marriage. However, because Hannah remains "meek, quiet and wise" throughout her troubles,[34] she is rewarded by both her husband—who gives her "a double portion" of gifts—and God—who grants her a son, Samuel.[35]

> Hannah was an amazing wife and a woman of great virtue. Her gracious attitude, her soft tongue, calm outlook, and forgiving spirit marvelled Elkanah. I believe that he even knew in his heart that if he had exercised a little patience and had put his trust in God the way Hannah did, he would not have needed to marry Peninnah who was now a piercing thorn in Hannah's flesh.[36]

In Francisca Duncan-Williams' interpretation of this story, not only does Hannah receive material reward—gifts and a child—for her submission, but her husband, in marrying a second wife, is made to look like rather a fool. It is not difficult to see why this interpretation of the biblical narrative might be popular with many of Ghana's urban women,

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[31] The concept of "success" in charismatic Christianity is discussed in Chapter Two.

[32] Darko, *Womanhood*, 81. Christie Doe Tetteh refers to Queen Vashti's "arrogance and lack of discipline" (*Celebrating Womanhood*, 74).

[33] Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 69.

[34] Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 21.

[35] Pregnancy as a reward for the maintenance of feminine virtue in the face of adversity is also a common theme in Ghanaian and Nigerian films, many of which echo Pentecostal-type narratives.

[36] Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 22.

particularly those who are married to men who maintain polygamous or "outside" wives. The important point, though, is that, in contrast to earlier forms of Pentecostal religion, in which women were promised reward in heaven for their dutiful submission, in Accra's born-again churches, female submission is rewarded in this world with children, wealth, and status. In other words, as suggested, it is presented as a strategy for achieving personal success.

Aside from biblical figures like Hannah and Esther, the position of pastors' wives also illustrates the sometimes complex relationship between the concepts of "submission" and "success". The wives of charismatic ministers tend to present themselves as the epitome of selfless service, submission and self-sacrifice, in relation not only to their husbands but also to their husbands' congregations. The Nigerian, 'Funke Nelson Adetuberu, in the preface to her book *Tears of Ministers' Wives*, for example, writes:

> This is just my own little contribution to all Ministers' wives and friends, showing the goodness of God in ministry so that they may know their secret tears are seen and heard by the Lord and to every of [sic] their grief and burden there is a solution. I owe all things to King Jesus and to my husband who is indeed my "lord" and who has released me to fulfil my destiny in God.[37]

This perception of pastors' wives is reflected also by the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association, which was founded by Francisca Duncan-Williams as a support group and training ground for the wives of charismatic ministers.[38] On one level, the leading figures of the

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[37] 'Funke Nelson Adetuberu, *Tears of Ministers' Wives*, Ibadan, Nigeria: By Living Faith Publications, 1998, no page numbers. Prophet 'Funke was a guest preacher at Solid Rock's 2002 women's convention (21–4 August).

[38] The Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association used to meet on one Saturday each month, but in 2003 this changed to a quarterly three-day retreat. It is difficult to assess how many women are involved with the Association, but it is open to any woman who is married to a pastor or engaged in ministry herself. At its annual retreat (17–19 July 2003) about 100 women, representing at least ten churches, were present. Though founded by Mama Francisca, the Association effectively is run by Rev Cindy Nortey and Rev Rose Nyonator, both of whom have a close association with Mama Francisca.

It is likely that Francisca Duncan-Williams modelled the Association on the numerous secular wives associations, which are common in Ghana. At the Women's Day (29 July) of the 2003 Emancipation celebrations ("Panafest") in Cape Coast, for example, a significant number of participants were members of a wives' association. Among those represented were, the Prison Officers' Wives Association, the Fire Service Wives Association, and the Police Officers' Wives Association. The predominance of these

Association seem strongly to support the view that the primary role of a woman is to be a "helpmeet" to her husband. The motto of the group is "Helpmeet! By his side!". In August 2002, the Association hosted the recording of a television chat show programme, *Love Web*, for two episodes on "Conflict Resolution in Marriage" and "Marriage and Career Women". As a guest speaker, Francisca Duncan-Williams asserted the view of the Pastors' Wives Association that women are helpmeets first and foremost: "Whatever we are doing as women, it is not to make money or to be famous, but to be a helpmeet".[39] The Vice President of the Association, Rose Nyonator, echoed this view on the Association's weekly radio show, *Parenting* on Choice FM, though she adopted a more overtly strategic tone:

> We are not strong so we have to use our wisdom to make things work. Once you submit and show weakness, a man will do what you want—he will show you affection as the weaker vessel. If you try to be macho, he will treat you like a man.[40]

In the public discourses of some of these pastors' wives, the concept of female submission extends also to sexual relations between married couples. Preaching on Proverbs 31: 10 ("A Good Wife") at Action Chapel's "Women of Worth" convention, Rose Nyonator told a group of women attending a marriage workshop:

> Your husband is your Abraham. Bless your Abraham. Your attitude to your husband should be one that makes him stand: "I bless this woman". That is all you need from him. All you need from your Abraham is a blessing. And you are closing the shop! The shop must be open from today! If you close the shop the marriage is over. If you have washed and cleaned, and you have not provided that one . . . you've done nothing.[41]

Sexual relations between husband and wife is what Mama Rose refers to in this extract as "the shop", which is not an uncommon term used in Ghana to describe the "services" provided by a woman to a man in marriage. The advice to women to submit their bodies to their husbands—to "keep the shop open"—may be as much a reflection of local gender dynamics as it is a Christian-inspired belief. When the

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associations illustrates that the identification of women with their husband's social position is a widespread phenomenon and not limited to the born-again churches.

[39] Clearly this view met with the approval of the male presenter: "When you hear so much about women's position it is nice to hear such balanced teaching".

[40] 21 September 2002.

[41] 3 June 2003.

Scottish wife of a Nigerian minister shared the guest spot with Mama Francisca on *Love Web*, Rev June Ahuru joked that if her husband upset her she may cook and clean for him, but "the shop closes at midnight!". Perhaps speaking from personal experience and certainly reflecting a commonly held perception of men's sexuality by women in Ghana, Francisca Duncan-Williams retorted: "If the shop is closed, he will go to another". This viewed seemed to be shared by the male television presenter who, confirming the suspicions of the female audience, laughed, "men love to shop!".

On a more serious note, this position on female sexuality has some interesting implications for the born-again belief in the spiritual equality of believers, because there are instances in which a woman's spiritual life is mediated by her duties to her husband. In an interview with the head pastor of Solid Rock Chapel, for example, Rev Cecilia told me that during programmes of prayer and fasting she had to seek the permission of her husband to fast because she lacks the energy for sexual relations during this time.[42] In a similar case, where the spiritual position of female pastors is affected by their marital status, a Nigerian minister from "Daughters of Destiny" explained that before coming to Ghana she felt it was her duty to visit her husband, living a day's journey away, to seek his permission to travel to Accra.[43] In contrast, when I spoke to a male pastor about the conflict between his work as a minister and his role as father and husband, Pastor Courage of Alive Chapel told me that, though the hours were difficult for his wife, she just "has to understand":

> Some of the time she complains, but I say no. You see, you have to understand this is the nature of the job… Someone wants you to go and take care of something at that particular time and you can't say I want to go and enquire from my wife and then come back. No, you see, I have to go, so she's made aware of the fact that some of the times I might not come home early.[44]

However, despite all the inequalities that this implies, female ministers and the wives of male pastors exercise considerable authority, both within their husbands' churches and within more female-oriented

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[42] Interview, 30 August 2003.

[43] Interview, 6 May 2003. The "Daughters of Destiny" (from Redemption Ministries, Port Harcourt, Nigeria) were in Accra to host the "Women of Destiny" convention (1–4 May 2003).

[44] Interview, 30 June 2003.

organisations such as the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association. For many of these women, the submission discourse is largely rhetorical; in practice women leaders enjoy an independence and personal status far beyond that which their public rhetoric implies. By employing the rhetoric of submission they avoid any perceived threat to church authority, which is dominated by men, and they protect their own relationships with the men upon whom they depend. By this I mean that, in most cases, the churches follow the pattern of local power relations, discussed in Chapter Three, in which women tend to access power through their relationships with men.[45]

Francisca Duncan-Williams is a prime example of this. In March 2001, amid rumours that their marriage was in trouble, it was announced that Nicholas Duncan-Williams and his wife had divorced. After nine months of separation, which Francisca spent away from the church in Ghana in the United States, the couple were reconciled and later remarried. In her account of this period, Francisca Duncan-Williams is not uncritical of her husband,[46] but she adopts a somewhat submissive stance and attributes the break-up of the marriage to her own misunderstanding of the term "helpmeet":

> I realized that the way I was looking at things was wrong. I was seeing my husband from a certain angle, when as a helpmeet, my duty was to follow his vision and not the other way round. If I am a helpmeet as God's word says, then I should rather help him and not expect him to submit to my dictates.[47]

Francisca Duncan-Williams, it seems, is an example of a woman whose access to power is mediated, to a certain extent, through her relationship to a man, in this case her husband, and she therefore employs the rhetoric of submission in order to protect her own position. With the concept of "success", which includes marital success, so strong in the charismatic movement, divorce could be seen as failure and may have an adverse impact on the couple concerned, especially a prestigious

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[45] The exception to this, of course, would appear to be Rev Christie Doe Tetteh, though as it will be shown, to some extent she does depend on her connection with the "big men" of the charismatic movement, especially Benson Idahosa, for her authority. This is explored further in Chapter Five.

[46] Francisca Duncan-Williams, *Reflections: the Untold Story*, Accra: Action Faith Publications, 2002. It is as an absentee father, rather than poor husband, that Nicholas Duncan-Williams attracts criticism from his wife in her account of the divorce.

[47] *Ibid.*, 54.

couple like Nicholas and Francisca Duncan-Williams whose popularity may depend, in part, on their ability to project an image of Christian success.[48] By adopting the position that she does, Francisca receives public endorsement from her husband, the bishop, and retains, consequently, her considerable status within the charismatic movement. As with the story of Hannah, public endorsement sometimes comes in the form of gifts. During the "Women of Worth" convention, for example, Nicholas Duncan-Williams told the congregation that he was going to give his wife a brand new Mercedes Benz. At this announcement, Mama Francisca danced around the stage and the women in the congregation clapped and cheered wildly.

Another important point here is that by submitting, or at least appearing to submit, to one man—their husbands—pastors' wives, like Francisca Duncan-Williams, put themselves in positions of authority that require female-like submission from other men.[49] This seems to be a fair observation also of women such as Moha Amoako, Rita Korankye-Ankrah and Vivien Agyin-Asare who, through their marriages to some of Accra's most popular pastors and prophets, are among the charismatic movement's lead female figures. I am leaving aside for now the case of Christie Doe Tetteh, which is more complex.

The important point is that the churches' emphasis on success and victory is seen here to influence even the most conservative of theologies—the role of women in the home and in the family. For example, in the same sermon quoted above, in which women are advised to submit to their husbands sexually, Rose Nyonator also assured them that whatever they did for their husbands, "God will give you double".[50] In other words, women who adhere to expectations of domesticity can expect to be rewarded, not in heaven, but in this lifetime with wealth,

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[48] Francisca Duncan-Williams also defends her husband's position, upon which hers rather depends. As noted in the Introduction, Nicholas Duncan-Williams' personal problems may have resulted in a decline in attendance figures. The evening of the book launch for *Reflections* (17 August 2002) was very interesting in this regard. Francisca Duncan-Williams was uncharacteristically silent throughout the proceedings and most of the speakers emphasised the virtue of her husband's reconciliatory efforts. It was a public relations exercise, of sorts, designed to boost the personal image of Nicholas Duncan-Williams.

[49] Men, especially male pastors, also may appear to submit to the wives of bishops and leaders only in order to maintain their own positions in the church.

[50] Refrains such as "double for your trouble" and "for your shame God will give you double" are commonly heard in women's meetings, and are a reference, in part, to 1 Samuel 1: 5 ("to Hannah he gave a double portion").

status, and Mercedes Benzes. Whilst actual rewards—particularly of the sort enjoyed by the likes of Francisca Duncan-Williams—are well beyond the experiences and expectations of most Ghanaian women, the discursive implications of the belief are significant. It introduces tension between an ideology of gender complementarity—in which femininity is identified with self-sacrificial service—and a concept of individualism that promotes women's personal prosperity and success. It is this that distinguishes charismatic Christianity from other types of Christianity on the subject of women and the family. Tension between individualism and women's familial roles is illustrated also in charismatic discourses on mothering and fertility.

Mothering and Symbols of Fertility

The importance of mothering, both biological and social, as a symbol of African womanhood is well known and has contributed in some way to the shaping of gender roles within African expressions of Christianity.[51] Consistent with local gender norms, motherhood is a prominent concept within the gender discourses of the charismatic churches. Most female pastors or pastors' wives are affectionately called "Mama" or "Mummy" by their congregants, male and female, with key figures such as Francisca Duncan-Williams, Moha Amoako, Vivien Agyin-Asare, and Christie Doe Tetteh, among others, described as "the mothers" of their respective churches.[52]

Born-again responses to biological motherhood and fertility are informed by the dominance of the belief in success and prosperity, which dictates that every believer, as a child of God, is entitled to prosper and therefore to have children. Barrenness, like poverty, tends to be seen as an indication of sin, or at least some lack of faith in the power of the Holy Spirit. In the context of prosperity beliefs, Genesis 1: 27

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[51] See Joan Burke, *These Catholic Sisters are all* Mamas*! Towards the Inculturation of the Sisterhood in Africa, an Ethnographic Study*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2001; and Carrie Pemberton, *Circle Thinking: African Women Theologians in Dialogue with the West*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003.

[52] 'Funke Nelson Adetuberu writes: "you need to see every member of that family (your husband's church) over which your husband is the father and you are the mother, as though they are your own family" (*Tears*, 26). On Mothers' Day the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association's radio show wished all pastors' wives a happy Mothers' Day, with special messages for "Mama Francisca" and Mrs Kufuor, "the Mother of the Nation" (10 May 2003).

("Be fruitful and multiply") is interpreted to mean that it is God's will for women to have many children:

> God commanded us to have many children. If you believe in the Word of God to be fruitful it will happen. You won't have any choice but to have many children. You are obligated by God to have many children.[53]

This interpretation of the command to be fruitful and multiply is seemingly confirmed by the God-given female anatomy: "The fact that God put a womb in a female implied that every woman, all things being equal, should bring forth children".[54] Anything that disrupts the divinely ordained biological order of things is an aberration:

> Declare open wombs! It is the will of God. Woman was made biologically with a womb that was made to be filled. Don't listen to what the doctors say.[55]

Both social and biological concepts of motherhood, then, figure prominently in charismatic discourses on women. African feminists have often employed images of mothering and motherhood to symbolise the African concept of "community", which is intended to distinguish African approaches to feminism from what is sometimes perceived as the Western-style individualism of European and North American feminism.[56] Whilst some writers have highlighted the importance of the concepts of "family" and "community" within the born-again churches,[57] of which the characterisation of pastors' wives as "mothers" is a part, I want to highlight a slightly different aspect of the emphasis on mothering. Namely, the frequent use of symbols of fertility and childbirth to express the more individualistic concerns of female believers, which again demonstrates the tension in charismatic gender discourses between women's social obligations and their individual trajectories.

When a charismatic preacher talks of pregnancy and childbirth he or she speaks, not just of babies, but of spiritual pregnancy and the birthing of miracles and personal destinies. At women's prayer meetings it is common to hear female congregants told that they are "pregnant with destiny" and that they must "bear down in the spirit".

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[53] Moha Amoako, Alive Chapel women's prayer meeting, 9 May 2003.
[54] Darko, *Womanhood*, 29.
[55] Rev Robert Ampiah-Kwofi, Action Chapel women's prayer meeting, 21 April 2003.
[56] Mikell, "Introduction", 8–9.
[57] See Chapter Two.

Prophetess Deborah Jones, an African-American guest preacher at Action Chapel's "Women of Worth" convention, based her whole sermon on this theme:

> God is going to give you a double portion this morning. He knows spiritual wombs may have been closed but the Holy Spirit is opening everything that may have been shut. Your spiritual baby is coming forth…In the realm of the spirit many of you are pregnant. I don't care what it looks like, keep on pushing! "It", whatever your "it" is, is going to happen this morning. I'm speaking prophetically as a whole, so when I say you're coming out, I mean you are all coming out. You're coming out pregnant this morning because God favours you. Right now, spiritually, I see you all pregnant and by the time I come back [to Ghana] you'll have had that baby.[58]

Prophetess Jones was not talking about the birthing of children but the birthing of miracles, prophecies and destinies. When charismatic Christians quote Isaiah 42: 14 ("I will travail like a woman in labour"), as they frequently do, the instruction is not to labour in order to give life to others but to labour for the sake of one's own God-given destiny. These fertility symbols represent the birthing of a new self.

Breaking with the Past: A Transformation of the Self

In their study of religious thought and political practice in Africa, Ellis and ter Haar suggest that "religious action is a form of self-fashioning",[59] insofar as religious activity "begins with a reconstitution of the self as a moral subject".[60] Whilst moral change—in the sense of moral behaviour—may not be the defining feature of the conversion process within charismatic Christianity,[61] images of change, renewal, and transformation are at the core of the movement and critical, therefore, to understanding its appeal. Crucially, it offers people the possibility of change. While this change may not be permanent, the

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[58] 4 June 2003.
[59] Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds*, 15.
[60] *Ibid.*, 42.
[61] The popularity of born-again Christianity does little to challenge the definition of African religiosity given in Chapter One, which noted that moral values do not tend to derive from religious beliefs in African societies, although religion does play a part in moral practice (Gyeke, *African Cultural Values*, 56–7). The relationship between born-again Christianity and moral change in the context of gendered modes of behaviour is addressed in Chapter Six.

possibility of a personal transformation is continually offered to those who desire it:

> I am a new creation; behold my old self is gone. Heavenly Father, you have adorned me with a new and everlasting sense of worth. I am born again and freed from all mediocrity, poverty, filth, and oppression. My life is now hidden in Christ Jesus.[62]

The concept of change and the transformation of one's present situation is a key element of the born-again message for both male and female believers. This is often expressed in established phrases that every congregant recognises and responds to: "From tonight, you life will never be the same!"; "This is your season of fruitfulness"; "Tonight is the night! Walk into your new season", and so on. Phrases like this may be repeated many times during a single service and never fail to rouse even the most subdued audience. The change may be immediate: "It doesn't matter how long you have waited, tonight is the night of your freedom…Someone shout: 'I'm coming out!' ".[63] Or, it may be the promise of a better life and a new self:

> God can take what man rejected and use it for something good…Don't allow the devil to suppress you; arise and know the crown of glory is waiting for you. When the devil reminds you of your past, remind him of your future. He only sees one side of our life.[64]

Or:

> For your shame God will give you a double blessing. What you are going through now is temporal. It is a matter of time, but it will soon be over. It doesn't matter what song you are singing now, but you will sing a new song. Because this is your season of fruitfulness. God will give you that thing 1,000 times more.[65]

In discourses on women, the concept of transformation is often expressed in terms of a break with a past characterised by abuse, rejection and pain; and in women's meetings, messages of renewal tend to focus extensively, though not exclusively, on women's relationships with men. Speaking at Alive Chapel's Wednesday morning deliverance service,

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[62] From "prayer for salvation" in Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 45.

[63] Nicholas Duncan-Williams, Action Chapel "Women of Worth" convention, 1 June 2003.

[64] Pastor-in-charge of the London branch, Alive Chapel women's Friday prayer meeting, 23 May 2003.

[65] Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 92–3.

which is attended mostly by women, Pastor Anointing preached on a common theme:

> You think there is no hope, but God is with you…When a woman is rejected [by a man], God will not reject you. When a woman is discouraged, God will not discourage you. Whatever anybody tells you, there is hope for you.[66]

Sometimes abuse by men is criticised more explicitly. This is what an assistant pastor to Dora Tackie-Yarboi of Victory Bible Church International told a group of single mothers at Action Chapel's "Women of Worth" convention:

> Single mothers, you are born again. It is new—you are a virgin. Let men know; don't hide the child. If you are alone, struggle hard; don't blame anybody. Whatever a woman is determined to do, she can do it…Let him go; that stupid man. You won't follow that bastard! I'm not ruining men, but sometimes, the pain you go through…[67]

Christie Doe Tetteh expresses a similar sentiment: "Everybody has a past…No matter what you have done with your life and how men have abused you, God has a purpose for your life".[68] On this subject of making a break with the past, then, preachers often seem to appeal to women's negative memories of their relationships with men as a contrast to the happy and prosperous future awaiting them with Christ, not in heaven but in this lifetime. Christie Doe Tetteh continues:

> The only thing you need to do is to forget about the past and press on towards the mark…Beloved whether you have a sordid past or not, you are a Queen…Nobody may know you today but when your season of visitation comes, just one strike and your name will be known across the continent of the world.[69]

The story of Rahab the prostitute (Joshua 2:1–24) is commonly told to illustrate that a woman with an unsavoury or abusive past can still be used as an instrument of God. More importantly perhaps, born-again interpretations of this story emphasise that a prostitute also became the richest woman in the city. This leads to a slightly different aspect of the charismatic discourse on personal transformation and the importance

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[66] (Translated from the original Twi), 30 April 2003.
[67] Workshop for single women, 2 June 2003.
[68] Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 104.
[69] *Ibid.*, 104–5.

of breaking with the past. It recalls the story of Esther, the slave girl who became a queen. According to the prosperity teaching of the churches—described in Chapter Two—any woman, no matter her status, can become a queen. The personal narratives of female ministers and pastors' wives, which share a common story of the journey from poverty to riches, illustrate this,[70] and possibly function as sources of inspiration for other women. The narratives of Rita Korankye-Ankrah, Rose Nyonator and Christie Doe Tetteh share many similar features, and are quoted here:

> People say I'm blessed. I've lived in one room, no curtains. When I was pregnant with my first born, I couldn't afford a balanced diet. I had to return to my parent's house for four years. We didn't even have a gas cooker. Tomorrow you will not live in somebody's house! Sorrow is only for the night. Today you are crying…God will wipe away your tears. Now as I go home and the security men are opening the gates, I ask myself…Listen to me, your story will change. You too will travel, you too will be a landlady.[71]

> God has called me to tell poor people…I have seen the father of poverty; that is my light. This God can take David from following the sheep to put him on the throne. Today, through the Pastors' Wives Association, I am talking on television. No shoe, remember? No money, no children, nothing to encourage me. Now if I want to sit at the back of this place, no one will allow me because God has raised me from the back![72]

> Yesterday I gave away a lot of shoes. One time, I didn't have. In 1982 I had one shoe. In 1992 there was a fire and all my shoes were burnt…one shoe left. So you see, shoes don't scare me![73]
>
> I'm telling you this…me! I used to eat from the dustbin. I used to wear second-hand clothes everyday. I changed! [Amen!] So you have to change. The same God in the US can bless you in Ghana.[74]

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[70] The exceptions to this are Francisca Duncan-Williams and Moha Amoako, who describe their journey from comfortable, middle-class childhoods to marital poverty prior to their husbands' success in ministry.

[71] Rita Korankye-Ankrah, Action Chapel "Women of Worth" convention, 2 June 2003.

[72] Rose Nyonator, Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association, "Retreat for Promotion", 18 July 2003. Rev Rose repeated this story at the "Women of Worth" convention: "God is planning to do something new. If you knew my history, you would know that the words in my mouth are not heavy—I'm talking about my life!" (4 June 2003).

[73] Christie Doe Tetteh, "Women of Worth" convention, 2 June 2003.

[74] Christie Doe Tetteh, Solid Rock, Wednesday Hotline Service, 2 July 2003. Her reference to the United States is important and it is discussed in Chapter Five.

Through personal narratives like these, women in born-again congregations are encouraged to believe that their lives can change just as dramatically, because every woman has been created a "winner" and every woman controls her own "destiny". It is not clear from these narratives whether the success stories they relate are the consequence of self-belief or divine intervention. In fact, the distinction between individual agency and God's will in charismatic attitudes to "destiny" is often rather ambiguous. An address by Moha Amoako, in which concepts of self-determination and predestination seem to converge, is typical of born-again preaching on this theme:

> If you say, "today, no more!", it is your will, your will. You yourself determines what happens to your life. Anything you want to do, you have to see it; see what you want to be and move towards it. God will protect you and push you forward. Before God created Moha he knew who she was going to be. God already knows who you are before he dropped you into your mother's womb. It is not up to me to ask God for what he has already made me to be. It is up to me to walk into my destiny. You cannot change what you are willing to tolerate. If you have no vision, God will not change your life. You are the author of your own book, of your own life. You are the author of your own life. It is up to you to make the best of it. Start to make an effort and the Lord will make an increase in your life, and others will see you as different. Don't be satisfied with where you are. Be a woman of destiny and a woman of worth![75]

However, ambiguities notwithstanding, this discourse of change and renewal, and of success and victory, is significant in the way that it creates a public space in which a woman's right to be a "winner" is declared and acknowledged:

> Women of worth, you can never fail!! You are born to win! You are born for such a time as today. You are created to be above only and not beneath. You are the head and not the tail. Rise up in virtue![76]

The emphasis on victory also shows—and the personal narratives of born-again women preachers confirm this—that success is not dependent on either social status or gender.

It is not difficult to see why a religious discourse that emphasises individual "agency" and control over personal destinies appeals, particularly to women who often feel that their lives are being directed by

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[75] Alive Chapel women's fellowship, 25 August 2003.
[76] Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 41.

events beyond their control. In charismatic Christianity, gender-neutral "individualism" is prioritised in a way not seen in Ghana's other Christian traditions. That said, born-again discourses do recognise that women's life choices are limited by the constraints of "tradition" and local gender norms.

Breaking with the Past: A Social Critique

As suggested, charismatic Christianity introduces an element of individualism into the religious discourse, which has particular significance for women because, as others have noted,[77] it enables women to renegotiate some of the cultural practices and expectations of traditional life that impede their lives and limit their choices. The churches under consideration here, as well as the Ghanaian charismatic movement more broadly, are quite critical of traditional practices and attitudes towards women, which "devalue the African woman"[78] and make her feel "like a second-class citizen or inferior to men".[79] The practices that attract particular criticism include widowhood rites, genital cutting, polygamy and the trokosi system,[80] which are said to "undermine the pride and confidence of the African woman".[81]

Interestingly, many of the concerns expressed by charismatic writers and preachers parallel the concerns and objectives of state feminism and reflect some of the issues raised by the Women in Development (WID) project, discussed in the previous chapter. Girl-child education, for example—a cornerstone of the gender development discourse—is hailed as an absolute necessity for women to "assess their worth" and "be able to compete with their male folk".[82] Without education, the girl-child learns to internalise certain "myths" and "misconceptions",

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[77] Marshall, "Power in the Name of Jesus"; Martin, "From Pre- to Post-Modernity"; Martin, *Pentecostalism*; and Brusco, "The Reformation of Machismo". For further discussion, see Chapter Two.

[78] Opoku-Acheampong, *The Essence*, 26.

[79] Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 56.

[80] Trokosi describes the system in which a girl is given to a fetish shrine to atone for an offence perceived to have been committed by a member of her family. She is expected to serve the shrine's priest in what amounts to sexual slavery. It has attracted considerable media attention since NGOs began to campaign actively against the practice (Mark Wisdom, *The Trokosi System*, Accra: Mercury Press, 2001).

[81] Opoku-Acheampong, *The Essence*, 26.

[82] *Ibid.*, 33.

which prevent women from ever becoming "high flyers" in society.[83] One writer even advocates the telling of "herstory" to overcome social stereotypes about women.[84]

Much of the inequality in Ghanaian society is attributed to customary law, which is blamed for giving women an "inferiority complex" and making it difficult for the African woman "to take her rightful place in society".[85] Young girls, it is suggested, should be educated on their constitutional rights, in accordance with the work of institutions like the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), which are praised for their action against the violation of women's rights.[86] In this regard, the gender discourse of the charismatic churches is probably the most overtly political aspect of their theology.

Some born-again figures are as critical of gender politics in religious life as they are of gender inequality in secular life, and other Christian denominations sometimes receive criticism for their attitudes towards women. The African instituted churches, for example, as well as the older Pentecostal denominations, are rebuked for their discrimination against women during menstruation,[87] whilst the mainline churches are accused of excluding women from leadership positions. Christie Doe Tetteh blames this on the mainline churches' misinterpretation of Paul's letters, "whose remarks were prompted by circumstances entirely foreign to churches in our generation".[88] In accordance with the charismatic belief in spiritual equality described above, the male leaders of the mainline churches are criticised for transferring the authority they should have in the home to the leadership structures of the church.

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[83] Darko, *Womanhood*, 17. She continues: "It is because of these problems, needs and attitudes that I offer this volume to help liberate us and see ourselves as partners in running the affairs of this life and not as appendages to men".

[84] *Ibid.*, 18.

[85] Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 56. (See also, Darko, *Womanhood*, 15.)

[86] Opoku-Acheampong, *The Essence*, 27. She notes also that the representation of women at decision-making levels is too low: "I believe if godly women take part in the decisions of the country, they could ensure that negative and outmoded customs and laws that affect women, children and our society are repealed. The godly woman will thus help influence the formation of gender sensitivity of policy implementation. This will help enhance the role of women in public life in the country" (28).

[87] *Ibid.*, 26.

[88] Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 33. Compare this with Kenneth Hagin's interpretation of Paul in *Woman Question*, which is repeated, almost verbatim, in Darko, *Womanhood*, 106–11.

Contained within this critique of Ghanaian gender politics lies a challenge to born-again women to stand up and assert their rights. Women, it is declared, have been "put down for too long" and it is time for them to take their rightful place in the church and in society. This was the topic of two sermons called "Go for Gold!" and "No More Excuses!", which were delivered by Christie Doe Tetteh at the national women's convention of Word Miracle Church International. She exhorted women to come out of the boxes that have been created by men and by tradition, and by the limitations women place on themselves. Women, she preached, have to learn to break the barriers within their own minds:

> You have looked down on yourself for too long. You know that you have been caged. You have to come out of that cage before you can break barriers. We are afraid of so many things: the barrier of religion, the barrier of tradition, the barrier of family, the barrier of class. We are breaking it! Anything that made you afraid, I have come to tell you, go for gold![89]

Whilst this type of theologising operates on a number of levels, including a spiritualised one,[90] the gender discourses of the born-again churches, as they have been outlined here, do at least complicate somewhat the suggestion that these churches are concerned, almost exclusively, with female domesticity and the reassertion of a Christian domesticating project.

The "Real" Woman

As shown in Chapter Three, at different periods in Ghanaian history attempts have frequently been made to define proper womanhood by stipulating the social and familial roles appropriate for women. This

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[89] Miracle Ladies national convention, Word Miracle Church, 28–9 August 2002.

[90] This is discussed in some depth in Chapter Six, where the significance of these gender discourses is explored in the context of the broader charismatic concern with spiritual warfare, but it may be appropriate to give an example here. The social position of women and the inequality they experience are attributed very often to the enmity between the woman and the devil, which is believed to have unleashed a spiritual force at variance with the prosperity of women. This means that an evangelist like Evelyn Obeng Darko, who uses UN statistics and data from the Beijing conference to make her case about sex discrimination in Africa, can also attribute these statistics to "the deception of the devil" and the devil's "continuous war against womanhood" (*Womanhood*, 42–6).

has been particularly evident during times of social stress, such as the colonial and nationalist periods. In this regard, the born-again movement shares something in common with the likes of Nkrumah and the European missionaries: the apparent desire to define Ghanaian womanhood. This is evident in the titles of the women's conventions that feature in this book. These include: "The Real Woman", "Women of Worth", "Women of Destiny", "Women of the Word", "Women of Excellence", and "Women in Higher Places". These titles imply that the churches have some concept of what makes a woman "real" as opposed to "unreal", or what distinguishes a woman of "the Word" from a woman of "the world"—a distinction drawn by Christie Doe Tetteh at Solid Rock's "Women of the Word" convention.[91] It has been established that womanhood is not defined solely in terms of domesticity, but below I want to consider in more detail how the churches define women's public roles.

It was suggested above—and in Chapter Five it is argued in more detail—that women in the charismatic churches access power primarily through their relationships with men. However, on one level at least, born-again Christianity does seem to challenge the assumption that women are defined primarily in terms of their relationships with men. Women are encouraged, for example, to aim for personal success and not to judge themselves on their marital status but to accept themselves as a child of God. "In fact, you don't need a man or a Mrs title to make you somebody, because God has already made you somebody!".[92] This view is endorsed by Francisca Duncan-Williams:

> Woman, It does not take your union with a man to be a complete person. Until you understand this truth, the world system will cause you to devalue your worth. I want you to appreciate the truth that marriage is not what makes you complete.[93]

The importance of personal achievement was a key theme in Rose Nyonator's preaching at the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry's "Retreat for Promotion" at the University of Ghana, Legon:

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[91] 21–4 August 2002.

[92] Opoku-Acheampong, *The Essence*, 38. She quotes "a famous Dallas businesswoman" to support her view: "You are somebody because God never wastes His time to make nobodies".

[93] Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 14. She later qualifies this by saying that if a woman is married she is bound to her husband "body and soul" (*ibid.*).

> God has sent me to tell you that you must aspire to make a name… We women have aspirations: we want to get married to a rich man and have twenty children for him, let him bring in money to us in the house… that is by the way in my ministry! When I get to heaven I'm not going to say how many children I had; I'm going to speak on my ministry. I was born to lead.
>
> Look, the fact that you are married does not stop you being of use to God. When you give account in heaven, you are not going to just say: "I was married". There is something you were called to do![94]

In her sermons to the women's fellowship at Alive Chapel, Moha Amoako frequently implied that a "woman of worth" was more than a wife and a mother:

> Be a woman of destiny and a woman of worth! Let your life count for something on earth… Stand before God as an individual, not as a prophet's wife or a women's fellowship president. It is who you are, not what you are. It doesn't matter your title.[95]

In practice, of course, it is probably her title—wife to the Prophet Salifu—that puts her in a position to be able to preach to other women, though this point requires further elaboration and is treated in more detail in Chapter Five.

So, whilst this element of the discourse is not without its complications in the sense that so many of the preachers who propound this discourse are only in a position to do so because of their marital status as wives of successful pastors, it does create a space for the issue of women in public life to be discussed and expands the acceptable sex-roles of women beyond the domestic sphere. One female evangelist, for example, even alludes to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the nineteenth-century religious reformer and author of *The Woman's Bible*, to illustrate this point.[96] She advises her readers to enter "marketable" professions so that women will be among the "high-flyers" of society.[97] "The home", she adds, "is not your last destination in life".[98]

The biblical figures chosen to illustrate the appropriate behaviour of women in the context of public life and decision-making are of some interest here too. Deborah (Judges 4: 1–24) is by far the most popular

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[94] 18 July 2003.
[95] 4 August 2003.
[96] Darko, *Womanhood*, 50–1.
[97] *Ibid.*, 74.
[98] *Ibid.*, 60.

and oft-quoted example, not only in her role as a prophetess but also as a national leader: the "first woman Supreme Court Justice" and the "first woman Military Commander".[99] The daughters of Zelophehad (Numbers 27: 1–11) are equally prominent in this context. They are described as five young women who had the courage to defy tradition and challenge an inheritance law that discriminated against them on the basis of gender.[100] Christie Doe Tetteh dedicates a whole chapter to them in her book, *Celebrating Womanhood*, in which she identifies them as "an instrument of change" and encourages other women to follow in their footsteps. "The five girls", she writes, "refused to accept the position tradition and society had put them in".[101]

> These women were not super human beings. They were women of like passions like us yet with confidence, boldness, courage and determination, they were able to achieve greatness, and impacted their generation so much that history cannot be written without mentioning them.[102]

In contrast, Mary, the mother of Jesus, whose meek acceptance of her fate at the hands of God and men traditionally represents an image of model Christian womanhood, is rarely mentioned at all.[103] In fact, as raised in Chapter Two, the virtue of suffering is simply not part of the discourses of the born-again churches. The suffering of Christ, for example, is rarely alluded to. The Jesus Christ of the charismatic movement is not the sacrificial lamb of some traditional Christian spiritualities, enduring death and suffering for the sake of humanity, but a victorious figure whose symbolic role is encapsulated in the popular song "Jesus is a Winner Man". This broader emphasis on victory, as

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[99] Opoku-Acheampong, *The Essence*, 30. Darko argues that the life of Deborah confirms that God approves of women rulers (*Womanhood*, 78–9).

[100] The daughters of Zelophehad also appear in Jakes' books. He suggests that their refusal to accept that the law discriminated against them is further proof that "faith is an equal opportunities business" (*Woman*, 145–6).

[101] Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 62.

[102] *Ibid.*, 67. Christie Doe Tetteh also preached on the Daughters of Zelophehad at the Miracle Ladies national convention: "They took a decision that was risky, but because they prayed they were well prepared and heaven supported them. The five daughters were not thinking of themselves alone and they brought a change" (28 August 2002).

[103] This model of womanhood is expressed widely in the mainline churches. At the Koforidua diocesan conference of the Christian Mothers Association of Ghana, women were urged to "emulate the virtues of the Virgin Mary, the mother of Christ, and also learn to be submissive, while serving the society as Bible teachers" (*Daily Guide*, 28 August 2002, 5).

opposed to suffering or humility, is incorporated into born-again discourses on femininity. The Biblical heroines of the born-again movement are women who stood up for their rights and stepped in to take the lead where men were perceived to have failed.

It is not only biblical heroines, however, that the movement appeals to in this regard. Francisca Duncan-Williams praises the "brave women" who initiated "the Women's Liberation Movement (Feminism)", which was "born out of deep frustration when women decided that 'enough was enough'".[104] Many of the female figures who are most celebrated as "heroines of faith", then, are religious reformers, political activists and social agitators. These include Catherine Booth (wife of William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army), Elizabeth Fry, Corrie Ten Boom, Barbara Harris (Episcopalian bishop), Florence Nightingale, Joan of Arc, Queen Victoria, Rosa Parks, Barbara Bush and Margaret Thatcher. The "Faith Hall of Fame" also includes the American evangelists Joyce Meyer and Katherine Kuhlman, and even African-American celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey.[105] These are the role-models for born-again women: "May the generations of tomorrow arise and call you blessed because you dared to be different and distinguish yourself in your time for the Father's service. May your name be counted among those who make things happen", writes Francisca Duncan-Williams.[106]

In born-again models of womanhood, then, the "real" woman, or the "woman of worth", is not defined solely in terms of her domestic roles. A woman's role as a wife and as a mother is not totally undermined by the discourse. As mentioned above, Deborah is celebrated for her role as a prophetess who, in the absence of suitable men, stood as leader of her people. It does not go unnoticed, however, that Deborah was also a good wife: "If she was a rebellious or domineering wife, the Bible would have stated that".[107] However, in addition to being a wife and a mother, the "woman of worth" is also a public figure, a political decision-maker and a nation-builder. In contrast to traditional interpretations of Proverbs 31, to which the charismatic churches do

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[104] Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 8. Bishop James Saah, in the Preface to Francisca's book, suggests, however, that ultimately the feminist movement, so far, has failed because "some women still suffer from identity crises, poor self-image, injustice, social marginalisation, rape, rejection, and abuse of all kinds" (4).

[105] See Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 35–41; Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 35–52; and Darko, *Womanhood*, 85–8.

[106] Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 36.

[107] Darko, *Womanhood*, 79.

also adhere, the virtuous woman "is the kind of woman who is a world changer and a history maker".[108]

It is the introduction of this element to charismatic gender discourses, which stresses individualism and the importance of women in public life, in conjunction with an emphasis on "victory", "success" and personal transformation, that appeals to women such as Gifty Affenyi-Dadzie, former president of the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA); Joyce Ayree (formerly Wereko-Brobby), CEO of the Ghana Chamber of Mines and former government minister; Angela Dwamena-Aboagye, executive director of the Ark Foundation (Ghana's only refuge for survivors of domestic violence); and Wendy Boamah, a volunteer case worker at the Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE) who, at first glance, may seem unlikely adherents of a religious movement that appears to advocate female submission and the divine authority of men.

Born-again discourses on womanhood do not overtly contradict the ideology of gender complementarity, which, as Chapter Three demonstrates, characterises Ghanaian gender politics. Whatever the subtext of some of her preaching, for example, Francisca Duncan-Williams often reiterates that women are not competing with men: "We are not fighting for equality; we know where we belong",[109] and almost every night at the "Women of Worth" convention the main preacher extended a special welcome to the men—"our leaders and our heads"—attending the evening sessions.[110] Born-again Christianity also perpetuates the belief that the inherent nature of women makes them particularly suited to the roles of home-maker and peace-maker, and in this regard there is little that distinguishes the new churches from the more conservative mainline churches.[111]

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[108] Duncan-Williams, *Women of Worth*, 31. Similarly, the virtuous woman "is a good woman of valour and knows that this is a time for every Christian woman to stand up and help to build our nation" (Victor Ogoke, *A Virtuous Woman: Her Duties in the Family, Christendom and Society*, Lagos: Victex Publications, 2002, 16).

[109] 1 June 2003.

[110] See also "If the men are among us then everything is okay", "When I see the men I know I am doing something right" (Francisca Duncan-Williams), and "I salute the men here tonight" (Christie Doe Tetteh).

[111] The district chief executive of the Methodist Women's Fellowship at Gomoa Ekroful, for example, asked women to promote peace and development in their homes and communities, and to ensure the success of their husbands and children (*Daily Graphic*, 21 September 2002, 16). Speaking at the third Women's National Congress of the Seventh-Day Adventist women's ministry in Kumasi, Mrs Gladys Asmah, the Minister for Women's and Children's Affairs, observed that "it is incumbent on every person, *especially women*, to cultivate their intellect to answer the purpose of God in

It is the additional stress on the importance of personal success and individual achievement as a child of God that distinguishes the gender discourses of the charismatic churches from other Christian denominations. At the level of discourse, born-again Christianity raises the importance of individualism to a new level and creates tension between women's social roles and their individual trajectories. However, whether this means that the new churches represent some sort of "women's movement" is the subject of the next chapter.

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their existence" (*Daily Guide*, 4 September 2002, 9). These attitudes are not confined to Christianity, however, and similar claims are made with regard to Muslim women (*Daily Guide*, 18 September 2002, 4; *Daily Graphic*, 16 September 2002, 19).

CHAPTER FIVE

BIG WOMEN, SMALL GIRLS

In the previous chapter I analysed some of the key themes in charismatic discourses on womanhood. In particular, the chapter highlighted the emergence of a religious discourse that raises issues of personal development and individual success to new levels, creating tension between women's social roles and their individual trajectories. In that chapter, however, questions of gender, power and authority, in practice, were left aside in order to concentrate on church attitudes towards women at the level of discourse. In Chapter Five, the focus of discussion turns to more practical questions of power, participation and democracy with regard to women's church activities.

In some respects this chapter is a response to Martin's thesis that Pentecostalism represents a worldwide "women's movement".[1] Martin's suggestion, which stems largely from the empirical research of scholars studying the gender implications of the rise of Protestantism in Latin America,[2] is that Pentecostalism represents not only a women's movement but "a sisterhood of shared experience"[3] and "a buried intelligentsia of women".[4] In his comparison of Pentecostal churches with Catholic base communities in Latin America he prioritises the concept of "community" within Pentecostalism and posits the existence of a shared bond between female converts: "As they are brought into the circle of participation they more and more actively relate to each other and sustain each other".[5] Martin extends his thesis to Sub-Saharan Africa,[6] where much of his argument depends on the

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[1] Martin, *Forbidden Revolutions*, 52.

[2] Green and Gill, for example, highlight the importance of the communal bond within the Pentecostal churches and the extent to which this both provides women with an alternative to kin ties and presents opportunities for the development of social capital amongst an otherwise marginal group (Green, "Shifting Affiliations", 159–79; Gill, "Like a Veil to Cover Them", 709–21).

[3] Martin, *Forbidden Revolutions*, 38.

[4] *Ibid*., 40–1.

[5] Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 203.

[6] Martin, *Pentecostalism*, 168–9.

assumption—drawn from the work of Ruth Marshall in Nigeria[7]—that the new churches are more egalitarian, and hence democratic, than their Catholic or Protestant forebears.

Recent work on gender and the rise of civil society in Africa, however, suggests that churches with egalitarian structures may in fact inhibit, rather than encourage, the democratic participation of their members, especially women. Drawing on the insights of scholars critical of the concept of civil society in Africa,[8] Peter Von Doepp argues that in rural Malawi the local Catholic church was more effective at encouraging participation among women than the local Presbyterian

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[7] Marshall, "Power in the Name of Jesus", 224.

[8] In the civil society debate the liberal school of thought has tended to emphasise the potential of civil society organisations to strengthen democratisation in Africa by encouraging the development of social capital and the political participation of its citizens (Michael Bratton, "Civil Society and Political Transitions in Africa", in Harbeson, Rothchild and Chazan, *Civil Society*, 51–81; Naomi Chazan, "Africa's Democratic Challenge", *World Policy Journal*, 9 (2), 1992, 279–313; Larry Diamond, "Rethinking Civil Society: Towards Democratic Consolidation", *Journal of Democracy*, 5 (3), 1994, 4–17). Organisations identified as particularly effective in this task are those felt to be characterised by internal democracy and decentralised authority structures. Taking its cue from the emergence of civil society in the social history of Europe and North America, the liberal view has conceptualised civil society in Africa "as an autonomous sphere of interaction constituted of free-thinking, self-governing individuals" (Peter Von Doepp, "Liberal Visions and Actual Power in Grassroots Civil Society: Local Churches and Women's Empowerment in Rural Malawi", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 40 (2), 2002, 276).

More critical approaches, however, have queried both the categorisation of civil society organisations in Africa and their effectiveness in supporting emerging democracies (Michael W. Foley and Bob Edwards, "The Paradox of Civil Society", *Journal of Democracy*, 7 (3), 1996, 38–52; Célestin Monga, "Civil Society and Democratisation in Francophone Africa", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 33 (3), 1995, 359–79; Dwayne Woods, "Civil Society in Europe and Africa: Limiting State Power Through a Public Sphere", *African Studies Review*, 35 (2), 1992, 77–100). First, critical scholars have questioned the distinction between state and society, and the public and private spheres, upon which Western definitions of civil society are based, which tends to exclude most non-elite African associations, including those based on kinship or ethnicity (Mikael Karlström, "Civil Society and Its Presuppositions: Lessons from Uganda", in John L. and Jean Comaroff (eds.), *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa: Critical Perspectives*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999, 104–23). The exclusion of these organisations, as well as other forms of associational life identified with the private sphere, marginalise women's groups in particular from conventional definitions of civil society (Tripp, "Rethinking Civil Society", 149–68; D. Hirschmann, "Civil society in South Africa: learning from gender themes", *World Development*, 26 (2), 1998, 227–38). Second, critical scholars argue that liberal theorists have underestimated the impact of local power relations on civil society organisations and that a major weakness of civil society in Africa is that civic associations tend to be undemocratic in their structures (John Mw Makumbe, "Is There a Civil Society in Africa?", *International Affairs*, 74 (2), 1998, 311).

churches, despite the Presbyterian churches theoretically conforming to the ideal of a civil society organisation. He argues that, in fact, the centralised hierarchy of the Catholic church formalised the process of female participation and protected the church from the influence of local categories of power and authority. In contrast, "the decentralised and democratic form of the Presbyterian churches actually *enabled* the reproduction of local power relations and social tensions within the organizations themselves".[9]

In light of Von Doepp's observations, my book questions assertions about the role of the new churches in encouraging participation and the development of social capital among women. As stated, these assertions depend to some extent on the assumption that Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal groups tend to have more egalitarian structures and are less susceptible therefore to local categories of power (including age and gender) than the hierarchical structures of the older churches. However, as Von Doepp's research shows, formally egalitarian churches may in fact be more likely to reproduce local power relations, thus perpetuating the disempowerment of marginalised citizens, than churches with centralised authority structures, which are better able to transcend local categories of power. In this chapter, then, it is argued that whilst Accra's charismatic churches may seem more egalitarian than some older denominations—authority is non-gerontocratic and positions of leadership are open to women as they are to men—the new churches tend to draw on "traditional" forms of authority and are susceptible therefore to reproducing the dynamics of local power relations.

Not all forms of traditional authority in Ghana have been based on gender, and so the reproduction of local power relations within the new churches does not necessarily imply the exclusion of all women from positions of power. Rather, as observed in Chapter Three, the predominance of dual-sex roles in Ghanaian gender politics means that women tend to exercise power in parallel structures whilst accessing that power primarily through their relations with men. This chapter examines the exercise of power and authority within female-dominated church structures. These structures parallel male ones and tend to recreate similar dynamics of power and prestige. The chapter explores relationships of power between born-again women and argues that lead female figures such as Francisca Duncan-Williams and Christie

[9] Von Doepp, "Liberal Visions", 294.

Doe Tetteh ("big women") exert authority over other women ("small girls"), and some men, by drawing on "traditional" sources of power.[10] These sources, which include personal charisma, the accumulation and dissemination of resources through patron-client networks, and the ability to demonstrate privileged access to spiritual forces, are critical, it is argued, to understanding the success of leading pastors' wives and female pastors within the charismatic sector.

This chapter is in two parts. First, by drawing on some of the issues raised by the gender and civil society debate, it examines opportunities within the churches for female participation and association, as well as highlighting some of the internal tensions that limit the establishment of the "sisterhood" solidarity posited by Martin's thesis. In the second section, the chapter seeks to explain the prominence of women like Mama Francisca and Mama Christie by examining the nature of their power and authority. The book posits that the behaviour of some "big women" in the charismatic movement is suggestive of the "First Lady Syndrome" identified by Aubrey,[11] and that the women's activities of the churches may function in ways that resemble women's wings of political parties.

Theories of Female Solidarity

Research suggests that, historically, women's church groups in Africa have presented their members with new opportunities for socialisation and self-expression.[12] Adrian Hastings describes the churches of the colonial period, for example, as "predominantly feminine entities—perhaps, indeed, feminine alternative societies to the male-dominated secular world".[13] Both Catholic sisterhoods and Protestant female societies, he argues, symbolised "a female fellowship, at once communal and freely chosen".[14]

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[10] See Nugent, *Big Men, Small Boys*.

[11] Aubrey, "Gender", 87–105. For a detailed discussion of Aubrey's concepts of "femocracy" and "First Lady Syndrome", see Chapter Three.

[12] S. Meintjes, "Family and Gender in the Christian Community at Edendale, Natal, in Colonial Times", in C. Walker (ed.), *Women and Gender in South Africa to 1945*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1990, 143.

[13] Adrian Hastings, "Were Women a Special Case?", in Bowie, Kirkwood and Ardener, *Women and Missions*, 122. Peel is somewhat critical of Hastings on this point, suggesting that Hastings' evidence is "too patchy" and his argument too broad (Peel, "Gender", 152).

[14] Hastings, "Were Women", 122.

Extending this argument to the *Manyanos* (women's unions) that accompanied the spread of Christianity across South Africa, Deborah Gaitskell describes women's church groups as a form of "corporate solidarity" and "an outlet and authentication for individual female revivalist preaching gifts and eloquence in vocal, communal prayer".[15] Similar observations have been made also of the *Rukwadzano* in Zimbabwe.[16]

The theme of female solidarity recurs in analyses of contemporary women's groups in the new Pentecostal churches of Latin America, upon which Martin draws to make his claim of a women's movement; a claim which he then extends to the churches in Africa. In Latin America these new Protestant groups have been compared to Catholic "base communities" and thus viewed as alternative institutional spaces within which people took refuge from the social upheavals associated with the violence and economic decline of the 1980s. Looking at women's groups in particular, Green describes Pentecostalism as "a 'religion of survival', a refuge from suffering and a space in which the women are able to reclaim some personal control over their lives".[17] Likewise, Gill suggests that Pentecostal groups "enable women to develop greater self-confidence and personal integrity".[18]

Of significance to this book is the extent to which both authors emphasise the churches' role in providing alternative social relationships to the ones disrupted by violence and social instability and, in particular, the ability of the churches to institutionalise and formalise these new bonds. For the Mayan widows in Green's research, church services constitute "a safe haven" to participate in communal activities and represent "fictive kin ties" to replace those lost in the violence.[19] For women in La Paz, conversion, argues Gill, is "a cathartic experience", which provides supportive relationships with other church members.[20] The Pentecostal *culto* offers women an institutional basis for developing social relationships and provides rituals for validating

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[15] Deborah Gaitskell, "Hot Meetings and Hard Kraals: African Biblewomen in Transvaal Methodism, 1924–60", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 30 (3), 2000, 279.

[16] Farai David Muzorewa, "Through Prayer to Action: The Rukwadzano Women if Rhodesia", in T. Ranger and J. Weller (eds.), *Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa*, London: Heinemann, 1975, 256–68.

[17] Green, "Shifting Affiliations", 162.

[18] Gill, "Like a Veil to Cover Them", 713.

[19] Green, "Shifting Affiliations", 173.

[20] Gill, "Like a Veil to Cover Them", 716.

these emerging bonds.[21] For both authors, what is significant about these Protestant groups is their contribution to the emergence of new communities rooted in women's shared experiences of violence, loss and social disruption.

Can such an analysis be applied to the new charismatic churches in Ghana? Are concepts of "sisterhood", "solidarity", or "community" appropriate in this context, and more specifically, to what extent can they be applied to the women's groups of the churches under consideration here? Furthermore, how relevant are *African* historical models of Christian female fellowship to an analysis of the new churches? Do the women's groups and communal activities of the charismatic churches represent new manifestations of the corporate solidarity model described by Gaitskell and Hastings? Or, do the internal dynamics of these contemporary women's groups set them apart from their cultural and historical forebears? It is to these questions that the discussion now turns.

Questioning the Solidarity Model

During the course of my fieldwork it became clear that for some women the churches were important physical spaces in which they found comfort, security and a sense of hope. The churches seemed to provide women with a sense of personal space, which either enabled them to escape the pressures of some of their domestic situations or provided an alternative focus for women without families or without work. With this in mind, it is important to be clear just how much time many born-again Christians in Accra spend in church, particularly women. For quite a number of individuals—with whom I spoke regularly during my time in the field—the church was, quite literally, their second home.[22] These women tended to be single or divorced and most of them had no paid employment or regular trading activity. Both Esther and Henrietta of Action Chapel, for example—the former unmarried and the latter divorced—told me that they come to the church every day because they are not involved in any formal income-generating

[21] *Ibid.*, 712.

[22] For one homeless woman, Alive Chapel was her only home. She was allowed to sleep in the church at night in exchange for cleaning the building during the day.

activities.[23] Theresa of Alive Chapel also spent the majority of each day in church. Like Esther and Henrietta, she was unmarried and without employment. Only some of their time is spent in services, however. The churches provide women like these with an alternative place to spend time away from overcrowded living conditions,[24] as well as giving them the opportunity to earn small amounts of remuneration for simple housekeeping tasks. "Every day I come [to the church]", Theresa told me, "otherwise I'm just in the house doing nothing".[25]

For women whose lives were less dominated by the church, the opportunity to leave aside domestic responsibilities for a few hours or an evening, or, in the case of a convention or retreat, a few days, seemed to be an important element of the born-again experience. It was very common, for example, to hear preachers at women's meetings telling the congregation to "forget" whatever they had left at home and not to be distracted by anything happening in the house.[26] For some women this had particular significance. A woman attending the "Daughters of Destiny" convention,[27] for example, was continually pestered by mobile phone messages from her husband and children, which she refused to acknowledge, though it clearly annoyed her ("they keep buzzing me").[28] At the close of each meeting she assured me that she would attend the next evening despite the demands of her family who wanted her to stay in the house.

This aspect of women's church life is more pronounced during women's conventions, which in 2003 at Action Chapel and in 2002 at Word Miracle Church, accommodated large numbers of women from the churches' regional branches. Throughout each convention, women from these regional branches ate, washed and slept in the church and, with the exception of those accompanied by young children, spent the duration of the week away from domestic pressures. Such an opportunity to spend time away from the home and associate with other women was evident also at the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association retreat, where participants spent two nights sharing university

[23] Interviews, 1 July 2003 and 3 July 2003.
[24] Theresa, for example, lives in one room, which she shares with her mother.
[25] Interview, 2 September 2003.
[26] I did not hear anything of this sort mentioned at men's fellowship meetings.
[27] 1–4 May 2003.
[28] Referring to the practice of calling a mobile phone once to register the call without costing the caller money.

dormitories, cooking food together and generally engaging in plenty of gossip and chit-chat.[29]

What is less clear is whether these opportunities for socialisation and personal space contribute towards the consolidation of communal bonds between women. In fact, there appears to be some tension between two types of rhetoric at women's meetings, which give public expression to women's shared experiences on the one hand, and, on the other, create suspicion about the motives and behaviour of other women. On one level, then, the women's fellowship functions as a forum for the public expression of women's shared experiences, particularly in regard to their relationships with men. It is not without significance that Francisca Duncan-Williams and Moha Amoako acknowledge publicly the difficulties they have faced in their own marriages, for example, and use these experiences to encourage other women faced with similar circumstances.

> Tonight, I'm only giving you courage. Some of you are discouraged. Maybe I'm saying it to encourage myself. It's not easy—I'm also a human being. I go through problems, depression, but I stand through it. It is good to give testimonies—people will reap courage from it. So you have to give yourself courage and believe that there is life in that death. As I'm talking to you, you thought you'd given up. In the marriage there is no hope: "the way I'm loving my husband, he doesn't love me that way". When your husband comes in you look at how he looks at you: "will he eat my food?".[30] Your aunty saw him with another woman . . . Maybe your marriage is dead, you have to speak life into that marriage. It doesn't matter how long it takes to reconcile. Know that God will restore . . . it has already been restored.[31]

Creating a space like this in which the shared experiences of women are given public expression is undoubtedly "a cathartic experience"[32] for

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[29] Between services I was invited into one of the dormitories to rest and share some food. For my benefit the women conducted most of their conversations in English, though when gossip was involved—I suspect it mostly concerned other pastors' wives—they reverted to speaking in Twi.

[30] In Ghana, if a husband refuses to eat the food prepared by his wife it is assumed that he is eating the food of another woman, usually his mistress. Food and cookery are closely associated with sex in Ghana. Among the Asante, Gracia Clark notes that the "sexual connotation of cooking is so strong that [they] use it as a euphemism as well as a symbol for sex" (*Onions Are My Husband: Survival and Accumulation by West African Market Women*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994, 344–8). She notes also that women who refuse to cook, in protest at neglect or unreasonable behaviour, signify "lack of sexual access" (*ibid.*, 347).

[31] Moha Amoako, Alive Chapel women's fellowship, 14 July 2003.

[32] Gill, "Like a Veil to Cover Them", 716.

many female participants, and during my time in the field I witnessed, on a number of occasions, what might be described as moments of collective catharsis. During a morning session towards the end of Action Chapel's "Women of Worth" convention, for example, the morning address, which was delivered by the visiting African-American preacher Rev. Patti Mack-Tucker, had been directed towards pastor's wives who constituted almost half the congregation:

> The Lord was speaking to me last night concerning pastors' wives and some of the things they go through, and they don't have anyone to turn to. You are carrying so many burdens and you thought that because you couldn't say it to anyone it would destroy you. Because of who your husband is you didn't want anyone to see there were problems in the home…there were so may pressures. I hear God saying: it's going to be removed today. I know that when I lay my hands on you this thing is going to be broken. There will be peace in the home. Nobody knows what's been going on, but I feel your pain…There are so many hurting people, but the Lord is merciful. He cares for you.[33]

Throughout the course of the week levels of emotion had been rising perceptibly among the convention participants and on this Friday morning things seemed to come to a head. Following this address by Rev. Patti, the attending female pastors stood at the front to prophesy over individual women and anoint them with oil. Whilst some of the women receiving individual anointing clung to the presiding ministers, sobbing in their arms, many in the congregation wailed in prayer and broken song. Others were crouched on the ground, shaking and crying into their opened Bibles. At the time, it was difficult to interpret this scene as anything other than a public outpouring of collective emotion.

There is little to suggest, however, that such displays contribute towards the consolidation of communal bonds between born-again women, or that the churches provide women with rituals for validating those bonds. In fact, in the churches under consideration here, female congregants may even be discouraged from forming close personal relationships with other women. Born-again women may be called "sisters in Christ", but this sort of rhetoric does little to overcome cultural suspicion about the motives and behaviour of other women. As Chapter Three revealed, competition for men, as well as fear about their promiscuity, runs high among women in Accra, and this fear

[33] 6 June 2003.

seems to fuel a general sense of mistrust between women. Charismatic Christianity does not challenge these feelings of mutual mistrust and may actually encourage them. On my first visit to Ghana in 2002, I listened to a sermon given by Pastor Allen at the "Women in Action" "Healing Clinic" on the theme of witches, which included a warning about the motives of friends:

> Your enemies are all around you. You can never know who a witch might be. Even your friends, people who are very close to you, could be witches. Friends close to you could just come along and take your man![34]

On my return to Ghana the following year I heard this type of refrain repeated many times and it became something of a familiar theme in all three churches. It was particularly dominant at Action Chapel during the church's "War Against Witchcraft" programme, when Mama Francisca warned the women who had gathered for the Monday prayer meeting: "There are many witches in the church and you never know when you may be sitting next to one, so you have to pray".[35] This message of suspicion was echoed also by Pastor Solomon of Solid Rock:

> We must be aware of men—that man could be your sister, a friend, but there will be a time when he will deliver you to the house of your enemies. There is somebody close to you and yet he hates you—either physical or spiritual.[36]

Within this narrative of mistrust is a warning against discussing personal issues with other people, even close friends:

> When you have a problem do you go to God or to friends? When you are weary, what do you do? You have to meditate on the word of God to strengthen you. If you are always talking with friends you become a weak Christian.[37]

At Alive Chapel women's fellowship, Mama Florence gave the following testimony, which is illustrative of a more pervasive attitude among female congregants:

> God is the only person you should be telling your problems to. Nobody knows my problems…only me and God. Who knows the problems I have been going through? If we are friends and I tell you about myself,

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[34] 20 August 2002.
[35] 9 June 2003.
[36] Hotline Service, 14 May 2003.
[37] Pastor Cecilia Mensah, Hotline Service, Solid Rock Chapel, 21 May 2003.

> you won't be keeping your mouth shut…so tell only God. Don't look to a human; only God can help us. I'm used to praying instead of gossiping.[38]

This attitude to friendship was expressed by many of my female interviewees, particularly when I asked if they had friends at the church, or if they were close to other members of the women's fellowship. The majority of responses were remarkably similar. Most of the women considered some of their fellow church members as friends, but in terms of discussing anything personal they often remarked that "you can never know a person's heart", meaning that even friends have ulterior motives. Echoing Pastor Allen's warning above, the fear that close girl-friends were potential rivals for men's affections was among the most common of their concerns.[39]

Opportunities for Grassroots Participation

Another important element of the solidarity theory is the concept of mutual obligation, which some scholars argue is fostered within voluntary associations such as women's church groups. Bernice Martin, for example, argues that Pentecostalism roots its believers in what she calls a "voluntaristic" and "collective" system of support,[40] whilst Dorier-Apprill[41] and Laurent[42] make similar observations that the new churches create networks of patronage within which the rules of mutual obligation apply. The Pentecostal church, suggests Dorier-Apprill, represents "a new paradigm of 'well-ordered' solidarity", in which rules of mutual obligation may be extended towards a community of "brothers and sisters in Christ".[43]

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[38] 18 August 2003.

[39] This response from Ama Nana of Alive Chapel is typical: "You don't know the person's character. Because one of my friends…we are just friends, and my husband sleep with her! That is why now days people don't move together, because you don't know the person. Maybe she will come and sit there like an angel, but she can do you something…you will never know" (interview, 31 July 2003). Esther told me that if she met a man who wanted to marry her, she would not share this with any women in the church because "the friends you think you are telling, maybe that person wants the man, [and] you may not know" (interview, 3 July 2003).

[40] Martin, "From Pre- to Post-Modernity", 128–30.

[41] Dorier-Apprill, "Pentecostal Networks", 302.

[42] Laurent, "Transnationalism", 271.

[43] Dorier-Apprill, "Pentecostal Networks", 302.

In the women's groups of Action Chapel, Alive Chapel and Solid Rock, however, there is little to suggest that the groups function as networks of mutual obligation. The monthly dues paid by members of the women's fellowships at Alive Chapel and Solid Rock contribute towards a fund to assist members with wedding, funeral and birthing expenses and to provide emergency help for those in real difficulty. However, the payment and redistribution of dues seems to create a certain amount of tension, with some women claiming they cannot afford to pay their dues and others questioning the legitimacy of giving financial assistance to members who fail to contribute the required amount.[44] Action Chapel differs slightly from Solid Rock and Alive Chapel because, as mentioned, the women who attend the Monday prayer meeting do not pay dues. Although the church itself runs a welfare department, there appears to be little to suggest that any rules of mutual obligation operate within the church's network of women. Pastor Allen raised the issue when he asked the "Women in Action" to go to the funeral of an important member's mother. He told the women that it was important for small groups like "Women in Action" to make an effort in this regard because in a large church like Action Chapel no one attends funerals. However, talking to the women after the meeting, it was my impression that few would be making the effort to go. The opportunity to participate in communal networks of support is not what attracts women (or men) to a church like Action Chapel.

For some women, financial pressure may even limit their participation in the women's activities of the churches. Consider, for example, the costs associated with hosting a women's convention, some of which are expected to be covered by contributions from members of the women's fellowships. Solid Rock's "The Real Woman" convention cost each member of the women's fellowship on average 150,000 cedis (about twelve pounds), in addition to the contributions they were expected to make towards food and drink (which were consumed by the American guest preachers, not the convention participants). The cost of the cloth—printed specially for the convention—was 80,000 cedis alone. In addition, the fellowship members were asked to pay 50,000 cedis towards the cost of cloth for the American guests, and they were required to purchase specially printed tee-shirts and badges at a further

[44] At Solid Rock one woman left the fellowship because she did not receive a wedding gift from them. She had received some financial assistance previously, but she had not been paying her dues. As a result she was not entitled to a wedding gift from the women's fellowship.

cost of 20,000 cedis. Given that the monthly dues of 2,000 cedis are a struggle for some, this level of expense must put regular participation in the fellowship out of reach for many women.[45]

The emphasis on tithing is so prominent at women's conventions that the churches appear to operate less as networks of mutual obligation than providers of a service, which, like the services of traditional shrines and healers, requires a substantial fee.[46] As Mama Francisca announced during the offering at the close of one of Action Chapel's convention nights: "If you come here you pay the money, otherwise you are mocking God". In contrast to the women's fellowships of both Solid Rock and Alive Chapel, where the offering was only a minor part of meetings, at Action Chapel's Monday prayer meetings it was a central feature. At the close of each meeting the women were instructed to hold up their offering—not to scrunch up the money in their fists—so that the amount could be approved by the presiding pastor.

The importance of tithing was also a recurring theme at the "Women of Worth" convention (2003) and the "Women's Healing Clinic" (2002), though even Francisca Duncan-Williams is conscious of what her congregation will find acceptable. When no-one responded to her calls for business women to sow one million cedis into their companies during a morning session of the 2003 convention, Mama Francisca protested: "I'm not raising money. I'm just doing what I feel". Earlier that morning she had commented that Pastor Mold, the resident pastor at Action Chapel, had told her "there is a belief that the women's meetings are just about taking money". Another time, when women had been asked to pledge 50,000 cedis, Mama Francisca had added: "If you want to do it, do it, but don't get angry".

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[45] My translator at Alive Chapel attended the fellowship meetings with me but was not a member herself because she said that she could not afford to buy the printed cloth worn by the women during some church services and other special occasions. A few weeks into my fieldwork, Moha Amoako bought a piece of cloth and gave it to her so that she could join the fellowship as a regular member.

Prudence Woodford-Berger draws a similar conclusion about church groups in her study of Akan women's associations in the Brong-Ahafu region. Noting that one of her informants was unable to join the Church Women's Alliance because she could not keep up her dues, Woodford-Berger suggests that "demands on the women in terms of the resources they bring to [mutual assistance] organizations can be so heavy as to put the organizations and the assets they may offer effectively out of the reach of the women who are most in need of them" ("Associating Women: Female Linkage, Collective Identities and Political Ideology in Ghana", in Rosander, *Transforming Female Identities*, 44–5).

[46] On this point, see Gifford, *Ghana's New*, 70.

At Solid Rock, Christie Doe Tetteh is adept at using guest speakers to raise the sorts of funds that she may not find it possible to request from her own congregation. On the Thursday evening of "The Real Woman" convention, Pastor Oduro of Alabaster House Chapel called on seven people to pledge one million cedis before he would draw the service to a close. At 10:25 pm the service had been running for four hours and some of the congregation were clearly impatient to leave. When a group of people at the back of the church stood up and started to walk towards the buses, Christie Doe Tetteh shouted at them not to leave.[47] Not until the high-life turned gospel singer Akosua Adjepong had pledged one million and the call for offerings had been gradually reduced from 500,000 cedis to 2,000 cedis was the service brought to an end at 10:45 pm.

Another point worth considering here is the extent to which charismatic Christianity encourages participation in democratic groups and provides women with opportunities to develop leadership and decision-making skills. As noted above, in the history of African Christianity, women's church groups have been valued for their capacity-building role and the opportunities they created for women's self-expression. In contemporary terms, Von Doepp comments on the importance of grassroots church groups in giving women the opportunity and confidence to speak and participate in groups,[48] and, as mentioned, many of the arguments about Pentecostalism and social change rest on the premise that it is a more inclusive religion that facilitates the participation of marginalised citizens.

In my experience, however, Alive Chapel was really the only church of the three under consideration here to offer women some opportunity to participate in groups and occasionally take leadership roles. Moha Amoako seemed to be genuinely interested in encouraging other women to grow in confidence, and she used her own experience to help others, describing how she used to practise giving the benediction at home so she would be less nervous when Prophet Salifu asked her to close the service in church. "Other women looked to me so I had to grow out of fear and timidity…Sometimes even your husband won't have

[47] It was impossible for them to leave anyway, because the buses were supplied by Solid Rock and never left the church until the services had finished and Christie Doe Tetteh herself had been driven away in her four-wheel drive.

[48] Von Doepp, "Liberal Visions", 291–2.

confidence in you, but encourage yourself. You can do it!".[49] In May 2003, Moha Amoako started to meet with the other pastors' wives after the Sunday service for the purposes of "encouragement and support" (in much the same spirit as the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association, established by Francisca Duncan-Williams). At one of these meetings she told the pastors' wives about the first time she preached in Alive Chapel's London branch, when Prophet Salifu had warned her not to speak for too long so as not to "disgrace herself". She described to them how she had practised preaching at home and as a result now preaches for the Prophet in the United States.[50]

The capacity-building initiatives of Action Chapel sound rather grand, but clearly, they are drawn from models outside the charismatic sector. In June 2003, Francisca Duncan-Williams announced that she had plans to build a Women's Centre[51] and that she intended to establish a Professional and Businesswomen's Association. In practice, however, actual opportunities for grassroots participation and leadership are extremely limited in a large church like Action Chapel. In contrast, in the women's fellowships at Alive Chapel and Solid Rock there is debate, discussion, and opportunities for members to make personal contributions. At the end of most of the women's meetings at Alive Chapel, for example, women were given the opportunity to respond to the announcements of the fellowship president and to settle disputes within the group. At some meetings, particularly those led by Moha Amoako, members were able to present scripture readings and were even asked to preach.[52] At Solid Rock's "Daughters of Zion" meeting a secretary records minutes, which have to be approved each week, and the fellowship has a formal voting system in place for making collective decisions.[53]

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[49] Pastors' wives meeting, 11 May 2003.

[50] *Ibid*.

[51] It is likely that Francisca Duncan-Williams has been influenced by the Women's Centre at Abokobi that was established in 1992 by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. The Centre has two conference halls and accommodation for 120 people. It provides training and capacity-building projects for church groups, NGOs, government bodies, and other voluntary groups (Rose Akua Ampofo, "The Role of Religious Organisations in Developing Women's Capacity: A Case of the Presbyterian Women's Centre", in Florence Abena Dolphyne and Esther Ofei-Aboagye, *Experiences in Capacity Building for Ghanaian Women*, Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2001, 90–107).

[52] At the beginning of one of these meetings, Mama Moha told the fellowship that everyone was going to preach: "We are going to the training school in the fellowship, so when you're called on you'll be able to preach" (4 August 2003).

[53] A forum of ten members is needed to approve a decision and every motion has to be seconded, including a motion to end the meeting each week.

This is not the case for the women's prayer meetings at Action Chapel. Like most charismatic services, the women's prayer meetings are dominated by the presiding pastor (or pastor's wife), and present little opportunity for female congregants to participate in leadership or the decision-making process.

A final point to be considered here, in terms of the churches' role in promoting the participation of women, is the claim that Pentecostalism is more inclusive and democratic because it is a religion of the spoken word, which values religious experience above ecclesiastical formality. Martin highlights the significance of Pentecostal forms of communication—speaking in tongues, trance, ecstasy, stories and testimonies—emphasising the restoration of an oral tradition and what he calls "spoken spiritual biographies".[54] He argues that spiritual communication of this sort, manifested in an atmosphere of participation, "makes heard those who were hitherto voiceless", including women.[55] Martin's analysis of Pentecostal spirituality has some resonance perhaps with analyses of spirit possession cults, which draw on James Scott's concept of "peasant resistance",[56] and it may be worth considering certain born-again spiritual practices, such as testimonies and *glossolalia*, in this context. Spirit possession cults have often been analysed as moments of "liminality"[57] in which established social boundaries are temporarily broken down. These liminal moments enable marginalised citizens (usually women) to voice concerns and make demands of their menfolk, which under normal social circumstances would be unacceptable. In what is perhaps the classic text on this subject, I. M. Lewis describes the spirit possession cults of East Africa as "a strategic intervention in a sex war".[58] Salvatore Cucchiari echoes some of these ideas when he describes the spiritual practices of Sicilian Pentecostals as moments of "antistructural liminality":

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[54] Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 178.

[55] *Ibid*., 163.

[56] "Everyday forms of peasant resistance" are described by Scott as the actions of the weak that require little coordination or planning, a type of self-help that avoids the direct questioning of authority or the norms of the dominant elite (James C. Scott, "Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance", in James C. Scott and Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet (eds.), *Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance in South-east Asia*, London: Frank Cass, 1986, 5–35).

[57] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969.

[58] I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*, London: Routledge, 1989 (1971), 77.

> [T]he Spirit is associated with the most prized experience of the *culto*: ecstasy-forged liminality. In short, the Spirit is predominantly linked to intimacy with God—*culto* ecstasy—and the consequent breaking down of the boundaries of experience. For example, in speaking in tongues—a sign of possession by the Holy Spirit—language sheds all the grammatical and semantic constraints in order to do what is by definition impossible for any language to do: communicate the ineffable. At the peaks of *culto* ecstasy other kinds of boundaries weaken or disappear: those between self and others, between self and the divine, between *culto* leader and *culto* participants. During the most liminal periods of the *culto*, the liturgical form of the service—highly flexible by most standards—becomes even more fluid as prayer, biblical exhortations, songs, and prophecy alternate in unpredictable patterns.[59]

In the charismatic churches of Accra, however, personal testimonies and possessions by the Holy Spirit are both less prominent and more "structured" than in the Sicilian churches described by Cucchiari. The spoken word of participants, as opposed to pastors and pastors' wives, is not a prominent part of charismatic meetings or services. There is often little time for testimonies, or the time given to them is so minimal that pastors or lay leaders simply summarise the personal narratives of participants with testimonies. Collective experiences of the Holy Spirit tend to be both predictable and structured. The time for speaking in tongues and possession by the Spirit, for instance, is often announced and brought to a close at the discretion of the preacher.[60]

It is also important to note the prominence of pastors, or pastors' wives, in the narration of personal testimonies. I return to this point towards the end of the chapter when I address the power dynamics between Christie Doe Tetteh and the congregants at Solid Rock Chapel. It is argued that in Solid Rock services the boundaries between leader and participant are not broken down—as Cucchiari argues—but repeatedly reinforced as the hierarchy between leader and participant is

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[59] Cucchiari, "Between Shame and Sanctification", 691. In addition, it is interesting to note that Cucchiari links the anti-structural liminality of the Spirit in Pentecostalism with femininity and the "antistructural potentiality" of female sexuality; a link which is often made in studies of spirit possession cults.

[60] During a period of spirit possession at an Alive Chapel Sunday service, a pastor's wife began to show signs of possession (a shaking body, tears and muttering in tongues). She received attention and anointing from both her husband and another pastor, but when she continued to shake and speak in tongues, to such a degree that it attracted the attention of a group of nearby pastors, I noticed (standing next to her) that her husband leaned over to tell her to stop: "it is enough", he told her. Almost immediately she withdrew from a state of possession and sat down.

publicly affirmed. On this point below, I consider the role of Francisca Duncan-Williams in reproducing "traditional" hierarchies.

"First Lady Syndrome": The Role of the Pastor's Wife

The prominence of pastors' wives in African churches is not exclusive to the charismatic sector. Gaitskell notes that in South Africa's *Manyanos* clergy wives were regarded as automatically entitled to and equipped for leadership,[61] and Brigid Sackey comments on the status of the wife of the founder of the Musama Disco Christo Church (MDCC) in Ghana, who was endowed with her own spiritual status and considered a co-founder of the church.[62] The wives of successful pastors in the charismatic churches, however, seem to attain a prominence quite unknown in the non-charismatic sector. The dual-sex role leadership pattern of some independent churches, which endowed the founder's mother with special status—echoing the gerontocratic model of Akan gender politics—gives way, in the charismatic churches, to a dual-sex role pattern of leadership modelled on the gender politics of the modern political system, which tends to grant privileged status to the spouse of male leaders. In other words, in modern Ghanaian politics the dual-sex role is characterised by an emphasis on the conjugal relationship rather than the (symbolic) maternal relationship of pre-state politics and this shift is reflected in the authority structures of the new charismatic churches.

"Big Man syndrome" in African leaders, and its associated behaviour, has been described as the bane of African politics. Gifford sees this style of leadership reflected in the behaviour and lifestyle of Ghana's charismatic pastors, who do little, he argues, to challenge established socio-political structures of power and authority, based on patronage, personalised rule, and the private accumulation of public wealth.[63] As noted previously, Aubrey describes the role of African leaders' wives

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[61] Gaitskell, "Hot Meetings and Hard Kraals", 279.

[62] Brigid Sackey, "Aspects of Continuity in the Religious Roles of Women in 'Spiritual Churches' of Ghana", *Research Review*, 5 (2), 1989, 26–9. She notes also, though, that the gerontocratic tendencies of the church prevailed when the wife of the founder continued in her role as Queen Mother after the succession of her son on the death of the original founder (28). This sort of gerontocracy is not evident in the charismatic sector.

[63] Gifford, *Ghana's New*, 185.

within these power structures as one of sustaining the power of their husbands whilst building their own networks of patronage and public prestige. My book argues that where parallels exist between the leadership styles of African male politicians and charismatic pastors, they exist too between the roles of political spouses and the wives of successful church founders.

In the churches under consideration here, Francisca Duncan-Williams and Moha Amoako display varying degrees of "First Lady syndrome" and differ substantially from one another, both in levels of personal prestige within their husband's churches and their status within the movement as a whole.[64] Both women are called the "First Lady" of their respective churches, and though Mama Francisca operates in ways that are more comparable to a First Lady of politics than Mama Moha, it is clear that Mama Francisca is a role model to the younger woman. Mama Moha described herself to me, for example, as Mama Francisca's "personal assistant" and said that she regularly consults her in matters concerning her role as the wife of a successful pastor. However, whilst Moha may model herself on Francisca Duncan-Williams, she is not imbued with the same status or personal prestige. Thus, what follows draws largely on observations about Francisca Duncan-Williams and her position in Action Chapel. It is here that the parallels between pastors' wives in the charismatic movement and the "First Lady syndrome" of political wives are most apparent.

As shown in Chapter Three, the nature of Ghanaian gender politics at the national level is such that the authority of political wives is limited in most cases to women's wings of political parties, and the clients of the patronage networks of political wives tend to be female. This model is reflected in the structures of Action Chapel, insofar as Mama Francisca is perceived as the natural leader of the women's activities of the church. Though her authority is not necessarily limited to female congregants,[65] the strength of her support stems primarily from women, and the women's fellowship in particular. Like the relationship between Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings and the 31DWM, the identification

[64] As the unmarried founder of her own church, Christie Doe Tetteh represents rather a different case from either Francisca Duncan-Williams or Moha Amoako and is therefore discussed separately.

[65] As I will show, to some extent her exalted authority (in contrast to Moha Amoako, for example) is due to Francisca's demonstration of spiritual power amongst men and amongst male pastors in particular.

of Mama Francisca with the women's fellowship of Action Chapel is highly personalised. She is so central to the life of the group that not only would the fellowship probably cease to function without her involvement,[66] it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the worship of God and the worship of Francisca herself.

The personal identification of the women's fellowship with Francisca Duncan-Williams was apparent on the evening of the launch of her book, *Reflections*. The church building was decorated in red and white flowers and streamers, and the women of the fellowship, seated together in the front few rows, were clothed in red, white and gold cloth—the "personal colours" of Mama Francisca. The same cloth was worn by the women from Action Chapel who accompanied Francisca to Solid Rock's women's convention in 2002. Whilst the wearing of uniforms to assert group identity is a well-established tradition in African churches, especially among Zionist and other African instituted churches, this use of cloth at Action Chapel represents a slight departure from tradition, because here the inspiration for the mode of dress springs directly from one individual, and does not apply to the whole congregation but to one group, who are clearly identifiable as followers of Mama Francisca. So, whilst it may represent an act of "belonging", of the type described in research on African instituted churches, it is also, in the context of Action Chapel, an act of identification with an individual, in this case the wife of Bishop Duncan-Williams, by a sub-group of the church.

To further this point, it is interesting to observe the amount of time at women's prayer meetings, and more so at women's conventions, that is devoted to the affirmation of the congregants' feelings for Mama Francisca. The women were asked frequently, for example: "How many of you love this woman of God?", to which the women responded with claps and cheers, some running to the front to throw money on the stage. One evening at the "Women of Worth" convention, after Francisca announced that an all-night Friday prayer meeting had been organised, she asked: "Do you love me for doing that for you? Then tell

[66] Rev. Clive Mold, Pastor-in-charge of Action Chapel, told me that the reason for the success of the women's fellowship at Action Chapel is the personal involvement of Francisca Duncan-Williams: "It's been headed, spearheaded, by the bishop's wife. For some reason she has not been able to keep the fire blazing in her absence. For some strange reason, when she is not here the fellowship is not as if she were here" (interview, 2 September 2003).

me you love me"; and the women shouted back with calls of, "Mummy, we love you!".[67]

This emphasis on personalities is understandable, perhaps, in the context of charismatic faith where the health, wealth and general well-being of believers is perceived to be firmly rooted in the quality of their connection with the man or woman of God. When Mama Francisca asked Action's women if they loved her she also warned them: "Anyone who doesn't know how to appreciate will never get to the next level". Success, then, is dependent on good relations with those in a position to provide it. In this sense, one of the primary reasons why believers are attracted to charismatic pastors is their perceived ability to provide patronage, both in terms of a distribution of resources[68] and the manipulation of unseen spiritual forces. This book proposes that some pastors' wives are perceived to possess similar abilities, either through their connection with a man of God (in the case of Moha Amoako), or, in a few cases, on their own terms (in the case of Francisca Duncan-Williams).

Mama Francisca functions as a source of patronage for both her female congregants—to whom tithing is presented as the route to a personal share in her wealth and status—and other pastors' wives, whom she often rewards publicly. During a morning session at the "Women of Worth" convention, Mama Francisca elaborated on the tithing theme slightly when the attending women were asked to sow a seed for a "Women in Travail" conference to be held the following year in the United States. In anticipation, perhaps, of a certain lack of enthusiasm for the idea, Mama Francisca assured the group that "this isn't fundraising, it's partnership". Any woman who wanted to become "a partner" was invited to pledge a regular sum of money each month (special forms had been printed in advance) with the promise that "As a partner, everything I am you will be also".[69]

In keeping with her "big woman" status, it is important for a person like Francisca Duncan-Williams not only to make a public display of her wealth but also to be seen to distribute some of that wealth amongst those loyal to her. Sometimes it was her personal belongings that she gave away—her mobile phone on one occasion, but more

[67] 2 June 2003.
[68] This has been referred to as the "trickle down effect".
[69] 4 June 2003. The forthcoming women's prayer meeting was re-named "Partnership Meeting".

often clothing—and sometimes money. In practice, of course, it is not always Mama Francisca's own money that is distributed. At an evening session of the "Women of Worth" convention the congregation were encouraged to give generously to one of the offerings, which was then handed to one of the female ushers as a gift.[70] In this case, the resource provider was Mama Francisca only indirectly, insofar as she selected the usher to receive the proceeds of the offering.

Another indirect source of patronage is related to the opportunities a woman in Francisca Duncan-Williams' position creates in terms of marketing the products of other women, especially her clothing. The habit of some charismatic pastors to wear expensive suits as a symbol of their prosperity and success is reflected in the physical appearance of their wives. The appearance of female pastors and pastors' wives is also a symbol of their status and success. Following a visit to Europe, Mama Francisca described a shopping trip in Italy:

> The bishop invited me to Italy. They took me shopping. My darling, Italian leather shoes… different colours. If God is blessing me, don't be jealous. You can choose to be blessed or not to be blessed. Tap into the anointing.[71]

Francisca frequently seeks compliments on her appearance from the congregation, especially during special events such as a women's convention. On these occasions, she generally wears a different outfit each morning, and in the evening sessions, when the women's fellowship wears the church cloth, Mama Francisca has a different style of dress made in the same cloth for each night of convention week. In the run up to the "Women of Worth" convention, Mama Francisca mentioned a number of times how many dresses she was having made for the occasion and how beautiful she would be looking, and it was her seamstress that was given the credit for this. Twice the seamstress was asked to stand up so that she could be pointed out to the other women. It is also not unusual for female congregants who make a living as seamstresses to make a dress for Mama Francisca in the hopes that when she wears it she will provide a similar marketing service for them.[72]

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[70] Given the size of the congregation (up to 700 people) this would have been a significant amount of money.

[71] 3 June 2003.

[72] A number of seamstresses had their work displayed at the convention and other women in the congregation were encouraged to admire their work and hopefully place orders. The seamstresses working for pastors' wives are under some pressure to perform well because there can be competition between high-profile born-again women. At

The relationship of Francisca Duncan-Williams to other pastors' wives is another important element of her "big woman" status. Due to the status of her husband within the movement, Mama Francisca is treated as the so-called "mother" of charismatic faith in Ghana.[73] There are two elements to this: first, Mama Francisca acts as a role model to other pastors' wives, and second, as the head of a hierarchy of pastors' wives, she presents herself as someone who can "make things happen" for other people. In turn, many of the wives of Accra's leading pastors attribute their success to Francisca Duncan-Williams in the same way that many of their husbands acknowledge the influence of Nicholas Duncan-Williams, the "father" of the faith.

Moha Amoako admitted that she models herself directly on Mama Francisca and aspires to be like her, which undoubtedly influences some of her decisions. In the weeks preceding her announcement that a women's Friday prayer meeting was going to be established at Alive Chapel, I noticed that Moha had been attending the Monday prayer meeting at Action. On the first Friday it was clear that the prayer meeting at Alive Chapel would resemble, almost exactly, the Monday meetings at Action. It was also around this time that Moha started to meet with the other pastors' wives after services on Sundays. Again, I suspect that Mama Francisca's Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association was a source of inspiration.

Among those who credit Francisca Duncan-Williams with the status of "mother", and whom she herself calls her "daughters", are Moha Amoako, Rita Korankye-Ankrah, Dora Tackie-Yarboi, Cindy Nortey, and Rose Nyonator, who are all wives of prominent pastors. In some cases, their rise in the charismatic movement is attributed directly to the influence of Mama Francisca: "Some of them were nobodies until they met me".[74] At the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry retreat,[75]

Word Miracle's women's convention (27 August–1 September 2002), for example, there were some humorous exchanges—tinged with irritation—between Vivien Agyin-Asare and Christie Doe Tetteh when the latter, a guest preacher, arrived in her convention dress the day before the bishop's wife's dress was ready.

[73] The wife of the late Benson Idahosa tends to be honoured as the "grandmother" of the movement.

[74] Whatever Francisca Duncan-Williams may claim, the prominence of many of these women is dependent on and comparable to the fortunes of their pastor-husbands. In some cases, however, the status of pastors' wives does not equal the status of their husbands. Moha Amoako, for instance, lacks the personal charisma of some of the other wives, which may explain her relatively low profile within the movement in Accra.

[75] 17–19 July 2003.

for example, the majority of women who gave testimonies about their own role as preachers or pastors' wives paid tribute to Mama Francisca as well as to God. When Rita Korankye-Ankrah spoke at a morning session of the "Women of Worth" convention, Mama Francisca told the congregation how she had originally encouraged her "daughter" to speak at an Action Chapel convention: "That was the beginning of many things . . . after I spoke over her, she started to travel".[76]

It is worth noting here that the opportunity for pastors' wives to travel "outside" (a Ghanaian term meaning "overseas"), particularly to preach, is an indicator of their level of success in the movement. Whilst in the case of Rita Korankye-Ankrah the implication is that Mama Francisca had some spiritual influence over her (she "spoke over her"), there is a more practical side to consider. This is illustrated by the examples of Rose Nyonator and Cindy Nortey, both lead figures in the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association, and thus "daughters" of Mama Francisca. When Rose Nyonator preached during a morning session at the "Women of Worth" convention, she responded to Mama Francisca's request for "partners" with an offering of one million cedis (about £100). It was the first time she had been able to make such a large offering and therefore wanted to make an occasion of it. Following the pattern of personal narratives outlined in the previous chapter, she told the standard "rags to semi-riches" story, in which the influence of Francisca Duncan-Williams seemed to have played an important part. The offering of one million cedis served both as an acknowledgement of Mama Francisca's authority as well as a public demonstration of Rose Nyonator's own progress towards "big woman" status within the charismatic movement. Moments later, Mama Francisca announced that she would be sending Cindy Nortey to London to preach and Rose Nyonator to Germany, and the congregation responded with clapping and cheers whilst the two women danced a jubilatory dance around the stage. In other words, to the women in her inner circle, Mama Francisca functions not only as a patron on an implicit spiritual level, where she is credited with having had some positive effect on another woman's life, but also as a direct provider of resources on a much more practical level—in this case, the provision of overseas travel.

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[76] 2 June 2003. At Solid Rock's women's convention, however—where Rita Korankye-Ankrah was a guest preacher—Christie Doe Tetteh took the credit for her success: "When she saw me in Nigeria, she said: 'One day I want to be like this woman'. Look at her now, travelling all over the waters" (16 August 2003).

The number of women who benefit directly from the distribution of resources in this way, however, is few. To the majority of women at Action Chapel, and elsewhere, Mama Francisca is first and foremost a source of spiritual power, and her authority within the movement depends, to a large extent, on her ability to create and maintain a perception of herself as someone close to God and therefore capable of manipulating the spirit world. In examining the role and authority of pastors' wives, Francisca Duncan-Williams is a particularly interesting example. In ways reminiscent of Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings, Francisca Duncan-Williams seems to be taking Ghanaian models of female authority to their logical conclusion. As we have noted previously, the nature of gender politics in Ghana is such that women tend to access power through their relationships with men—the first ladies of national politics and the Queen Mothers of pre-state Ghana have been cited as examples—and undoubtedly the authority of pastors' wives in the charismatic churches stems essentially from their relationships with the men to whom they are married. In this regard, Mama Francisca is no exception. However, she seems also to be trying to establish a spiritual status for herself that functions outside her relationship with Nicholas Duncan-Williams and gives her an authority in her own right within the charismatic movement in Ghana as well as further afield.

In her public presentation of herself Francisca Duncan-Williams makes far fewer references to her husband than do either Moha Amoako to the Prophet Salifu or Vivien Agyin-Asare to her husband, the bishop of Word Miracle Church International, for example. When the residing bishop of Action Chapel, James Saah, addressed her during the "Women of Worth" convention, Francisca called out: "Call me Doctor[77]…Doctor Prophetess!". She seems to be moving into the prophetic role in a way that is far less evident in the behaviour of someone like Moha Amoako who is endowed with spiritual power only indirectly through her close relationship with Prophet Salifu.[78] Francisca Duncan-Williams, on the other hand, presents herself as a source of spiritual power that is less dependent on her relationship with Bishop Duncan-Williams. Believers can access this power through physical

[77] Francisca Duncan-Williams holds an honorary doctoral degree from a Bible school in the United States.

[78] As Pastor Courage told me, the women organise around Mama Moha because "they see her as the man himself [Prophet Salifu] coming to talk to them" (interview, 30 June 2003).

contact with Francisca herself, or through contact with something she has touched. The specially printed headscarves that women were expected to purchase for the "Women of Worth" convention were sold as "miracle agents" on the basis that they had come into contact with Mama Francisca. One morning during the convention, Francisca implied that this perception of the headscarves had been generated by the women themselves: "Some of you want to buy the scarves from me because you think if I sell it to you the anointing will be in the scarf".[79] However, earlier in the week Mama Francisca had told the congregation that the scarves were "anointed": "As you wear these scarves and use the handkerchiefs [also printed for the convention], any miracle… It doesn't sound spiritual, but we anointed the scarves".[80] Another time, when distributing collection boxes, Mama Francisca stopped women from coming to the stage to collect them, saying: "There is a blessing in these boxes. Let me give it to you. It is filled with anointing".[81]

Francisca Duncan-Williams' spiritual power can also be accessed through the reading, or even presence, of her books. Promoting her book *Reflections*, for example, Mama Francisca told the congregation at Action Chapel:

> There is no book like this in the whole world. With this picture on the front [a photograph of Francisca], put it there as a point of contact. This picture is my being there with you in your house. Agyin-Asare's son asked, "Daddy, is that an angel behind that book?". I believe there is an angel behind this book.[82]

This reference to Charles Agyin-Asare is not without significance. The fact that men are seen publicly to endorse her spiritual authority is important to her overall standing within the charismatic movement. Mama Francisca's personal assistant, Pastor Allen, plays a central role in building her reputation as a preacher and a miracle-worker in her own right. At the women's Monday prayer meetings, which Pastor Allen often leads in the absence of Francisca herself, part of the evening is invariably taken up with descriptions of Mama Francisca's spiritual accomplishments. One Monday evening Pastor Allen arrived late—

[79] 6 June 2003.
[80] 2 June 2003.
[81] 6 June 2003.
[82] 22 August 2002.

having just returned with Mama Francisca from a trip to Abidjan—and addressed the gathered women (many of whom had been grumbling at the absence of the woman herself):

> Mummy is now moving in a level… She spoke for just ten minutes and something happened in that church. She placed two hankies on Pastor Johnson and he went crazy. People were looking at her like she was something that came from heaven.[83]

Another indication that Mama Francisca is pushing the boundaries of her role beyond that of wife to Nicholas Duncan-Williams was given the morning after the Rev. Eastwood Anaba had anointed convention participants with a cloth used to wipe the sweat from his face. That same evening a male pastor was also anointed by Rev. Anaba. At the meeting the following morning, Mama Francisca told the congregation that the anointed pastor had covered himself with Francisca's handkerchief, which was soaked in her sweat from dancing, before receiving anointing from Rev. Anaba.[84] The implication was that the pastor's contact with the spiritual power of Francisca Duncan-Williams had marked him out for special attention from Eastwood Anaba, the Man of God.

Gender, Power and Authority: The Rev. Christie Doe Tetteh

> Rev. Christie Doe-Tetteh is known as a "Spiritual Bulldozer"… She is known as the First Lady in Ghanaian charismatic circles. A Trailblazer and a groundbreaker… Rev. Christie Tetteh, is a colossus in Ghana's charismatic circles, epitomizing the power of God in Christian courage. She thunders God's message. She mothers God's love. She is a woman of wisdom, faith and full of the Holy Ghost power—not coming with the enticing words of men's wisdom but in the demonstration of God's power. Rev. Christie, is indeed a woman of distinction and a role model to her generation. She is a notable visionary, a charismatic leader, and God's apostolic ambassador to all nations.[85]
>
> Praise God for discovering your Destiny… In a world that makes it so difficult for women to be fully accepted in their own right as bona fide human beings created in the image of God and authorized to complement men to harness the resources of the earth for our common good, I

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[83] Women's prayer meeting, Action Chapel, 23 June 2003.
[84] 6 June 2003.
[85] Mrs. Gifty Afenyi-Dadzie (former President, Ghana Institute of Journalism) in Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 112–13.

> would like to encourage you to know that God has made you A GIFT for your generation.[86]

These salutations, which appear at the end of *Celebrating Womanhood*, give some insight into the importance of Christie Doe Tetteh's personality and charisma to the life of Solid Rock Chapel International. In this section it is argued that Christie Doe Tetteh plays a typical "big woman" role in her leadership of the church, which is authoritarian in style and attracts an almost sacred devotion from her followers, most of whom are women. The sources of her authority, it is argued, stem, in part, from traditional models of female authority in Ghana, including motherhood and an ability to demonstrate privileged access to the spirit world. Christie Doe Tetteh is not simply new wine in old wine skins, however, and her success can not be explained solely in terms of traditional spiritualities. The final part of this section, then, draws attention to the importance of Christie Doe Tetteh's references to the charismatic genealogy, which for the most part is male, and her frequent allusions to places "outside" Ghana, especially Nigeria and the United States. It is argued, in conclusion, that these references are indicative of the extent to which Christie Doe Tetteh's authority stems also from external, and predominantly male, sources.

A "Big Woman"

Christie Doe Tetteh is a big woman, in both physical size and stature. Even during her increasingly prolonged absences,[87] her presence dominates the church. On the front wall of the North Kaneshie branch of Solid Rock, where in a Catholic Church a crucifix might hang, sits a framed enlargement of Christie Doe Tetteh's graduation photograph,[88] and hanging on the rear wall of the church is a bright-coloured banner celebrating her return to Ghana after a trip to the United States in April 2003. It reads: "Welcome home Rt. Rev. Dr. Christy Doe Tetteh. You

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[86] Mrs. Joyce Wereko-Brobby (now Ayree, Executive Secretary, Ghana Chamber of Mines) in *ibid.*, 114. Joyce Ayree is also the author of "Salt and Light", a Christian column in *The Chronicle* newspaper.

[87] Christie Doe Tetteh is spending an increasing amount of time travelling to other parts of Africa—mainly Nigeria—the United States and Britain. It is difficult to keep track of her overseas trips because they are rarely announced in advance, probably because the congregation tends to diminish considerably when it is known that Christie Doe Tetteh will not be around.

[88] Awarded to her by Dr. Kingsley A. Fletcher, a Ghanaian now residing in the United States.

are a source of inspiration and a voice for women, a pacesetter, a woman of vision. We love you. We are proud of you. We will stand by you."

During Solid Rock services the mere mention of Christie Doe Tetteh's name, which can be prefixed with as many as five titles, including Right Rev. Dr. Pastor Bishop Mama, engenders a burst of raucous cheers and applause from the congregation; louder and more energetic in its delivery than any response I heard to the common instruction in charismatic services: "Put your hands together for Jesus". At most Solid Rock services people who are visiting for the first time are asked to stand up and be formally welcomed by the church on behalf of "the Right Rev. Dr. Christie Doe Tetteh", after which a salutation to Christie Doe Tetteh typically follows. On one occasion, at "The Real Woman" convention, Rev. Shaddrack Addei generated much shouting and whistling from the congregation following one such introduction of newcomers when he told Rev. Christie: "Mummy, we love you; we honour you". After that the guest speaker for the evening, Pastor Oduro from Alabaster House Chapel, stood up to address his host: "I want to salute Mama, a woman with a heart." "Unbeatable!" shouted someone from the pews. "I would say irrevocable. A woman with the eyes of an eagle and the footprints of an elephant." More shouting and calls of "Mummy, we love you!" followed from the crowd. Silence descended as Christie Doe Tetteh herself stood up to speak: "Am I looking beautiful tonight?". Silence. "Talk to me! Talk to me!" Immediately, the whole church erupted into praise and applause, women danced in the aisles, instrumentalists burst into song. In my field notes, I recalled the noise of a football crowd celebrating its winning team.

A service at Solid Rock does not really begin in earnest until Christie Doe Tetteh arrives, and because she invariably arrives late, most services overrun, sometimes by as much as two hours. The "Hotline Service" which takes place on Wednesday mornings, for example, supposedly begins at 10:00 am and closes at 1.00 pm, but in practice it rarely finishes before 3.00 pm because Christie Doe Tetteh never arrives much before midday. If she is very late, and people begin to suspect that she has travelled, the disappointment is palpable.

Christie Doe Tetteh rarely delivers sermons, at least not at Solid Rock.[89] She maintains a tight grip, however, on the overall running of

[89] I heard her give sermons in other churches, some of which have been referred to in this book, but at Solid Rock one rather had the impression that Christie Doe

services and takes a somewhat authoritarian approach to her treatment of pastors and congregants alike. At both North Kaneshie and City of Faith, Christie Doe Tetteh sits on a throne-like chair on a raised platform at the front of the church from where she directs and controls proceedings. She spends a substantial amount of each service barking instructions to junior pastors and other church workers or congregants, the majority of whom kneel as they are addressed. Though she often appears to be busy with other matters—making arrangements on her mobile phone or instructing her pastors—she soon interjects if an element of the service is not to her liking. On the first night of "The Real Woman" convention, for example, the choir finished their opening set and started to return to their seats until Christie Doe Tetteh looked up and shouted, "I didn't tell you to sit down! Sing again!", so they quickly reassembled and continued to sing.[90]

On frequent occasions, especially when another pastor was leading the build-up to the offering, Christie Doe Tetteh would interrupt to "encourage" the congregation to "sow a good seed". Even testimonies—the epitome of the new churches egalitarianism, according to Cucchiari[91]—are subject to Christie Doe Tetteh's intervention. At a Tuesday "Deliverance Service", for example, a pastor announced there would be five minutes for three testimonies. People were slow to come forward, but after a couple of minutes two women stood up. Christie Doe Tetteh, who until that point had been engaged in conversation on her mobile phone, looked up and announced, "If the men don't have testimonies they should go!".[92] Two male pastors then hurriedly stood up to speak.

These illustrations have helped to establish that Christie Doe Tetteh displays many of the characteristics of a Ghanaian "big woman" and adopts an authoritarian style of leadership in her running of Solid Rock Chapel. The source of her status and authority, however, is yet to be established and it is to these matters that the discussion now turns. It is argued that Christie Doe Tetteh follows four "models" of authority:

Tetteh considered herself above the task of delivering sermons. This job was mainly left to Rev. Shaddrack Addei.

[90] 10 August 2003.

[91] Cucchiari, "Between Shame and Sanctification", 691.

[92] This may indicate also Christie Doe Tetteh's need for male endorsement of her prophetic gifts. This point has been raised above with regard to the authority of Francisca Duncan-Williams.

clientelism, motherhood, traditionalism, and externality. Each of these is dealt with in turn.

A Patron-Client Relationship

An important element of Christie Doe Tetteh's authority and prestige is her wealth and the ability to demonstrate publicly her material success. As discussed in Chapter Two, for Ghana's charismatic Christians wealth is an indication of God's blessing and it is difficult to conceive of a successful charismatic pastor who lacks a demonstrable ability to accumulate personal wealth. In a previous section, Mama Francisca was heard telling the Women in Action: "If you come here you pay the money". The right to accumulate wealth in exchange for spiritual services is regarded in much the same way by Christie Doe Tetteh. In Achimota Forest one Tuesday morning she complained to those gathered there:

> There are some people who wish you will never make it in life. There are people who want to use your services but don't want to pay. They want to rely on you until the coming of Jesus Christ, but they don't want you to enjoy the goodies of life.[93]

In this context, wealth constitutes material proof of God's blessing. At Action Chapel's "Women of Worth" convention, for example, Mama Christie told the congregation that "to be blessed means that people envy you. If people don't envy you, you know you're not blessed".[94] As proof of this blessing, she makes frequent references to her material wealth to her own congregation at Solid Rock. At a Wednesday "Hotline Service", Mama Christie announced that she had just had a new wardrobe fitted in her house: "Yesterday they brought my wardrobe… not the one you people know [but] wall to wall!".[95] The congregation clapped and cheered. Mama Christie continued: "I am blessed. I have given out twenty-one pairs of shoes". She then gave away a travel bag to one of the church's female elders as well as a scarf to another woman, which matched a blouse she had given to her on a previous occasion.

This distribution of goods among members of her congregation is an important part of understanding Christie Doe Tetteh's authority. Her material wealth is presented not just as a sign of her personal blessing

[93] 5 August 2003.
[94] 5 June 2003.
[95] 11 June 2003.

but also as an indication of the future blessings of her congregation and those associated with her. Of her house, for instance, which is an impressive marble-fronted structure on Atomic Road in the north of the city, she once said: "Why would I be building a nice house if you were not coming for honeymoon?".[96] Another time she claimed that she was building such a grand house to accommodate the many guests that would be visiting the church from the United States. The millions she was spending on the house, she said, would save on the cost of hotel bills.[97]

A key theme in Solid Rock sermons—one that I heard repeated many times in various forms—is the importance of service and loyalty to God's prophets in the pursuit of success and prosperity in this life. At a Tuesday deliverance service in Achimota Forest, for example, Rev. Shaddrack Addei gave a sermon titled "My Days of Honour Are Here", in which he instructed the congregation thus:

> The missing link in Christianity these days: Most of us feel too big to serve. If we want to be honoured we must go back to the days of old when people served. There is something attached to the person you are serving. That thing is not an inheritance; it is not attached by blood. Some grace and anointing can only be passed on through service. Don't take it lightly.[98]

To some extent this represents a return to traditional hierarchies and relationships of patronage. Hierarchies in the charismatic churches are not based on kinship ("it is not attached by blood"), age or gender; nonetheless the relationship between Christie Doe Tetteh and her congregants is an exchange relationship rather like the neo-patrimonial relationships that characterise postcolonial African politics.

Even Christie Doe Tetteh's latest book, which purports to be a celebration of womanhood, is in fact, in part at least, an elaboration on this theme of service to the prophets of God. The concluding chapters, for instance, celebrate the lives of two biblical women (2 Kings 4: 1–7; 8–37) who "accepted the place of the prophet in their lives"[99] and obeyed the instruction of the prophet, even though it did not make sense at the time. Do not take the men of God for granted, she warns.[100] The widow with the oil (2 Kings 4: 1–7) "recognized the

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[96] "The Real Woman" convention, 14 August 2003.
[97] 25 June 2003.
[98] 8 July 2003.
[99] Doe Tetteh, *Celebrating Womanhood*, 101.
[100] *Ibid.*, 107.

place of the prophet in her life and by simple obedience God turned her situation around".[101] In other words, Christie Doe Tetteh's special relationship with God, as one of his prophets, puts her in the position of "resource provider". For believers, these resources can be accessed only by maintaining a close personal relationship with the Woman of God through whom the blessings of the divine are channelled.

An interesting development in regard to the prophet/patron role of Christie Doe Tetteh, however, is suggested by the testimony of her driver, a Muslim. During a Tuesday morning deliverance service he told the church that since associating with Mama Christie he has been able to buy a car. He explained that even though Islam prevents him from becoming a Christian, since coming to Solid Rock it has "profited" him. "So what about you, the Christian?", he asked the crowd.[102] What this seems to suggest is that it was not his faith in God that enabled him to buy a car ("as for me I can't go into Christianity") but his association with Christie Doe Tetteh. This testimony points to the fluidity of religious identities in Accra, but it underlines also the somewhat ambiguous nature of Christie Doe Tetteh's spiritual role: a prophet, or vessel of God's power, on the one hand, and a self-powered patron, or provider of resources, on the other.

Motherhood and Groundnut Soup

In a break with tradition, and in contrast to the biographies of some of Africa's female religious leaders, Christie Doe Tetteh's authority seems not to rest entirely on identification as an "honorary male".[103] On the contrary, Christie Doe Tetteh, and those around her, embrace her womanhood both as an attractive and unique feature of Solid Rock Chapel and as a broader symbol of the charismatic movement's attempts to distance itself from what it perceives to be Africa's traditional attitudes to gender. When she preaches at other churches, for example, Christie Doe Tetteh is invariably introduced as "the only woman general overseer", or "the

[101] *Ibid*., 102.
[102] 5 August 2003.
[103] Brigid Sackey, for example, records an interview with *Sofo* Mary Owusu who responds to critics of her position as leader of a spiritualist church that Christ, a man, is inside her: "Christ has taken control of me" ("'Do Not Think of Me as a Woman, For He That is in Me is a Man.' The Story of *Sofo* Mary Owusu of the *Great I Am That I Am Church*", in Reiner Mahlke, Renate Pitzer-Reyl and Joachim Süss (eds.), *Living Faith—Lebendige Religiöse Wirklichkeit*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997, 133).

First Lady of Ghana's charismatic circle", and she often makes comments herself in reference to the fact that she is female: "Be glad that your pastor is a woman, your mother, your sister".[104] "Thank God he used a woman. I have no regrets God made me a woman".[105]

However, in order to establish her authority as a successful female pastor in a movement that, at heart, remains a male domain, Christie Doe Tetteh draws on the traditional model of female authority in Ghana, which is motherhood. As shown in Chapter Three, the use of motherhood as a source of authority is often symbolic, and this is certainly so in the case of Christie Doe Tetteh. It is perhaps because she is unmarried and childless that Rev. Christie needs to emphasise her role as a mother in the church to a greater extent than either Francisca Duncan-Williams or Moha Amoako, both of whom are biological mothers and access authority through their husbands. For Christie Doe Tetteh, the title "Mama", which is bestowed on her by her congregants, carries its own significance: "How many of you know I don't have a father, husband, children? I gave birth to myself. You are my children".[106] "You don't know how it feels to have no husband, no children; and yet I'm all these things without the things men think I should have."[107]

It is indicative, perhaps, of this use of symbolic motherhood that Christie Doe Tetteh's ministry seems to specialise in miracle babies. The magazine *Solid Rock News*, for example, is dominated by stories of miracle births and cures for infertility, and similar stories feature prominently in church services too. During a deliverance service in Achimota Forest, a woman was called to the front by Rev. Christie: "This lady, she trusted God for the fruit of the womb for years. The doctor said her tubes were blocked. Now she is a mother of two".[108] Another time, at a "Hotline Service", two women were called out. One of them also was described as having "blocked tubes" that the doctors were unable to treat. Then she came to see Mama Christie:

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[104] "The Real Woman" convention, 10 August 2003.

[105] *Ibid*., 13 August 2003. This does not mean, however, that Christie Doe Tetteh is not aware of the reluctance of some to attend a church led by a woman: "Don't let anyone tell you, 'Don't go to a woman's church'. If a woman was a dentist, you'd go there. What I am doing is more than a dentist, a gynaecologist. We're saving souls" (5 August 2003).

[106] 5 August 2003. Despite this reference to Christie Doe Tetteh's "miraculous" birth, her mother is a respected elder and a regular presence at Solid Rock services.

[107] "The Real Woman" convention, 17 August 2003.

[108] 8 July 2003.

"Now she is a mother of three". The other woman was said to have gone nine years "without menstrual…Now she is a mother of three".[109] Or, again during a "Hotline Service", a female singer was introduced who was said to have been waiting four years for a baby: "No-one was buying her tapes because of no show. Now she has a son called Gideon".[110]

At "The Real Woman" convention, Christie Doe Tetteh introduced Prophet Jeremiah, "my son", who apparently had been told by a pastor that he would not have children: "He came to Solid Rock…Now he has a daughter called Christie".[111] Christie Doe Tetteh's own miraculous role in these births was made very clear in one particular story. Again at the convention, she introduced a twenty-two-year-old chorister as "the first miracle baby":

> What I'm doing hasn't just started. I got on a plane for her naming ceremony [she also is called Christine]. I told the father, it is a girl. He said a boy. I said, even if it's a boy, when I get to the house God will change it into a girl![112]

This is not to suggest that miraculous cures for infertility are not a feature of all charismatic ministries, but stories of miracle babies do seem to be particularly prominent at Solid Rock where numerous "Christines" and "Christians" seem to reside.

Christie Doe Tetteh's role as the (symbolic) mother of Solid Rock Chapel's members reinforces her authoritarian identity as the "big woman" among many "small girls". However, a rather different approach to cultural models of femininity is suggested by Rev. Christie on occasions when she seems to adopt the role of symbolic "wife" to her church, which she does by cooking food for her congregants. A number of times—always following a deliverance service in Achimota Forest—people were invited to stay behind and eat food prepared for them by Mama Christie. On one of these occasions, she told those who had gathered in the forest: "When the Lord lays something on my heart,

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[109] 11 June 2003.

[110] 2 July 2003. What is implied here is that the woman's infertility ("no show") was hindering the sale of her tape recordings, and this is probably because infertility carries connotations of witchcraft.

[111] 13 August 2003.

[112] 14 August 2003.

I obey immediately. He hasn't laid on my heart for c70,000 connection or watermelon today.[113] He told me to bring banku for you".[114]

The symbolic significance of food and cookery in the context of Ghanaian gender relations has been noted. Whilst there are no sexual connotations implied by Christie Doe Tetteh's acts of food preparation, they do seem to symbolise a somewhat more deferential approach to her congregation than is the norm. For a Saturday morning breakfast meeting during the "Women of the Word" convention, for example, Mama Christie even prepared groundnut soup, which is a notoriously laborious process and a symbol of women's love for (or servitude to) their husbands.[115] Quite why she should choose to adopt such a deferential attitude to her congregants on these occasions is unclear, but if nothing else, it illustrates the often complex, and sometimes contradictory, character of the Rev. Christie Doe Tetteh.

Traditional Priestess or "Religious Expert"

Alongside Ghana's traditional priestesses and the female leaders of Ghanaian spiritualist churches, Christie Doe Tetteh may be viewed as one of a number of "exceptional women", whose authority stems from their ability to demonstrate privileged access to the spirit world.[116] In continuity with a long tradition of female religious experts, Christie Doe Tetteh uses her access to supernatural power to deal primarily

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[113] These are references to previous "seed faith" offerings. (For an explanatory note on "seed faith", see Chapter Two.) During a previous service, the congregation had been invited to give substantial offerings in exchange for anointed watermelons.

[114] 5 August 2003. Banku is a popular Ghanaian dish of fermented corn.

[115] 22 August 2002. Ghanaian women complain of the difficulties of finding time to attend church if their husbands have requested groundnut soup, which is traditionally eaten on Sundays.

[116] Female leaders in each of these religious traditions may be categorised as female "religious experts" because they tend to share certain common characteristics. As a group, these religious experts are "exceptional" women who are able to occupy positions outside the boundaries of normal gendered behaviour. Traditional priestesses, for example, usually refrain from marrying, though there is no actual prohibition against marriage, and they are permitted to bear children with any man of their choosing. Sackey explains that men are reluctant to marry a priestess due to the costs of her training, which her parents expect to have reimbursed, as well as the difficulty of living with a wife who is subject to many taboos ("Aspects of Continuity", 30, n. 7).

The reasons for Christie Doe Tetteh's marital status are unclear (she did once hint that in her twenties a man had "disappointed himself"), though it is unlikely to be due to ritualistic reasons. However, like a traditional priestess, her unique spiritual status excuses her from the social pressure to marry which is experienced by many Ghanaian women.

with witchcraft, which is seen as the root cause of people's problems, especially so-called "women's problems", such as infertility.

Christie Doe Tetteh herself rejects any association with the practices of traditional religion. She lays great emphasis on the fact that whatever happens at Solid Rock comes from the Bible, not from "fetish" practices, which are a source of evil and a barrier to success. In Achimota Forest she told the congregation,

> This is not a magic centre; it is a miracle centre. We don't do anything that's not in the Bible. If you're expecting me to lay hands, spit on you, slap you . . . "I see a roach in your brassiere" . . . you're wasting your time!

With reference to the biblical story of Jesus and the woman with the issue of blood (Luke 8: 40–48), she continued:

> She didn't come to look at his face, so if you've come to look at my face . . . I'm sorry! Some of you are not praying. If you're waiting for me to come and lay hands on you . . . excuse me! I'm not following you home. You should go home with confidence.[117]

Similarly at "The Real Woman" convention, when she introduced a woman's son as "the first miracle baby in this nation", she said:

> I told her to go! Now she has three children. He would not go to school until he had seen Mama Christie. I didn't bring candles or take her to the beach . . . it came of a prophetic word.[118]

However, although Christie Doe Tetteh may reproach people who come "to look at her face", most people who attend Solid Rock services do so in order to see Christie Doe Tetteh. It is her personal presence and her function as a medium between them and the spirit world that attracts many people to the church, just as people visit traditional priestesses for their ability to mediate between the natural and supernatural realms. Unlike traditional practitioners, however, Christie Doe Tetteh is more than an intermediary between two worlds and more than just a vessel through which the spirits speak. It is Christie Doe Tetteh's personal power and charisma that attracts people to her church, and though the source of that power may be attributed to her special "connection" with God, the distinction between Christie Doe Tetteh's power and God's power is often ambiguous.

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[117] 24 June 2003.
[118] 13 August 2003.

At times, for example, she seems to imply that in her actions she is simply obeying God's instructions as an instrument of the Holy Spirit: "When the Lord lays something on my heart I obey immediately", or "Sometimes when God tells me to do something I become a bit hesitant…" and "This morning the Holy Spirit told me…" are all common prefixes to seed faith offerings and other forms of instruction frequently issued to Solid Rock congregants. Likewise, in the run-up to a prayer session it was common to hear Rev. Christie say things like, "We are ready Lord, put me aside", which, again, implies that she is a vessel, nothing more, waiting to be filled by the power of the Holy Spirit.[119]

At other times, however, the distinction between the power of God and the power of Christie Doe Tetteh is less clear. After a small group of people had made a special offering at a deliverance service in Achimota Forest, for example, Christie Doe Tetteh handed each of them a piece of soap: "Ordinary *Sunlight* or miracle agent?", she asked. Then she told them, "Bring out something, a pen, a hankie…I want to pray over it. I don't want money". Holding up a cardboard box, she continued: "This carton, because it is coming from Mama Christie's house can become an anointing". She tore a piece off. "When I tore the first piece off, I felt something…a miracle".[120] During the same service she told the following story about her hairdresser:

> Every time she washed my hair, she's falling down [slain in the spirit]. I say no, I have to get another person. Some people came to my house to wash my things [laundry]. As soon as I handed them the things they started falling. Every time they touched one of my things, they fell…That's the anointing.[121]

This ambiguity surrounding perceptions of Christie Doe Tetteh's power is reflected in the personal testimonies given at Solid Rock. *Solid Rock News*, for example, claims to be filled with examples of God's miraculous intervention in people's lives. In fact, the vast majority of the magazine is simply a list of the miracles performed by Christie Doe Tetteh and it

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[119] 2 June 2003. This is reminiscent of the nineteenth-century female evangelists described in Chapter Two as "mouth pieces of the Lord" and vessels of the Holy Spirit.

[120] 24 June 2003.

[121] As in the case of Francisca Duncan-Williams, physical contact with Mama Christie, or contact with something Mama Christie has touched, is important for her congregants as a way of accessing her spiritual power. On occasions when Christie Doe Tetteh offered a hug to everyone giving an offering the whole church queued up for a chance to be touched by her.

is filled with letters of thanks for the blessings passed on by the woman of God. The testimonies given at Solid Rock services reflect this trend. During a call for testimonies at "The Real Woman" convention, a female chorister stood up to thank "Mama Bishop Dr Christie Doe Tetteh" whose life had blessed her and her family. At the same convention, a lead chorister thanked Mama Christie on behalf of the choir: "We are all beneficiaries of your impartation", and when two key figures in the church, Mama Dorothy and Pastor Cecilia, gave their testimonies at the convention, they also praised Mama Christie for her impact on their lives. Again, they made no mention of God.[122]

There is one further point that needs to be made on the subject of Christie Doe Tetteh and concepts of spiritual power. In continuity with cultural conceptions of witchcraft and other forms of esoteric power, Christie Doe Tetteh's ability to manipulate the spirit world is presented as a benevolent, but also malevolent, force. Alongside promises of groundnut soup and miracle babies lies a warning to anyone who may wish her ill; and her enemies, it seems, are all around: "I'm a pastor. Pastors have problems…people are sent to kill them!".[123] As if to confirm this, Christie Doe Tetteh told the women's convention that God had saved her from a knife attack: "A drunkard threw a knife at me. It just fell down by my side…A knife! I thank God for preserving my life". She continued, "In this country and beyond, there is no way you can fight me and win!". Even her own congregants are given a stark warning:

> If you are not coming to the convention ["The Real Woman"], you are against me…yes! You want to make me unhappy? I'm sorry for you. If you are in this church and you decide to be ashamed to associate with me, you are treading on dangerous ground. Me, I'm very sharp; you may be standing a long way from me, but I'm hearing what you are saying. You are either for me or against me. If you're for me, that's good. If you're coming here and you're not for me, you are treading on dangerous ground! I know what I'm saying…God will deal with you.[124]

In other words, Christie Doe Tetteh can use her power to harm as well as to heal.

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[122] Rather than breaking down the boundaries between leader and participant, as Cucchiari suggests ("Between Shame and Sanctification", 691), the personal narratives and testimonies heard at Solid Rock reinforce Christie Doe Tetteh's personal power and authority.

[123] 5 August 2003.

[124] 12 August 2003.

Christie Doe Tetteh's position within her church, then, represents many moments of continuity with traditional models of authority and spirituality, especially the focus on her personal charisma and the ambiguity surrounding the source of her powers. A significant area of innovation, however, is the extent to which Christie Doe Tetteh appeals to the charismatic movement itself as a source of authority.

Externality and the Charismatic "Genealogy"

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of Benson Idahosa and his influence on the growth and development of charismatic Christianity in the West African region.[125] Many key charismatic figures position themselves within the Idahosa "lineage" in order to give weight to their claims of divine favour. In Ghana, the most famous of Idahosa's offspring is Nicholas Duncan-Williams who in turn has sired "children" of his own. A "grandfather-father-grandchildren" hierarchy has evolved in which children and grandchildren share in the spiritual or "genetic" heritage of the late Archbishop Idahosa. In a sermon at Action Chapel about the importance of honouring leaders, for example, Eastwood Anaba spoke of the "genetic constitution" of Benson Idahosa and Nicholas Duncan-Williams. As a child of Duncan-Williams and a grandchild of Idahosa, he said, it is in his own "genes" to do "great things".[126]

Despite the modest size and age of Solid Rock Chapel, Christie Doe Tetteh presents herself not as the child of Nicholas Duncan-Williams, as one might expect,[127] but rather as the direct descendent of the movement's grandfather, Benson Idahosa himself. The reason she can do this relates, most probably, to her previous role as the Archbishop's personal secretary,[128] which, along with her years living in Nigeria,[129] she mentions often. Her relationship with Idahosa means that, unlike some of the other female pastors and pastors' wives we have looked at, Christie Doe Tetteh does not consider herself a "daughter" of Francisca Duncan-Williams. In fact, to avoid any rivalry perhaps, Christie Doe

[125] See J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *African Charismatics: Current Developments within Independent Indigenous Pentecostalism in Ghana*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005, 112–14. "Ghanaian students returning from Idahosa's Bible school", he writes, "became symbolic embodiments of Idahosa's teachings" (205).

[126] The "Women of Worth" convention, 8 June 2003.

[127] Duncan-Williams has supported Solid Rock financially, even paying for a new roof for City of Faith after it was damaged in a storm.

[128] A post she held for twelve years during the 1980s and early 1990s.

[129] 1978 (or possibly 1982) to 1994.

Tetteh and Francisca Duncan-Williams always refer to each other as "my twin sister".[130] The fact that she feels justified in placing herself on the same level as Nicholas Duncan-Williams in the charismatic hierarchy,[131] however, is symptomatic of the importance attached to her history with Benson Idahosa. As her pastor, Rev. Shaddrack Addei, explained: "The anointing is transferred to other people. Because of Idahosa's anointing upon her life, Mama Christie enjoys supernatural favour".[132]

These references to her close links with leading charismatic men—through whom, it is suggested, she establishes some of her authority—extend beyond Africa, mainly to Britain and the United States. On introducing the Rev. Michelle Jackson (who is married to Bishop Harry Jackson, senior pastor of Hope Christian Church in Maryland, Washington, DC) at "The Real Woman" convention, Christie Doe Tetteh told the congregation, "I met her preaching for Matthew Ashimolowo".[133] Later on in the convention, she said:

> I met this precious daughter of Zion when I was preaching in Matthew Ashimolowo's church in London, KICC. The following year, they invited me to preach in their church in Washington DC…a big place! She sent a beautiful hat from DC to New York for me…by DHL![134]

Another guest speaker at the convention told the crowd:

> She's not only doing it in Accra, but over there in the US there are places when you mention her name, people stand! God has given you someone. I want you to stand solidly with her.

And, as if to confirm her status within the American movement, the guest speaker said: "I bring greetings from Morris Cerullo".[135]

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[130] Although Mama Francisca usually likes to point out that while she "came out white", Rev. Christie "came out chocolate". At one point I heard Christie Doe Tetteh suggest that she "came chocolate" and Francisca "came yellow", but "I'm older than her", she added ("Women of Worth", 5 June 2003).

[131] At the "Women of Worth" convention, Christie Doe Tetteh also described herself as Nicholas Duncan-Williams' and Bishop James Saah's "twin sister" (2 June 2003).

[132] 18 June 2003.

[133] The Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC), founded by Matthew Ashimolowo, is the largest charismatic church in London, with a predominantly Nigerian congregation. It has received some critical attention from the British press in relation to its prosperity teaching ("Poor Christians are deluded by 'grab it' gospel", *The Times*, 17 March 2003, 4).

[134] 11 August 2003.

[135] 11 August 2003.

Sometimes Christie Doe Tetteh even seems to suggest that she is a superior preacher to "men of God" from Britain and America. At a "Hotline Service" she told the church that she had recently met a pastor in America: "He said sometimes when he preaches people give him $100, but because Mama Christie is blessed, sometimes people give her more than $100".[136] Another time, in Achimota Forest, she described the following encounter with a young man at Alabaster House Chapel:

> I told him, "I'm not up to Ashimolowo's standard". He said, "You have more than Ashimolowo. You've blessed my life". He was a shoe-shine boy originally. In 1997 Mama Christie spoke over his life that one day he will be a great man. He stood on that word and now he's a chief executive with his own firm.[137]

Christie Doe Tetteh's regular references to "outside"—to Britain, Nigeria and the United States—play an important role in establishing her power and authority within Solid Rock Chapel and the wider charismatic movement. She often welcomes guest preachers from what she calls "the United States of Soul Clinic at Cantonments" [a suburb of Accra] and "the United States of Akosombo" [a town in the Volta Region]. She repeatedly makes comments such as "I was teaching in the Bronx", "When I was preaching in Brooklyn", "in the church in California", "I was preaching in Lagos . . . they gave me a police escort!", "I just had a call from London", and "I was praying over the phone with somebody from America". Through these references, Christie Doe Tetteh presents herself as a point of contact between her congregants and the goods of the world economy.

> God has blessed me so I will be a blessing to other people. From the day I arrived from the US to the first Tuesday I had given out fifty pairs of shoes. You have to make Christianity appetising and appealing to other people. Your Christianity shouldn't always have a twisted hand and broken back begging for something. I'm telling you this: me, I used to eat from the dustbin. I used to wear second-hand clothes everyday. I changed! So you have to change. The same God in the US can bless you in Ghana.[138]

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[136] 2 July 2003.

[137] 5 August 2003. His printing company produced fliers and other marketing materials for "The Real Woman" convention.

[138] "Hotline Service", 2 July 2003.

It is through Mama Christie's presence that the global world (specifically the United States) is brought into the midst of her congregation and its opportunities symbolically extended to the level of the local. In this regard, then, it is argued that Christie Doe Tetteh's authority, as well as her appeal, stem as much from her connection with "outside" as they do from indigenous sources and spiritualities. Whilst she draws on local models of female authority, her status as a charismatic leader is also intimately linked to global, and predominantly male, sources.

In this chapter I have suggested that while opportunities for socialisation and self-expression do exist for female participants in the born-again churches, these opportunities are tempered somewhat by the perpetuation of a narrative of mistrust about fellow participants, and the dominance of the leadership, which limits participation and even structures spiritual expression. This is evident at Action Chapel, where Francisca Duncan-Williams reproduces the political clientalism of "First Lady syndrome" and the spiritual authoritarianism of the prophetic mode; she is a "big woman" and her congregants are "small girls". A similar model is evident at Solid Rock, where Christie Doe Tetteh draws on local and external models of power to produce new forms of gendered authority and to re-legitimise established norms. The new churches appeal to many women primarily not because they provide opportunities for communal solidarity—though they may do this to a limited extent—but because they provide access to the spiritual power of prophetic individuals. In the next chapter, it is argued that women sometimes try to use this spiritual power to mediate their gendered relationships.

CHAPTER SIX

MEN, MARRIAGE AND MODERNITY

The preceding two chapters have been concerned primarily with exploring charismatic beliefs and practices associated with women and women's church activities. Having examined constructions of womanhood in charismatic Christianity at some length in Chapter Four, this chapter is concerned primarily with constructions of manhood within born-again discourses on masculinity, marriage, and family life. It is argued that the new churches' attitudes towards marriage and family life reflect many of the social changes—introduced in Chapter Three but outlined in more detail here—regarding the state of the family in contemporary Ghana. On one level, the appeal of charismatic beliefs about men, marriage and modernity lies in assisting individuals in negotiating some of the changes in domestic life that have been experienced in the postcolonial era. However, whilst constructions of family life in the charismatic movement correspond with what many perceive as a broader cultural shift towards the individuated nuclear family system, the predominance of a spiritualised discourse, which attributes male behaviour, in particular, to the activities of malignant forces, suggests that the churches' primary role lies in explaining the absence of change, or at least the absence of change in the direction desired by many, especially women.

Until now I have been concerned primarily with the gender discourses of Action Chapel, Alive Chapel and Solid Rock. In this chapter, however, the focus is broadened slightly to include the teachings of other charismatic figures on men, marriage and family life; namely, Rev. Samuel Kisseadoo, who is a regular speaker at Action Chapel; Mensa Otabil, head pastor of the International Central Gospel Church (ICGC); and the Nigerian founder of Winners' Chapel, David Oyedepo, whose branch in Accra is the largest church in the city. According to Gifford, the diversity of Ghana's charismatic sector means that figures like Otabil of ICGC and Salifu of Alive Chapel reside at opposite ends of a very broad spectrum, and therefore that Otabil's message simply would not resonate with the concerns of Salifu's congregants.[1] To some extent, this

[1] Gifford, *Ghana's New*, 193–4.

is the case. However, the discursive influence of Otabil is felt across the spectrum by a range of people through his daily radio broadcasts and his televised sermons. The number of people who listen to Otabil on the radio, for example, is far greater than those who attend his church. Mention Mensa Otabil to Salifu's congregants, or those of Solid Rock, and you will often hear how much "that man has blessed my life". A similar remark might be made of David Oyedepo, whose books and tapes are readily available to a Ghanaian audience. This chapter is interested also, however, in how people encounter charismatic beliefs about marriage and family life in their everyday lives. I consider, therefore, how these broader discourses are experienced and interpreted by my informants in Action Chapel, Alive Chapel and Solid Rock.

Family Life and Social Change in Ghana Since Independence

Research into the state of marriages and family life in Ghana during the two decades following independence presents a picture of social change that contrasts "traditional" family relations with "modern" Western models and posits the rapid growth of the latter among Ghana's urban elite at the expense of the former. The traditional family[2] is represented as an unstable domestic unit characterised by widespread polygamy, separate residential patterns, informal conjugality resulting from social and economic independence, and divided loyalties between the family of orientation and the family of procreation.[3] The research of the 1960s and 1970s predicted that under the influences of colonialism, changing economic systems, urbanisation, missionary Christianity and formal education, traditional family patterns would give way, in a relatively short space of time, to what was perceived as

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[2] There has never been a monolithic family structure in Ghana because the nature of the family differs between ethnic groups. Max Assimeng describes the traditional family in relation to three different systems of kinship: the matrilineal type (the Akan); the patrilineal type (the Ga); and the double descent system (the Fanti). The matrilineal system, he notes, is the most common (*Social Structure of Ghana: A Study in Persistence and Change*, Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1999, 75–6).

[3] Diana Gladys Azu, *The Ga Family and Social Change*, African Social Research Documents, vol. 5, Cambridge: African Studies Centre, 1974; John C. Caldwell, *Population Growth and Family Change in Africa: The New Urban Elite in Ghana*, Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1968; Christine Oppong, *Marriage Among a Matrilineal Elite: A Family Study of Ghanaian Senior Civil Servants*, Cambridge: CUP, 1974. Drawing on some of this work, Nukunya notes that in Ghana in general "relations based on marriage are usually subordinated to those of kinship" (*Tradition*, 48).

the more "modern", Western-style, individuated nuclear family system. This would be characterised by joint decision-making and socialisation, male participation in household chores, individual choice of marriage partner, rejection of family interference, and the concentration of expenditure on the nuclear family. It was suggested that the African family would become less and less distinguishable from its European or North American counterparts. In his study of Ghana's emerging post-independence urban elite, for example, John Caldwell noted:

> Whatever the basic causes, the changes themselves are tending to make the families more like Western middle-class families and to reduce those characteristics which have previously distinguished local families from families in Europe or North America.[4]

Other commentators of this period were slightly more cautious in their predictions than Caldwell. Christine Oppong argued that the changes in family structures related more to material culture and style of life than to changes in the system of domestic rights and obligations, and that prescribed norms for conjugal roles were distinct from actual behaviour.[5] However, she also concluded that the ideal relationship aimed at by most couples in her study was the closed/joint type—that is, the nuclear relationship characterised by joint decision-making and shared financial resources—and that the overall trend was "away from the traditional matrilineal system towards a small bilateral family, adapted to spatial and social mobility and involving a greater intimacy and equality between husbands and wives".[6]

Research from the 1990s suggests that changes in family life have not occurred to the extent predicted by these early studies, in part due perhaps to the economic decline Ghana experienced in the 1980s in conjunction with the socio-economic changes wrought by structural adjustment and the ERP. Despite the recognition of the nuclear family in law—in particular, the introduction of the Intestate Succession

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[4] Caldwell, *Population Growth*, 64. He does comment in addition, however, that some of his informants felt that the shift towards a Western-style family had been achieved "at the expense of all tendencies towards sociability, mutual help, and unselfishness that operate outside the nuclear family and towards other relatives" (66).

[5] Oppong, *Marriage*, 27. Caldwell recognises this also to some extent, though he lends as much weight to changes in attitude as he does to changes in behaviour: "Factual data have been intermingled with findings on attitudinal change, for both are signs of change and, though belief and practice cannot be exactly equated, both are measures of change and do interact" (*Population Growth*, 71).

[6] Oppong, *Marriage*, 159.

Law PNDCL 111[7]—most urban Ghanaians continue to experience at least some tension between the conflicting demands of the nuclear and extended family groups.[8] For many, then, the lineage system continues to take priority over the conjugal bond.

Also, despite the prestige associated with Ordinance and Christian marriage among Ghana's emerging elite in the post-independence period, in contemporary Ghana the number of legal unions appear to have decreased whilst the number of informal unions has doubled.[9] Although in accordance with earlier predictions the practice of polygamy has declined,[10] urban Ghana has experienced a growth in the phenomenon known as "private polygamy" or "outside wifeship",[11] which tends to direct the expenditure of men away from the nuclear domestic unit.[12] The conjugal bond has not become characterised by joint decision-making and greater intimacy to the extent expected, though there is more emphasis on love and romance in courtship among some Ghanaians.[13] In fact, since the downturn in the economy, the number of

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[7] See Chapter Three.

[8] "While literates, urban dwellers and others of their kind are doing their utmost to divest themselves of their extended family obligations, the wider family members are not taking this development lightly. Studies of this phenomenon seem to suggest clearly that there is, at the present, quite a contest going on between extended families and those of their members trying to renege on their obligations to them" (Nukunya, *Tradition*, 149).

[9] John S. Nabila and Clara Fayorsey, "Adolescent Fertility and Reproductive Behaviour in Ghana", in Ardayfio-Schandorf, *Changing Family*, 143.

[10] Assimeng attributes the decline of polygamy primarily to changes in the economy and labour demands. He argues that where more wives and more children were once necessary for labour-intensive farming, the family has shifted from being a "production unit" to "an expensive consumption unit": "More wives, and more children, may still have a prestige value for the polygynist; but mere social value without economic value is just too much to maintain now" (*Social Structure*, 92).

[11] Assimeng notes, for example, that although people might be prepared to condemn polygamy "at the verbal level", they might also be prepared "to indulge in this arrangement, or variations of it, in secrecy" (*ibid*., 84). He describes "a new system of polygyny" in which men have one "legitimate" wife and a host of concubines, usually with the knowledge of the wife. "Bigamy", he argues, "has very little cultural and psychological support—at the moment—in the social structure of Ghana" (*ibid*., 96). Similarly, Nukunya comments that "most Ghanaians still consider access to a plurality of women a man's right and would like to reserve this right to be exercised when the need arises either in casual affairs or additional marriages", and he notes that it is easier now than in the past to have extramarital sex because traditional sanctions against it have been relaxed (*Tradition*, 156–8).

[12] Yaw Oheneba-Sakyi, *Female Autonomy, Family Decision Making, and Demographic Behaviour in Africa*, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1999, 147.

[13] Nukunya suggests that this is due to the influence of foreign films, novels and the international media on young literate Ghanaians (*Tradition*, 153).

female-headed households has risen, and husbands and fathers have become increasingly marginal within many Ghanaian homes.[14]

It is argued, therefore, that the changes in marriage and family life that were expected to occur in the postcolonial period in Ghana have not occurred to the extent predicted, though the individuated nuclear family system remains the ideal for many people. This disparity between the ideal and the reality seems to have given rise to a perception of unprecedented marital disruption and familial instability. This view is expressed by Max Assimeng, who describes four negative effects of social change on Ghanaian families: first, men and women are choosing unstable forms of cohabitation rather than marriage; second, marriages are breaking down and women are being abandoned by men overwhelmed by the cost of marital and parental responsibility; third, as a result of economic retrenchment, male-female roles in the home are being reversed and women are becoming more "dominant"; and fourth, parents who have little time for their children are responsible for an increase in rates of delinquency.[15] These views, which are reflected also in the popular press,[16] seem to indicate a widespread perception of a country that is experiencing an increase in marital disruption and instability within the contemporary Ghanaian family.[17] It is this account of the impact of cultural and economic changes on family

[14] According to the Ghana Living Standards Survey (1989), 24.8 per cent of families in Ghana are headed by women and in Accra that figure rises to 33.9 per cent. The marital status of female heads has changed also since the 1960s: in 1987/8 a larger proportion of female heads were widowed or divorced (47.5 per cent) compared with 38 per cent in 1960, and fewer were married (49.5 per cent in 1987/8 compared with 58.9 per cent in 1960). Individuals living in female-headed households in 1990 number four million, which is about 25 per cent of the total population (Addai-Sundiata, "Family Dynamics and Residential Arrangements in Ghana", 73–5). The author notes, however, that in joint households the decision-making power of wives has increased due to the improved economic status of wives (*ibid*., 77–8).

[15] Assimeng, *Social Structure*, 98.

[16] "Let's Maintain Our Family System", *The Ghanaian Voice*, 29 May–1 June 2003, 6; "Ghanaians Urged to Maintain Strong Family Ties", *The Ghanaian Voice*, 26–8 May 2003, 5; "Trial Marriage: What Panellists Say", *The Mirror*, 7 June 2003, 29; "Marriage and the Family Circle", *The Weekend Heritage*, 30 May 2003, 6; "Married Couples Schooled", *The Crusading Guide*, 20–6 May 2003, 5. All of these articles in some way reflect the concerns expressed by Assimeng.

[17] A former government minister, for example, writes: "The family, the basic unit of production and reproduction, is in crisis: marital bonds are being broken while men are shirking their responsibilities. Consequently, women are being over-burdened by men's negligence of duty and their coping strategies are not adequate enough to enable them to maintain their children fully" (D. S. Boateng, "The Changing Family and National Development in Ghana", in Ardayfio-Schandorf, *Changing Family*, 3).

structures and the conjugal relationship that constitutes the social and historical context for analysing charismatic discourses on marriage and family life.

Changing Men and Masculinities

One of the most important elements of the charismatic movement's discourse on marriage and family matters is revealed by its attitudes towards men and the role played by irresponsible males in what is perceived by the churches as the social and moral crisis in African family life. In a series of "Family Life" sermons given at Action Chapel, Rev. Samuel Kisseadoo attributed 50 per cent of the world's problems to "men who have no time for women and children".[18] Men have neglected their duty as fathers and they have abused their position as heads of their homes; they are proud, childish, irresponsible and completely lacking in respect for women. At an Action Chapel women's prayer meeting, Rev. Ampiah-Kwofi led a rather typical tirade against the "childish thinking" of men, which causes marriage break-ups and unstable families. It is men, he preached, and their inability to take responsibility—losing interest in their wives, running after other women, trying to exploit women rather than helping them—who are the cause of so much "social confusion" in the world today.[19]

In contrast to the traditional Christian interpretation of Genesis 3: 1–24, which blames the woman, Eve, for the eviction of the first couple from the Garden of Eden and the fall of mankind, the theology of the new churches blames Adam who neglected his leadership position and allowed the devil to come into the garden and trick Eve.[20] Satan attacked the wife when the husband went out: "I think he should have been doing his duty", writes Kisseadoo, meaning Adam should have been at home, "when the enemy struck".[21] When God calls to the man

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[18] "Family Life and Spiritual Warfare", 24 July 2003.

[19] Action Chapel women's prayer meeting, 21 April 2003.

[20] This is the overwhelmingly most frequent interpretation. An exception is found in one marriage pamphlet, which suggests that disobedient wives should learn a lesson from Eve: "Except for her impudence mankind could have been spared the agony and pains being encountered today" (Francis N. Harvey, *Mistaken Marriages… Their Remedies*, Accra: Evangelistic Prayer Association, 1998, 101–2).

[21] Samuel Kisseadoo, *Spiritual Warfare and Family Life: Understanding the Devil and His Schemes to Enable You to Win the Victory for Your Family and Church*, Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2003, 6.

and asks, "Adam, where are you?" (Genesis 3: 9), Kisseadoo interprets the verse to mean: "Adam, what did you do or didn't do for the devil to come in and do what he did? That's the meaning".[22] Similarly, in one of a series of sermons entitled "Marriage 101", Mensa Otabil, of the International Central Gospel Church, preaching on this point, said:

> Do you remember the first person to cause trouble in the world was Eve, a woman? But when God came, he didn't say, Eve where are you? He said, Adam where are you? Responsibility lies with the man.[23]

To some extent this is a critique of modernity and urbanisation; in particular, it represents a critical perspective on the increasing number of men who are travelling to Europe and the United States as economic migrants. Otabil is outspoken on this point:

> Husbands, dwell with your wife: to live with, remain with, reside with, to be together. You must live with them and that literally means, when you marry you don't live apart from each other. You don't live in Germany and your wife lives in Ghana. Sometimes I've seen people marry and immediately they marry they have plan that the husband should travel to go and seek for greener pastures and soon the wife will join, but what they forget was that the American Embassy was not part of their marriage, and the British Consulate was not the reverend minister who officiated their marriage! Some husbands leave and they go to live in another country and the life there is so nice; their wife and children is here…they can't come back, and very soon some woman will start occupying the space…and they will write back and say, "the thing is so difficult, I've prayed about it and I think anytime you feel to marry somebody else, you marry". Any time the man writes that, you know what he's done. Women, tell the men: dwell with us.[24]

More commonly, this perspective on Adam, and his failings as a husband, represents a critique of "African culture" and what is seen as its tradition of sexual inequality that favours men and disrespects women. Again, on this point, Otabil sets the tone:

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[22] "Family Life and Spiritual Warfare", 24 July 2003.

[23] Living Word Ministries, "Marriage 101", Part 4.

[24] *Ibid*. See also the advice given to men in a marriage pamphlet not to travel abroad for long periods because "women feel lonely and comfortless. Money remitted to them regularly does not normally solve the problem" (Kwame and Bea Owusu-Ansah, *15 Ingredients for a Successful Marriage: Steps to Enjoy Your Marriage*, Kumasi: Greatline Publications, 2002, 96). The critique of male migration is undermined somewhat by the frequency of prayers for passports and visas, which are commonplace in charismatic services and actually encourage the economic migration of born-again men, and women.

> You would think that because they carry the next human beings on earth and because all of us came from women, you would have thought that they would be the most honoured of the human beings; far more honoured than the man. And yet, it's not so. The ones who carry the human beings are abused and the ones who did a five minute job are given all the respect as if they did a hard job. It wasn't any hard job! That was nothing! You just had fun for five minutes, and she carried the burden for nine months. And the saddest thing is, while she's carrying the burden, you who gave her the burden start going for another woman. May God have mercy on men!…Sometimes even when the wife is pregnant, the man slaps her around, beats her, kicks her, because she didn't get my food ready…Oh God, if I had a cane, we will lash all the man on their backs, on the bare behind…[laughter] lash them!…Taking care of the big baby, the grown one, who has no understanding; self-centred, egotistical, proud, haughty man, arrogant, no respect! Wants to be a king in his own house without providing for the house. I believe the key to a good home is the man. If the man will learn to honour and dwell with knowledge there will be peace at home.[25]

Although in this passage Otabil attributes much of the blame for the behaviour of men towards women on individual men, much of his critique of male behaviour is levelled at a culture which he sees as encouraging disrespect and abuse: "some of the things some of us men do are the highest form of wickedness; it's evil, but we do it because the culture accepts it". For Otabil it is a simple matter of cultural change:

> The number one need of most men is to be respected…How does a man interpret respect? It's all based on culture, because if you've been raised being told, if your wife pounds fufu for you after nine in the night when you've come from work, then she really respects you, then you will demand fufu at night as a sign of respect. Is that not so? So for some men they will say, a woman respects me because she washes my things. She respects me because she cooks for me. She respects me because when I talk, she doesn't talk. And as much as it is the way a man interprets respect, remember, it is based on the culture you have come out of. The thing about culture is that culture changes, it is dynamic, so what was respect in your father's days may not necessarily be respect now.[26]

Whilst Otabil articulates most clearly a critique of the effects of African culture on male behaviour, the correlation between culture, male behaviour and the need for social change is not confined to the overtly counter-cultural rhetoric of Mensa Otabil's International Central

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[25] "Marriage 101", Part 5.
[26] "Marriage 101", Part 2.

Gospel Church. The discourses of some of the other new churches also suggest that conceptually a born-again marriage marks a definite departure from tradition and that African culture—in particular, traditional views on the superior status of men—is primarily responsible for the moral and social crisis perceived to be afflicting the African family. In the context of marriage and family life, then, a born-again convert is required to make a choice between the "tradition" of his or her elders and a Christian life. In a wedding ceremony at Alive Chapel, for example, Pastor Bempah instructed his congregation to choose between God and tradition:

> Some Christians still follow tradition; they know the Word of God says some things believers are not meant to do but when they return to the house they do those things and say "give unto Caesar". Until you come out of tradition you will never experience the Word of God. You say, "we will not drink", but when visitors come you serve them drink. You are not a proper Christian. At your engagement you say, "nothing should come between me and the woman", but you let your family in. You are not a proper Christian. Choose between your God and tradition.[27]

The choice between Christianity and tradition is regarded as having particular implications for male converts for whom a break with the past is conceptualised in terms of their attitudes towards women and the rejection of role models established by their fathers. This theme emerged from the personal narratives of some of my male informants. When asked about their own marriages, or marital expectations, my male interviewees often cited their father's behaviour as an influential factor in their decision to make a break with the past and become born again. Polygamy, extra-marital sex and domestic violence were the most commonly cited behavioural patterns that men associated with their fathers and wanted to avoid themselves. I quote from these narratives below:

> My father came from this Asante, the royal palace, he was a chief. He had a lot of money [and] he got married. He put my mother through hell. He travelled and got married [again. His father had four wives.] My mother

[27] 11 May 2003. A marriage pamphlet instructs its readers likewise to choose "between the tradition of his elders and God's Word" (Stephen Adei, *The Secret of a Happy Marriage: Communication*, Accra: Africa Christian Press, 1991, 101). Similarly, Otabil begins his series of sermons on marriage by reminding the congregation that "this is not your uncle speaking, not your village elder speaking; this is the Lord Almighty" ("Marriage 101", Part 1).

> had a broken heart and ever since my mother has not come back to her form again. I took a cue from my mother's situation because my mother is so dear to my heart…I mean, unless any woman go through that thing. These are some of the things I don't want anyone to go through. I took a cue from what my father did to my mum; I don't want it to happen to any woman.[28]
>
> My father was very confused about marriage. He married my mum in the Catholic Church and that was the only person he married in Catholic Church. Before he married my mum he was already married to four women that he laid off and went fresh to marry my mother. But that's not fresh, you understand? Because you have got a back-log somewhere, that will always put pressure on you one way or another. He stayed with my mum for years and years, but the appetite for many women had been in him already.[29]
>
> From what I heard…there was a separation between my parents. Because during that time my father would have to go in for another woman and they had children before they came back to marry. That's why I've said already, in our culture here in Ghana, unless you are well-versed in the Word of God you go by the tradition…But if you are living according to the principles of the Bible or the principles in marriage that God has prescribed for the church, I don't think there will be any sort of [problem]. Even if there will be some problem, it will just be minimal; but it is not as big as the way we live in our tradition.[30]
>
> My father married three wives and I will never under no circumstances whatsoever marry a second wife. I won't do that. You know, in Ghanaian society polygamy is not a crime; you can choose to marry as many as you want. My father married three wives and that has affected us a lot. That thing affected he himself a lot. Ever since my father married a second wife he has never been himself. Things have gone bad, the job bad, everything bad. This polygamy, this polygamous family is not good enough. There is nothing that will make me go in for a second wife. That is a departure from my father.[31]

What these accounts illustrate is the close link made by some male converts themselves between becoming born again and a transformation in their attitudes and behaviour towards women. Some spoke with regret of their "womanising" pasts and of the women they had hurt or "abused". Others expressed sadness about the treatment of their wives in the early days of their marriage before they became born again. One young man told me simply: "I knew I had become born again when I started respecting women".

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[28] Michael, interview, 1 September 2003.
[29] Pastor Praise, interview, 8 September 2003.
[30] Pastor Daniel Prepah, interview, 7 July 2003.
[31] Pastor Courage Adonoo, interview, 30 June 2003.

What, then, are the expectations of born-again men in their relations with women and in their roles as husbands and fathers? How does the charismatic movement define manhood and masculinity, and in what way does this represent a departure from what it perceives as the "affliction" of the African male? In Chapter Four it was established that charismatic Christianity preserves a gendered hierarchy based on complementarity within the conjugal relationship, but it was observed also that the issue of female submission within marriage is more complex than it is sometimes represented. In this chapter, I want to examine how the churches define a man's leadership role in marriage and his position as head of the home. It is argued that whilst a male-female hierarchy is preserved, the concept of male authority is redefined in terms of "sacrifice" and "self-giving" love.

In charismatic Christianity, male headship does not mean that men are superior to women, or more precisely, that the husband is superior to the wife. The concept of the superiority of the man over the woman is presented as an African traditional belief: "In the African tradition, man and woman are not equal, because man is traditionally given more power over the woman", but "this should not be so among Christians".[32] The Old Testament figures of Abraham and Sarah are most commonly cited by the new churches as the ideal "Christian couple"—not least because Sarah "obeyed" Abraham and called her husband "lord"—but in charismatic interpretations, Abraham is transformed from biblical patriarch to loving husband and father. Following the examples of Abraham, and to some extent Adam, born-again men are encouraged to "respect" their wives and treat them with kindness so that wives will submit to their husbands not out of fear but "with love".[33] This means

[32] Iyke Nathan Uzorma, *Overcoming the Forces Against a Successful Marriage*, Benin City, Nigeria: Franco-Bon Publishing Ministry, 1994, 62–3. He adds that couples should not allow the "master" and "servant" relationship to come into play in the matrimonial home, because it will lead to divorce (83–4). Mensa Otabil describes the headship of men as little more than "a metaphor": "Remember, when God said, 'For the husband is the head of the wife', he was not speaking in physical terms; he was speaking in metaphorical terms. It was a metaphor. When the Bible says the man is the head, it doesn't mean your wife has no brain; it doesn't mean you are the only one who has brains. You know your wife has brains and she was probably doing better in school than you. I mean, these days you go to most schools and the girls are doing better than the boys…Then one day this boy who was bottom of the class is going to say, 'I'm the head'! Where were you when we were doing mathematics? Where was your headship?" ("Marriage 101", Part 2).

[33] "Submission is to be done out of love not out of fear…The submission is not in slavery, but in love; not in fear, but in love" (David and Faith Oyedepo, *Success in Marriage*, Lagos: Dominion Publishing House, 1999, 96; 167).

that men are not to behave like "lions" and "tigers" in their homes;[34] neither are they meant to shout or create terror in the minds of their wife and children, and all forms of domestic violence (beating, slapping, and emotional abuse) are condemned as "abhorrent".[35]

> God does not want the woman to be terrorised into doing good. God does not want the husband to frighten his wife into obeying him. Shouting on her . . . beating her into submission . . . that is not what God is talking about. And some of us believe, especially some African men, have grown with the understanding that if your wife is not submissive you have to discipline her so she will shut up and respect you. She may fear you, she may be terrified of you, but she will not respect you. Because you don't respect people who abuse you.[36]

As this extract from an Otabil sermon suggests, definitions of male headship within born-again Christianity tend to be contrasted with what are perceived to be "traditional African values" about men and their masculine identities. African values are blamed for preventing a man from showing affection to his wife in public;[37] it is African culture that creates

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[34] Faith Oyedepo suggests that it is "pride" that makes a man behave "like a lion" in his own home so that his family are afraid of him (Oyedepo and Oyedepo, *Success*, 137). Otabil describes the homes of men who behave like tigers and lions: "the moment you come home, signals are sent, and you think it's respect, but go and listen to the private conversations of your wife and you will know you have no respect whatsoever. Is that what you want?" ("Marriage 101", Part 5).

[35] David Oyedepo, for example, tells husbands that they are obliged to "honour" their wives, which makes "beating, humiliating or maltreating the woman a taboo" (Oyedepo and Oyedepo, *Success*, 91). In fact, most marriage pamphlets warn men not to beat their wives (Evangelist and Mrs. Kenneth Onyeme, *24 Marriage Keys for Ladies to Know Their True Life Partner During Courtship*, Lagos: Keneve Evangelistic Publications, 2003, 11; Joshua Adjabeng, *Sex, Friendship & Marriage*, Accra: Pentecost Press Ltd, 1991, 53; Harvey, *Mistaken Marriages*, 108). One suggests that "only infantile and immature husbands beat and maltreat their wives", but adds: "Women are also not permitted to beat their husbands" (Owusu-Ansah and Owusu-Ansah, *15 Ingredients*, 72–3).

It is interesting to note, however, that when questioned about the Domestic Violence Bill, which in 2003 was being debated in Parliament, most pastors and born-again men were unsure that the law constituted an appropriate response to the problem. On BBC Radio Four "Woman's Hour", Ghana's Minister of Tertiary Education, Elizabeth Ohenyi, commented that the concept of marital rape is not culturally acceptable for most Ghanaians and that the clause will probably be removed before the Bill is passed (9 March 2005).

[36] Otabil, "Marriage 101", Part 5.

[37] On Choice FM's *Parenting* show, hosted on Saturday afternoons by the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association, the resident social worker, Mr Darlington, exhorted men to treat their wives publicly with pride and respect, especially in front of the extended family: "In Africa, a man sees exalting his wife before his family as a weakness; they won't even do it. They won't even talk about her, as if she did not exist. Please men, do it; stand up and be counted as men". During the call-in for this show,

"male pride" and stops men apologising to their wives or sharing in the household chores; and it is African tradition that hinders men's acceptance of their wives as equals and co-partners in the running of the home. As one marriage pamphlet puts it, the concept of equality goes "against the grain" of African culture because it undermines the leadership of the man in the home. Leadership is seen "in the traditional sense of power relations and not in the biblical sense of self-giving love (Ephesians 5: 22–3)".[38]

In born-again Christianity then, the concept of male headship is redefined in terms of "love" and "sacrifice", and the primary focus of a man's life shifts from self to partner: "You are going to deprive yourself of many things just to make her happy…make her highest form of welfare and happiness your greatest goal".[39] The male pride associated with African culture is undermined by expectations of humility in men's relations with Christ and their wives: through the fear of God "everyone must die to self" and a husband must "submit to his wife". Men's failure to be humble is condemned as "the underlying cause of all mistreatment that wives and women in general receive from husbands and other men".[40] At a wedding ceremony held in Action Chapel, a pastor from Fountain Gate Chapel, preaching on "The Conscience of Man", told the men in the congregation: "If you are a child of God you have a conscience. Saying sorry to your wife doesn't diminish you but makes you a greater man and somebody God has blessed so your wife can respect you".[41] This sort of change of attitude, following conversion, in men's relationships with women was reported by some of my male informants. Pastor Courage of Alive Chapel, for example, described the change in his relationship with his wife and children after he became born again:

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which was titled "Should Our In-Laws Live With Us or Not?", a male listener thanked the Pastors' Wives Association, remarking that "the nation needs this programme; men have to learn to respect their wives" (26 April 2003).

[38] Adei, *Secret*, 31. Describing what the author calls a "typical" African scene—a man and wife returning home from the fields and the pregnant woman is carrying a full load while the man carries just the machete—he warns men against adhering to "traditional restrictions" on showing love and concern, suggesting that the man should share his wife's burden even though tradition would "ridicule him" (62–3).

[39] Daniel Jenkins, *How to Have an Enjoyable Marriage*, Accra: Altar International Ltd, 1996, 42.

[40] Samuel Kisseadoo, *Why Do We Marry? and Who is the Head of the Home?*, Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2002, 51–3.

[41] 7 September 2002.

> The first and foremost is that the husband must be loving. You see, if the loving aspect is there then the man becomes very responsible. If you love the person you also want to be caring and you want to be tender. You see, it is the way you talk with your wife…I try not to shout at her. If I want to tell her something that I think will be demanding, very demanding, I try to do it in a lovely way…Even the children, I don't beat them. It is because of the born-again thing, I now know that I must talk to them and I must teach them; I must do this, I must do that. So the born-again experience has actually helped me a lot in my family and in my relationship with people.[42]

A young born-again man, who had recently married, told me about a disagreement he had had with his wife:

> A couple of weeks ago my wife and I had a disagreement. After a few days I could see that she was still upset. So, I got down on my knees and I looked at her and said, "Helen I love you and I am sorry. I promise not to do that again." And every day for a week I did that, I went down on my knees to apologise.
>
> [*Was it hard for you to admit that you were wrong and apologise?*] Yes, very hard. But I didn't want her to think that she had married a bad man.
>
> [*Did you shout at her?*] Yes, I shouted at her.
>
> [*Would you have apologised if you had not been born again?*] No. "Just fuck off! Pack your bags and fuck off!" [laughs]. I would never have apologised. It's very difficult for a man to apologise to a woman. But I know that Helen won't tell anyone.
>
> [*So you would not want any of your friends to know that you apologised to your wife?*] No.[43]

According to Rev. Samuel Kisseadoo, the very definition of a "man" includes the sorts of characteristics that the men quoted above adopted after their conversions. Beyond physical attributes, maleness is defined by certain qualities, which include humility, fidelity and commitment. Only a man who nurtures these qualities can claim "headship" of his household:

> When we talk of a "man" in this sense [as head of the home], we do not mean any male who just finds himself spending some time in a house, merely making a particular house his abode for his personal living, or routinely sleeping in a home with a woman to his personal satisfaction and

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[42] 30 June 2003. On recalling the conversion of her late husband, an elderly female informant from Action Chapel, Grace, said that he stopped shouting at her and generally behaved better in the house, with more patience, after he was born again (interview, 11 July 2003).

[43] A young pastor from Alive Chapel also commented that apologising to your wife is a very recent idea in Ghana so men have to be told to do it.

> probably producing children as a result. In this context we are referring to any man who understands marriage and family life and has made a conscious decision to be permanently bonded and committed to a woman whom he regards as his only wife. Such a man automatically becomes the "head" of the woman, the family, and the home.[44]

This means that extra-marital affairs and sexual promiscuity (which are among the most common of the complaints made by women about men) are considered unacceptable behaviour. In part this is because male promiscuity directs expenditure away from the nuclear domestic unit towards "outside wives" (which, again, is what women complain about most when questioned on the subject), but such behaviour is criticised also because it undermines the purpose of marriage, which in born-again Christianity, as I show below, is love, companionship and mutual support.

Moreover, for born-again men their ability to fulfil the duties of a good husband and a committed family man are linked to concepts of "success" and "victory", with which, as Chapter Two demonstrated, charismatic Christianity is so concerned. A believer's access to success and prosperity is to some extent predicated on the fulfilment of his responsibilities as the loving husband and active father. Rev. Kisseadoo, for example, suggests that in marriage "people who normally take the back seat become leaders with goal oriented lifestyles that fuel the engines of family life for high productivity and success".[45] The founder of Winners' Chapel, David Oyedepo, warns:

> When a man stops looking after his household his life becomes worse than that of an unbeliever's. No matter how much tithe and offering he gives, God says he has denied the faith and will suffer the same fate as an unbeliever.[46]

In other words, the breaking of the marital bond is linked to failure and an inability to progress in life. Pastor Bempah spoke on this theme in a wedding sermon: "Some of the men have a wife in the house but they are enjoying themselves with girlfriends…That is the reason you are not going up. Faithfulness brings promotion".[47] On one level, then,

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[44] Kisseadoo, *Why Do We Marry?*, 48.
[45] *Ibid*., 32.
[46] Oyedepo and Oyedepo, *Success*, 53–4.
[47] 11 May 2003. A marriage pamphlet warns: "Can anything be more threatening to a Christian? The way you treat your wife has a bearing on your prayers being answered" (Adei, *Secret*, 105).

the concept of "success" for men is redefined in terms of their familial roles. Charismatic Christianity, therefore, redirects men's attention towards the domestic sphere and the needs of the nuclear family. As Rev. Kisseadoo declared at Action Chapel: "If you don't have anointing to help stir the stew with your wife, you don't have anointing to preach and lay hands".[48]

The Ideal Christian Family

The model of an ideal Christian family perpetuated by the charismatic movement reflects the broader cultural shift towards the individuated nuclear family system discussed above. In accordance with this trend, born-again Christians in Accra tend to recognise three stages of the marital process, which culminates, where possible, in a church wedding complete with bouquets, bridesmaids and a big white dress. Many of the books and pamphlets published on the subject of marriage—to which I refer throughout this chapter—display pictures of elaborately decorated brides and grooms on their front covers.[49]

Despite the importance placed on a church wedding ceremony, born-again Christians do not disregard totally the practice of the customary marriage rites,[50] which constitute the first stage of the marriage process. I attended four church wedding ceremonies during fieldwork and at each one the father of the bride was invited to the stage to confirm that the groom had completed all the necessary rites, which included the payment of money and other gifts to the bride's family. At Alive Chapel, for example, Pastor Bempah asked the father of the bride to confirm that the marriage had been "contracted properly" (meaning the customary rites had been performed) so that it could be "fully constituted in the House of God".[51] It is generally recommended, however, that born-again grooms do not present the bride's parents with the traditional bottle of liquor but soft drink or extra money instead. There are

[48] "Family Life", 27 July 2003.

[49] On some pamphlets the couples on show are not African but European, or sometimes Asian.

[50] For detailed descriptions of customary rites, see Nukunya, *Tradition*, 42–3, and Assimeng, *Social Structure*, 80–1. The latter similarly notes: "It should be stressed that, in spite of the modern vogue for Church and Ordinance marriage, the customary element has tended to precede several such modern marriages" (82).

[51] 11 May 2003.

also warnings against the pouring of libation during the performance of the customary rites as this "flirtation with the demonic world" is "un-Christian" and could cause problems later on in the marriage.[52] Traditionally the completion of the customary rites marks the beginning of the marriage, but for born-again Christians, ideally, this stage in the process represents an engagement[53] but not a marriage. Therefore, the couple are not supposed to live together or have sexual relations until after the church wedding ceremony.

The second stage of the process is the registering of the marriage with the civic authorities, thereby making the union an "Ordinance" marriage. This is recommended to born-again couples on the grounds that a registered marriage ensures that on the death of a spouse the family property will be inherited by the remaining spouse and children under Law PNDC 111.[54] The third stage is a church wedding, which, as suggested above, is usually replete with all the "white wedding" trimmings of a traditional European ceremony. Brides are often dressed in the most elaborate of outfits (including one at Alive Chapel with flashing red lights sewn into her veil), though many couples choose to share their wedding with other couples to reduce costs.[55]

It is not unusual for a born-again couple to enter into a Christian and Ordinance marriage many years after they performed the customary rites and had children.[56] Sometimes this is due to the costs involved in a church wedding, but for my informants who had organised a church wedding after twenty years or more of marriage, their decision was informed primarily by their conversion to born-again Christianity. Pastor Courage of Alive Chapel, for example, told me that he and his wife "went the traditional way" because they were not born-again at the time of their marriage. It was only after they became born-again in a charismatic church that they registered the marriage. Similarly, the

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[52] Harvey, *Mistaken Marriages*, 152.

[53] Nukunya describes the engagement as "an important innovation" in new marriages, which replaces the "handing-over ceremony" of the customary rites (*Tradition*, 156).

[54] For details on inheritance laws, including PNDC 111, see Chapter Three.

[55] A wedding at Action Chapel, for example, involved three couples, which, I was told, is quite common because families can share the costs of the ceremony and the reception. One pamphlet warns couples against elaborate weddings as they could provoke witchcraft attacks from jealous family members (Harvey, *Mistaken Marriages*, 154–5).

[56] Nukunya also notes that registering a marriage may take place many years after the couple have completed childbearing (*Tradition*, 157).

wedding of Joseph and his wife at Alive Chapel[57] followed many years of customary marriage. Joseph, head of protocol at the church, told me that, as born-again Christians, he and his wife should have their marriage blessed in church, though there was some suggestion that a dispute between his wife and his family had prompted the registering of the marriage.[58] The important point is that in accordance with the modern trends outlined above, born-again Christians tend to want to enter into Ordinance marriage with a church wedding following completion of the customary rites. As one lady expressed it: "I want to be a full Mrs. Housewife with two rings"; meaning that she wants both an engagement (the customary rites) and a church wedding. I also heard women described—with some envy—as "two-ring wives", indicating that they had been both "engaged" and married. This represents the attitude of the majority of born-again Christians, both female and male, with whom I spoke about their marital expectations.

In accordance with "modern" marriage trends, born-again Christians tend to advocate a move away from the extended family towards the nuclear unit, though the break away from extended family ties is rarely comprehensive. There is still much debate within charismatic circles about the appropriate relationship between the conflicting demands of conjugal and kinship bonds. For example, despite David Oyedepo's warning to young men and women not to let anyone "tie your destiny down with a simple kolanut",[59] the emphasis on individual choice of marriage partner does not entirely counteract the need for parental blessing.[60] During a workshop for single people at Alive Chapel, the congregation were told that even if their parents are "ungodly", they should listen to them when choosing a marriage partner, because "in this area God gives them authority and wisdom".[61] Similarly, a

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[57] 27 July 2003.

[58] There was a suggestion among some people in the church that a male member of Joseph's family had attacked and beaten his wife. The reasons for the alleged attack, however, were unclear.

[59] Oyedepo and Oyedepo, *Success*, 63. This refers to the kolanuts traditionally presented by the groom to the woman's family as a symbol of the marriage contract in West Africa.

[60] Assimeng notes that whilst "romantic love" is the main basis for choice of marital partners among educated urban dwellers, some traditional considerations persist, of which the most important is "parental consent" (*Social Structure*, 79). Nukunya also notes that "though parental initiative is no more common, their agreement and support for the choice are still necessary" (*Tradition*, 153).

[61] "A Time for Singles: How to Choose Your Marriage Partner", 25 August 2002. There was one case at Alive Chapel I was told about where some of the senior pastors

pamphlet entitled *The Portrait of an Ideal Christian Family*, which despite picturing a man, woman and two children in a love heart on the front cover, reminds readers that marriage in Africa is still "a group affair" and therefore couples should be ready to accommodate the views of their parents.[62]

The importance of parental consent notwithstanding, after marriage it should ideally be the nuclear family that is the focus of a born-again couple's energies; a position which is based on the oft-quoted biblical text: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Genesis 2: 24). This text is interpreted to mean that parents or other family members should not be allowed to participate in conjugal decision-making, married couples should not live in the family house nor encourage relatives to live with the couple, and a married person's primary financial responsibility is to his or her partner and offspring, as opposed to their kin.[63] This does not just alter relationships between family members but redefines what the family is: "A family is a social group in society consisting of a man, his wife and their offspring".[64] So members of the kinship are not always even included in born-again definitions of "the family" and Akan customs such as matrilineal inheritance are dismissed as "primitive traditional practices", which should fade with Christian influence and urbanisation. One pamphlet even includes guidelines on making a will to ensure that the nuclear family are the main beneficiaries of the deceased's estate.[65]

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had entered into negotiations with a woman's family on behalf of a junior pastor. The woman's family disapproved of the marriage proposal because the pastor's social and financial status did not match that of their daughter. The couple did eventually marry in December 2003. Onyeme and Onyeme suggest that if both families reject your marriage partner, then probably the relationship is not God's will (*24 Marriage Keys*, 9).

[62] Henry U. Ogbonnaya, *The Portrait of an Ideal Christian Family*, Victory and Joy Family Series, no date, 43.

[63] In theory, this relieves married people of their obligation to members of their kinship, which, as Gyekye notes, can become "burdensome" unless the couple happens to be wealthy (*African Cultural Values*, 80).

[64] Oyedepo and Oyedepo, *Success*, 9. Compare this with a definition of the African family provided by Gyekye: "It is a matter of common knowledge that when one speaks of the family in an African context one is referring, not to the nuclear family consisting merely of husband, wife, and children, but to the *extended* family, which comprise [sic] a large number of blood relatives who trace their descent from a common ancestor and who are held together by a sense of obligation to one another" (italics original, (*African Cultural Values*, 75).

[65] Joshua Adjabeng, *Enjoying a Fruitful Marriage: Romance and Management in Marriage*, Accra: Olive Publications, 1995, 166–73. It does recommend that something be left to the extended family to avoid upset, but like most of the advice given to born-again

This redefinition of what a family is has implications also for the financial arrangements within the conjugal relationship; couples are encouraged to combine their finances and keep joint bank accounts. Traditionally, married people in Ghana keep most of their financial arrangements separate by maintaining a clear division of responsibilities between husband and wife, and most people look towards the kinship as their primary economic relationship.[66] This has consequences for men, who are instructed by the new churches to be open with their wives about their income,[67] and for women who are advised to share their trading revenue with their husbands rather than directing it towards the kinship, which traditionally is a woman's main source of security. In marriage

> we learn how to put monies together in a joint bank account, and team up to make reasonable financial planning, which enables us to plan effectively for the future. We learn joyfully to pay bills together, spend money together for needs, buy gifts for each other as well as close and extended family members, and even suffer financial constraints or losses together.[68]

In other words, in born-again Christianity the marital relationship should be characterised by joint decision-making and shared financial resources, which is a significant departure from the traditional matrilineal (or patrilineal) system.

"The Language of Love": Shifting Marital Expectations

Thus far, it has been established that born-again masculinity is represented by church discourses as less "African" than other masculinities,[69] and that the concept of "the family" is significantly re-shaped to reflect

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couples, the nuclear family is prioritised. Under some guidelines on "Family Expenses", for example, "Remittance to Parents" is included, but readers are advised to be aware of "unreasonable demands" from in-laws, which could plague a couple's financial plans (Jenkins, *How to Have*, 109).

[66] This is especially so among the matrilineal Akan where a married man is traditionally responsible for his sister's children (part of his matrikin) rather than his own offspring. Assimeng writes of the Akan father and husband as being "owned" by his matrilineage (*Social Structure*, 77).

[67] A common complaint among women in the churches is that husbands are secretive about money and do not tell their wives how much they earn.

[68] Kisseadoo, *Why Do We Marry?*, 18–19.

[69] As shown in Chapter Two, others have noted that born-again men are less "male" than non-born-again men. (See Brusco, "The Reformation of Machismo" and Gill, "Like a Veil to Cover Them".)

"modern" trends, which indicate a shift (to varying degrees) from an understanding of the family as an extended kinship group to a nuclear family system. In addition, it is argued that the concept of the conjugal bond is transformed from what is perceived primarily as a socio-economic arrangement based on an exchange of mutually beneficial resources,[70] to a male-female relationship grounded in love, friendship and mutual support. "In primitive societies, it is said that love is not the basic [sic] of marriage", but economic organisation, division of labour and protection of children. "This is why in such societies men marry many wives. But with the children of God love comes first."[71] "Before you even start sharing money and property", preaches Otabil, "you have to share your heart; you have to share your love".[72] Given Ghana's cultural context, this is important, because it means that even children are not a reason for marriage but only its by-product.[73] This is a significant departure from tradition; it means that infertility, in either the man or the woman, is not a justification for divorce or second marriage.[74] This aspect of the discourse may appeal particularly to women, on whom infertility tends to be blamed.

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[70] See Chapter Three.

[71] Ogbonnaya, *Portrait*, 15.

[72] "Marriage 101", Part 2.

[73] "Childbirth is not a yardstick to measure success of married life—wonderful couples pass through the world without any children between them" (Kisseadoo, *Why Do We Marry?*, 12). "Marriage is not only for procreation—[but also] for companionship—don't allow the family to ruin the marriage if it is childless" (Adjabeng, *Sex*, 60). One pamphlet observes: "The whites normally try to cope up by adopting children or stay alone to enjoy the marriage by themselves" (Owusu-Ansah and Owusu-Ansah, *15 Ingredients*, 95). Compare this with Gyeke's assertion: "The relationship is expected to result in the birth of children, who are very much wanted and highly valued in African societies. A marriage that fails to produce children is regarded as a great misfortune and will inevitably strain the relations not only between the man and his wife but also between the two families involved. Because every marriage between young people is entered into *for the purpose of procreation*, failure to produce children (a failure traditionally blamed on the wife) can even lead to divorce" (*African Cultural Values*, 91; italics mine).

[74] "Lack of children in a marriage is never a reason for taking a second wife or dismissing a wife" (Harvey, *Mistaken Marriages*, 120). Women are advised also against "proving" their fertility (which some men, or the family of some men, request prior to marriage). At Alive Chapel's "A Time for Singles", the preacher told the female congregants: "Women, do not prove your fertility. There's no guarantee that one birth will lead to another; it's a commitment you are making. Would you want to stay with that person even if you have no children? 'Be fruitful and multiply' does not only mean children in the physical sense. You can be fruitful in other ways". Equally, fertility is not proof of manhood: "Having children is not to prove that you are a man. Let it not be said that a man without children is unfruitful. Do not condemn anyone who does not have children" (25 August 2002).

Whilst a general shift from temporary polygamous unions towards permanent monogamous ones was initiated by the mission churches during the colonial period,[75] the contemporary charismatic movement emphasises the importance of love, affection and romance. During a recording for the television program *Love Web* at Action Chapel, for example, Rev. Emmanuel Ackun (author of *The Irresistible Man: Winning Secrets for Great Husbands*)[76] spoke about the importance of "affection" in marriage:

> Every woman wants affection. Is that true ladies? [A big cheer went up from the mostly female audience.] If I am married to you I must adjust my life so I can meet you at the point of love to make my marriage better . . . In our culture a man enters marriage thinking he is the boss and this makes him bossy. But you marry a woman to cheer her up, to make her happy.[77]

In a sermon on "How to Have a Lasting Marriage", Otabil advises husbands to express affection and appreciation daily, because as African men "we must strive to inject more affection into our relationships":

> It has been found out scientifically that husbands who kiss their wives every morning live an average of five years longer than husbands who don't. How many of you want long life? This is scientifically proven . . . And those husbands who kiss their wives every morning have fewer car accidents . . . they are sick 50 per cent less than those who don't kiss and they earn 30 to 40 per cent more than those who don't kiss . . . scientific. There is something about kissing your wife that will give you life! I know African men kiss under darkness, I know that, but don't wait until all the lights are out and then you go in, looking for a lip. Do it in the morning! How many of you want to live five years longer, earn 30 per cent more, have fewer car accidents? Kiss your wife.[78]

Echoing this theme, most pamphlets on marriage and family life include sections on topics such as "Understanding Love", "The Practice of Love in Marriage",[79] and "The Language of Love",[80] which contain recommendations such as making "a love calendar", taking romantic walks

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[75] See Chapter Three.

[76] Accra: Journagrafx, 2001.

[77] 14 September 2002. A similar comment was made by a male contributor to the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association's radio show during a broadcast on "The Role of the Father in the Home": "If your wife isn't happy, you are not fulfilling your role as a husband" (21 September 2002).

[78] "How to Have a Lasting Marriage", Living Word Ministries.

[79] Jenkins, *How to Have*, 115–42.

[80] Adei, *Secret*, 21.

with your spouse, sharing a picnic on "a day of love maintenance", and regularly exchanging words of romance and intimacy. The importance of "communication" and "friendship"[81] between spouses is stressed, alongside encouragement to spend time in the company of one's spouse and to share in joint activities. Men, in particular, are admonished to spend more time with their wives:

> Men lack commitment; they want contentment. When they have money they enjoy spending it on other women. The woman is just left with the children in the home. It is not right! It is something that should stop. They never see their wives but expect the shop to be open at night! It doesn't work like that. You don't need money to go to "Frankies";[82] just take her for a stroll in your area, keep a picture of your wife in your wallet. Just little things that show I care . . . We've come to accept that the man can do certain things but not the woman. But it's not right. She too is born of woman. She's your lover, your best friend. If you are meeting other friends in the evening, you should make your wife your friend. Everything good should be in his home so he can go out with his whole family.[83]

This call for greater intimacy extends also to sexual relations between husbands and wives, and many of the marriage pamphlets produced by born-again pastors contain sections on the sex act that resemble "how to" manuals.[84] The main point of these sections is to instruct men on the art of pleasuring their wives and the importance of romance and

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[81] This was a central part of the message to young people at Alive Chapel who attended the workshop for singles: "The first step is to make friends with the person; friendship is the most important thing to God" (25 August 2002). A similar message was preached at an Action Chapel wedding ceremony: "The marriage began on a note of friendship and it must continue as a friendship today. Your best friend must be your wife or your husband. If your husband or your wife is not there you will feel there is a problem, that there is something wrong. At the end of everything let the friendship prevail. I pray that people will learn to joke, to make each other happy . . . Friendship can be even greater than blood ties if we create and serve in the marriage" (7 September 2002).

[82] "Frankies" is a fast food restaurant on what is known locally as Accra's "Oxford Street". It is popular with Europeans and the middle-class but too expensive for most Ghanaians.

[83] Male contributor on the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry's radio show, "The Role of the Father in the Home" (21 September 2002).

[84] See for example, Adjabeng, *Sex*, 55–79 ("Sexual Intimacy in Marriage"); Jenkins, *How to Have*, 71–98 ("Sex in Marriage"); and Evangelist Israel Onwumere, *Great Practical Steps You Must Take to Achieve Total Success in Your Marriage*, Lagos: Israel Publishing Ventures, 2003, 8 (which advises married couples to purchase "sexual intercourse story books" so that they can learn the "styles" that will please their partner).

foreplay in marital relations.[85] Otabil talks extensively about this in his "Marriage 101" series:

> Women like affirmation and words of encouragement more than sex. Am I right women? [Laughter and applause from the congregation.] So if you are a man who thinks you are a macho man and you really know how to satisfy your wife, you may know how to satisfy a prostitute but that is different from satisfying your wife; it's a different thing. You need to be patient; no under the cover, rushing, before you realise it you're on top of her. No, you don't do things like that…And some men think they have sexual experience: "I have experience". I mean, what experience? You were doing it under the chicken coup, under the mango tree; you have no idea how to handle a woman. You don't know anything…If a man is not understanding towards a woman there is no way he can satisfy her sexually. All the styles you know, you can put into practice but it won't satisfy her, because what she wants, it's not just an act, it's a relationship. We don't do it in the animal way; we do it the human way, and that means you must understand your woman.[86]

Rev. Samuel Kisseadoo preached a similar message in his "Family Life" sermon at Action Chapel:

> You have to give the sex life to God in prayer and study the Word and have it as a mental attitude. [Don't] Come home and jump on your wife like Nigeria Airways landing at airport…Without marriage it's hell,[87] but in marriage do it well or don't marry. Seventy-five per cent of the enjoyment in the bed matters [is] your approach, the way you go about it, the way you communicate. No woman will enjoy it if she doesn't even know you are going to do it. Find signs and symptoms to indicate to her, on the phone or in the morning; a scratch on the palm, just something that tells her. The brains you use to get your degree and to fill your forms to travel overseas, use it in your home![88]

It is this issue of "love" in particular which some women in the charismatic churches say distinguishes born-again men from other men and it is the reason they often give for wanting to marry a convert or, preferably, a pastor. Born-again men, I was told, are "different" because "they understand love" and are less likely to engage in extra-marital

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[85] Jenkins' section on "Sexual Anatomy", for example, includes diagrams of the male and female sexual organs and instructions on the clitoris, as well as details of the sexual changes women experience during menstruation, pregnancy, motherhood and menopause (*How to Have*, 78–82).

[86] "Marriage 101", Part 5.

[87] Meaning that sex before or outside marriage is a sin.

[88] 27 July 2003.

affairs. One young woman told me, for example, that with a Christian man "you live peacefully":

> If you marry a God-fearing man you are coming to church with your husband. Your husband knows that God says this [and] this. I shouldn't do this, so he will not do it. But if the person doesn't know God he can behave . . . he can go marry somebody attached to you [a friend], because we have many women now [looking for husbands]. But the person who fears God knows that it is an abomination and will not do that.[89]

Another young woman, a student at the University of Ghana, explained why she was "praying for a pastor-husband":

> Because when I see Bishop [James Saah of Action Chapel] I just get so excited. Sometimes I just wish I could have a man like his type to get married to. I would like to be married to a pastor. At least if I don't get a pastor a Christian will do, but I would like to marry a pastor. So if I have a man of the cloth then that man is ready to encourage me, will back me up, wouldn't destroy . . . wouldn't kill my dream and my hope and my desire, okay? If you have a Christian you are also sure he wouldn't go after other ladies because he knows his principles, [so] the probability of him doing that is very less.[90]

These sorts of opinions about the desirability of born-again men are reflected in the personal pages of local newspapers and magazines, which reveal an overwhelming preference among women in Accra for "born-again" and "God-fearing" men whom, it is assumed, will be better husbands and more responsible fathers. Within charismatic discourses on marriage and family life, however, it is not men alone who are the subjects of critique. Women's attitudes towards men are addressed also, particularly the way in which women are perceived to treat men as "commodities".

Restoring Manhood

To some extent, the discourses of the new churches on marriage and manhood represent an attempt to mediate some of the changes in gender relations that have been caused by social changes associated with economic decline such as the increase in the number of female breadwinners. Church discourses, for instance, include a critique of

[89] Interview, 3 July 2003.
[90] Interview, 15 July 2003.

women's behaviour in their relations with men. In particular, the churches are critical of women's treatment of men as financial "commodities", which, the churches say, promotes a definition of manhood that is based on ownership of cars and mobile phones[91] rather than character or religiosity.

It is not unusual to hear young single men complaining that Ghanaian women are "gold diggers" of shallow character, who are interested in men only for their money. These men suggest that they find it difficult to marry because so many young women are waiting for a "big man" of wealth and status; in many cases, they say, women would rather be the girlfriends of "big men" than the wives of "small boys".[92] Pastor Bempah commented on this trend when he addressed the young women among the congregation at a wedding ceremony at Alive Chapel: "Most of these ladies are not getting married because they are looking for something big. If a person is not having a number [mobile phone]…Argh, forget it!".[93] Otabil also is critical of women who dismiss men for being "too bush" (meaning uncivilised) in favour of men who "talk sweet": "Meanwhile there was somebody prepared to honour you, support you, but you looked at the package and thrown [sic] it away".[94] This perception of women's attitudes towards men is reflected in the comments made by some of the young men that I spoke to in the churches who were critical of what they perceived as women's preference for older men with expendable incomes. From these conversations the impression emerged that if women favour born-again men because they "understand love", then young men prefer born-again women because they "love the man" and not the money.

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[91] Migrant men of the postcolonial era have long been called "been-to" (meaning "been overseas") and "fridgeful", signifying their ability to provide money and modern goods for their wives and girlfriends.

[92] See Carmel Dinan, "Sugar Daddies and Gold-Diggers: the White Collar Single Women in Accra", in Oppong, *Female and Male*, 344–66, for extended interviews with Ghanaian women on their relationships with "big men".

[93] 27 July 2003. Kisseadoo laments: "It's unfortunate that some people (especially some ladies) use the possession of a car as one of their primary qualifications for accepting a man's proposal" (*Why Do We Marry?*, 26).

[94] "Marriage 101", Part 1. See also a marriage pamphlet warning ladies who value money more than a relationship, and who therefore "set their sights on a rich guy", that such a "misconception" is one of the main causes of "late marriage" (Evangelist and Mrs. Kenneth Onyeme, *30 Things Ladies Must Do to Attract Quick and Successful Marriage*, Lagos: Keneve Evangelistic Publications, 2002, 18).

The churches are equally critical of married women who try to "boss" their husbands because their income matches or even exceeds that of their spouse. On the radio show hosted by the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association, a contributor expressed sympathy for the "poor men" who marry women from "well-to-do families" and develop an "inferiority complex" because their wives try to dominate household finances. Similarly, a marriage pamphlet warns: "When a woman tries to emasculate her husband and rip [sic] him of headship because of her wealth and status in society, the marriage is certainly in danger".[95] Pastor Praise of Alive Chapel suggested that his own marriage had fallen apart because his wife, a Nigerian "landlady",[96] became dictatorial when he lost his job and was unable, therefore, to pay the rent for their house. Indicating, perhaps, the gap between the born-again ideal and the experience of many (his wife was born-again), he expressed anger about women who feel empowered to "act like the boss" at home when economic conditions make it so difficult for "men to be men". In his opinion, part of the problem stems from young women making too much money from relationships with "big men" boyfriends:

> That's why you see a lot of girls with flashy cars, good houses; and the men that should marry them are trekking and taking tro tro, and so they end up not having husbands. But if they want to get one now they go and use their money to pull you into the house and force you to marry them, you know? And at the end of the day, he can't be a breadwinner, so it's like, very few men achieve success… There are a lot of things that make men not to be men. And the minute the person, who you think shouldn't be your boss, who is your wife, tries to act like your boss, you give it to her immediately.[97]

As this comment from Pastor Praise suggests, the "inferiority complex" of men unable to fulfil the traditional role of family breadwinner is

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[95] Jenkins, *How to Have*, 9.

[96] "Landlady" is a term commonly used to describe a woman who owns her own property or properties, especially if she rents rooms to paying tenants. For a married woman, the term may imply that she "controls" her husband: "when you say you have landladies, it means either the man is not existing or the man has no say" (Pastor Praise).

[97] Interview, 8 September 2003. Cornwall records similar complaints from Yoruba men about women who become "rude and troublesome" when their incomes exceed those of their husbands (Andrea Cornwall, "Wayward Women and Useless Men: Contest and Change in Gender Relations in Ado-Odo, S. W. Nigeria", in Hodgson and McCurdy, *"Wicked" Women*, 78).

said by the churches to be one of the primary causes of spousal abuse in Ghanaian marriages. Women, therefore, are encouraged to remain "humble" in relations with their husbands in spite of their earnings and to "cover" their husbands should the role of breadwinner fall unexpectedly to them. As Pastor Emmanuel from Father Care International—an NGO linked to the Victory Bible Church, which provides a counselling service for fathers and the children of absentee fathers—told me: "Men should see the income of the wife as a blessing, but women should cover their husbands; don't let people see where the income is coming from".[98]

The Nigerian preacher Bimbo Odukoya, who hosts a weekly programme on Ghanaian television called *Single and Married*, takes an interesting approach to the effects of economic failure on male self-esteem. She urges married women to restore their husbands' sense of manhood through sex:

> If your husband has lost his job and he's feeling depressed… then seduce your husband… make love in a very vigorous and serious way… you will see a changed man… you'll let him know you don't love him for what he has, you love him for who he is. One thing that makes a man feel he's a man is when he's sexually satisfied… If a man is failing in life, as long as he's sexually satisfied, he will drag himself back. Tell him he satisfies you; you are showing him he's a man and not a failure. He needs to know his wife loves him for himself, not for anything he does for her.[99]

The charismatic discourse, then, emphasises the responsibility of women to make men feel like "real men" at a time when "traditional" masculinities appear to be threatened. In this regard, born-again Christianity seems to constitute, in part at least, a response to the effects of economic decline on men and on male gender roles, as it has become increasingly difficult for Ghanaian men to be the breadwinners that tradition expects[100] within an economy that is dominated by the informal sector. Women may find that they have more access to the informal economy, through trading activities and small-scale business initiatives, than men who have been more heavily affected, perhaps, by the retrenchment policies of structural adjustment and the Economic Recovery

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[98] Interview, 4 August 2003.

[99] Extract from a sermon entitled "Sex in Marriage".

[100] Despite some separation of conjugal incomes, Gyeke suggests that traditionally a woman is expected to be "fully dependent" on her husband and "a man is expected to take full responsibility for his wife's total welfare" (*African Cultural Values*, 82).

Programme (ERP). Therefore, just as men are required to adjust their relationships with their wives to accommodate cultural change, so too are women encouraged to alter their perceptions of the conjugal bond from exchange relationship—in which husbands are primarily providers of resources[101]—to a partnership based on love, companionship, and mutual support.

Family Life and Spiritual Warfare

The charismatic movement's preoccupation with the activities of the spirit world, however, often overshadows the social reform dimension of its discourse on gender relations and family life. In the last section of this chapter it is argued that local beliefs about the impact of spiritual activity on events in this world are used by the churches to account for the gap between the ideal Christian family and the lived experiences of many born-again believers. In particular, I want to highlight the extent to which a charismatic discourse on spiritual warfare and demonology attributes aspects of male behaviour to a satanic strategy to disrupt family life and destroy marriages. Within this discourse women are held responsible for the "salvation" of men through the exercise of "natural" feminine religiosity.

It is argued that whilst this sort of discourse is continuous with local belief systems (described in the definition of African religiosity given in Chapter One), it bears a somewhat uneasy relation to the discourses of individualism, self-development and behavioural change addressed in Chapters Four and Five. I raise this not as a problem, as such, but rather as an illustration of the cultural and religious complexity of the charismatic movement, which advocates a shift towards "modern" family life whilst explaining the absence of this shift in the experience of many in terms of a local spiritualised discourse.

Charismatic Christians believe that Satan is on a mission to destroy homes in order to prevent the family from destroying his kingdom.[102] The family is perceived as the prime location for the cosmic battle between good and evil and thus virtually all family life problems are

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[101] The correlation between "husbands" and "commodities" is treated in some detail by Clark in *Onions Are My Husband*.

[102] "The family unit is currently facing one of its greatest attacks more than at any other period in history" (Oyedepo and Oyedepo, *Success*, 27).

attributed in some way to spiritual influences. This is how Rev. Kisseadoo describes the role of demons in his book, *Spiritual Warfare and Family Life*:

> Several demonic activities in multiple forms produce unfaithful or adulterous spouses, unloving and selfish husbands and wives, unforgiving and wicked spouses, disobedient and delinquent parents, stubborn and irresponsible children, parents that are difficult to live with, interfering and difficult in-laws, family violence, diseases and illnesses, financial losses, hindrance to social and academic progress, obstruction of business transactions, blockages of opportunities and promotion, invasion of the family by destructive friends, loss of property, backslidden Christians, and loss of desire for the holy things of God.[103]

These demonic activities include satanic onslaughts against families, the presence of spirit entities in the world disguised as human beings to attract "marital slaves", and "spiritual marriages" contracted to frustrate earthly unions. Expanding this theme, Rev. Kisseadoo recommends that all couples go through deliverance prior to marriage to release them from any demonic activity that might destroy the union. The influence of demons on marriages is commonly linked to the interference of the extended family and the practice of cultural traditions. One marriage pamphlet, for example, warns readers that demons can gain entrance to the marriage through the pouring of libation at the engagement ceremony or through a naming ceremony for the birth of a child.[104] It also suggests that relatives who fear they will not benefit from a union could be satanic agents working to break the relationship through spiritual marriage. Kisseadoo advises men whose wives are not responsive to them to "see if there is any soul-tie with the mother or if any witchcraft spirit from the mother is oppressing your wife".[105]

Ideas like these emerged from some people's own stories of marital difficulties and break-ups. Pastor Praise, for example, felt that his wife probably had "a character problem", but he also expressed concern that the shrine in his wife's family house had exacerbated the problem. He told me that the customary rites had been performed in a room that was used as a shrine by his wife's uncle, a fetish priest, and that, despite a subsequent Christian wedding ceremony, the shrine "kept

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[103] Kisseadoo, *Spiritual Warfare*, 90.
[104] Owusu-Ansah and Owusu-Ansah, *15 Ingredients*, 81.
[105] *Spiritual Warfare*, 127.

recurring in her dreams".[106] Grace, an elderly widow from Action Chapel, explained that the infertility she had experienced throughout her married life was due to witchcraft within the extended family. She added, however, that the root of the problem was only revealed to her after she became born-again.[107]

The subject of demons and satanic influence on marriages featured prominently at the wedding ceremonies I attended, which always included prayers against the "forces of darkness" and the "influence of the enemy" over the couple's lives. Pastor Mold concluded a ceremony at Action Chapel, for example, by reassuring the couples that "no demon or spirit will be able to interfere with what God has put together today".[108] Similarly, when Pastor Bempah of Alive Chapel declared, "What God has put together, let no man put asunder", Moha Amoako added, "Let no demon, no parent, no spirit put asunder what God has joined together".[109] At the reception for this ceremony, prayers were said over the wedding cake, including: "Any demon spirit hanging over your marriage, as you cut this cake you are cutting every one of them!".

What seems to emerge from these spiritual references is a certain amount of tension between the sorts of marital practices discussed above—affection, romance, self-sacrifice and love—which are advocated by the churches and emphasise the adoption of new forms of behaviour, and the belief that the behaviour of individuals in marital relationships is controlled by spiritual forces. Even Otabil's explicitly counter-cultural message is imbued with this thinking. He begins one of his sermons on marriage, for example, with a prayer to deliver married couples from the "traps of the enemy" and he thanks God that "no weapon of the enemy shall divide what you have put together". The sermon continues on this theme:

> If Satan is going to fight, he's going to fight your marriage. He's going to fight the unity and agreement of husband and wife. Most of you are involved in these battles; you have no idea why it is so hard for your marriage to work. Sometimes you think the other person is too stubborn, your

[106] Interview, 8 September 2003.
[107] Interview, 11 July 2003.
[108] 7 September 2002.
[109] 27 July 2003. At another Alive Chapel wedding, Pastor Bempah likewise declared that "no man, no demon, no principality" would put asunder what God had joined together (11 May 2003).

> husband is too wicked, your wife is too stubborn, and that's why all these problems are happening. May I suggest to you, it's not just that someone is stubborn or somebody is wicked, it is simply because there is an adversary of mankind: he's called the devil, or Satan—Lucifer—and his job is to break asunder your unity.[110]

Furthermore, within this spiritualised discourse, demons, witches and family curses are used to explain why men behave in the way that they sometimes do. Again, what is interesting is the tension that arises between behaviour change—a break with the past and the rejection of tradition—and the role of malignant forces in directing the actions of men. Despite the churches' condemnation of domestic violence and extra-marital sex, for instance, these things are attributed to the activities of spiritual forces, even in the lives of born-again Christians: "If you think a man is a man because he is born-again", Pastor Allen warned the "Women in Action", "you are wrong. If a man speaks in tongues, it does not make him an angel". He explained that the devil, "the Master Spirit", is manipulative. He described a man who sees a beautiful woman on the street: she is wearing tight trousers so he wants to follow her, to speak to her, "even though he has a wife in the house". This sort of behaviour, explained the pastor, is caused by the manipulation of spirits, which he then demonstrated by leading a young male pastor by the back of the neck around the circle of giggling women.[111]

A similar view is expressed by Samuel Kisseadoo. On the one hand, as discussed above, he attributes the mistreatment of women to the failure of men to be humble, but he also asserts that the "real explanation" for unfaithfulness, marital abuses and violence is "satanic motivation".[112] On the subject of domestic violence, he writes: "Since Satan is a murderer, a high progression of the attacks results in constant violence, quarrels, and abuses that could lead to injuries and murder".[113] Another marriage pamphlet tells perpetrators of spousal abuse: "you are being foolish and of course controlled by the devil".[114]

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[110] "Marriage 101", Part 4.

[111] 20 August 2002. This view of male behaviour is reflected in the personal narrative of one of my female interviewees who told me that her husband's promiscuity was caused by his possession by the water spirit *Mamiwater*. She said that she is also praying for deliverance for her eldest son who she fears is possessed also by *Mamiwater* because he is promiscuous like his father (interview, 31 July 2003).

[112] Kisseadoo, *Spiritual Warfare*, 88.

[113] *Ibid*., 162.

[114] Harvey, *Mistaken Marriages*, 108.

This perception of male behaviour is not confined to the churches. Certain popular tabloid-type newspapers are filled with lurid stories of sexual exploits, rape, incest and adultery, and many of the stories have some sort of spiritual dimension attached to them. This letter, for example, appeared on the help pages of an edition of *Love and Life* magazine:

> Dear Nana
> I am 45, living with my wife and step-daughter. The step-daughter is 18 and very beautiful and I'm being tempted of late to seduce her. I am, however, not sure if seducing her would amount to incest since we are not blood relations.
>
> Dear V.D.
> It would be considered incest if you seduce the girl because you have a sexual relationship with the mother. So stop being tempted lest you get into trouble and pray that the devil does not lead you into sin and trouble. You need deliverance. If you don't go to church start doing so.[115]

It is not unusual to read in the press that men charged with rape, defilement and other sexual or violent offences blame their behaviour on the work of the devil. This trend is criticised by some media commentators who blame a rise in the number of men using the devil in their defence on the charismatic churches, which, in the words of a *Daily Graphic* editorial, "attribute all the afflictions of the individual to the devil".[116] Rev. Emmanuel from Father Care International rejected this criticism of the charismatic sector and argued that individuals have to take responsibility for their actions. However, even this NGO representative told me that in some circumstances irresponsible fatherhood is a demonic problem that needs to be dealt with through deliverance.[117]

When questioned on the role of spirits in controlling male behaviour, most of the pastors I spoke to suggested that whilst demonic influence is not an excuse for this sort of behaviour—a defence of this sort has never been upheld in a court of law, for example—male violence and promiscuity are symptoms of a satanic strategy to disrupt families.

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[115] 19–24 August 2002, 3.
[116] 16 September 2002, 7.
[117] Interview, 4 August 2003. He also told me about a radio show he had hosted called "Bloodlines", which examined the role of family curses in the rise of fatherless households. On a similar note, a panellist on the Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association radio show advised a caller who complained that her father was refusing to pay her school fees that "If your father has money for fees but he doesn't pay there may be a spirit behind it, so you have to hang on to prayer" (10 May 2003).

Moreover, it is women who are given the responsibility of not exacerbating the problem by falling into "Satan's trap" of becoming angry with their husbands and boyfriends. This element of the charismatic message encourages women to become the "saviours" of men by directing their anger towards the devil in prayer. Concluding his sketch about the influence of manipulative spirits on men's sexual drives, Pastor Allen told the women: "this is a spiritual matter, so you need to pray for your husbands and boyfriends to be delivered from such a curse". By the time I returned to Ghana the following year, the severity of the warning had increased:

> The devil is working very hard. If you decide to be angry with your husband because he is [mis]behaving, you will kill him! That is when you have to help him. It will take a woman to deliver him [and] that woman is you. He needs your prayers; you can lift him from that place with your prayers.[118]

As the extract suggests, in some respects women in the new churches are regarded as the primary saviours of men and feminine religiosity is perceived to be crucial to behavioural change in their male partners. This stems from charismatic beliefs about both the "natural" feminine qualities of women—"God has admonished women in particular, that by their purity, modesty, respectful character, gentleness, fervent prayer, and humility, they can break and change their unsaved husbands, and cause them to become saved by Christ"[119]—and the nature of feminine spirituality. At the climax of the national women's convention held at Word Miracle Church International, for example, Bishop Charles Agyin-Asare spoke on the importance of prayer. Women in particular, he preached, have a responsibility to pray:

> Anytime there are women you have praying people; people who can save a nation, save a church, turn a situation around. Every abasement of the devil can be delivered from because women can pray for the family and for the church… Some of you women, I know that your husband is a drunkard and he smokes; in this pandemic of AIDS your husband still won't keep his trousers zipped. The only person that can save that man, my sister, is you. I see someone getting that man delivered because they are praying.[120]

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[118] Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association, "Retreat for Promotion", 19 July 2003.
[119] Kisseadoo, *Spiritual Warfare*, 147.
[120] 27 August 2002.

This view is echoed by Nicholas Duncan-Williams in his book *The Incredible Power of the Praying Woman*. He writes:

> As a woman, God has given you incredible natural abilities to see what men often find difficult to detect. Your innate intuition is remarkable, and when channelled into prayer, you are bound to enjoy incredible results.[121]

In contrast to other charismatic discourses on womanhood, which, as shown in Chapter Four, emphasise individualism and the importance of women's self-development and self-esteem, this spiritualised aspect of charismatic Christianity encourages women to direct their attention towards the welfare of others, primarily their husbands. Alongside calls for women to become the "higher fliers" of society, born-again women are instructed also to take responsibility for the salvation of men. During his "Family Life" sermon delivered at Action Chapel, for example, Rev. Kisseadoo listed some of the complaints women make against men: "I am broke…I had a baby, the man didn't marry me, [he] went overseas two years, I don't even know if he married me or not" and so on. Then he told the women in the congregation: "the spirits are attacking him [the man] from your home. I tell some of the women, look, it's you they [the spirits] want to disgrace and they are attacking the man because at the beginning you didn't pray enough".[122] At the "Women of Worth" convention, Francisca Duncan-Williams issued a similar warning: "Don't wait for me or for any leaders. Start praying. If you don't wake up for your husband, your children, my darling, they will be taken away from us".[123]

However, even this spiritualised element of charismatic gender discourses, which seems to make a link between negative male behaviour and failed feminine religiosity, is not entirely one with the feminine self-sacrificial piety of traditional Christian spirituality. Born-again women are portrayed as "warriors" fighting the devil for control over their husbands' behaviour. The God of born-again Christianity is a

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[121] 6. See also Kisseadoo: "In my opinion, one of the major roles of a wife is the quality and intensity of her prayer life behind her husband, and for her children. When a wife focuses on helping her husband to be in good spiritual shape by having a closer walk with the Lord Jesus, rather than setting her eyes on the riches of this world, her needs will be supplied by God,…The prayers of a diligent, scripture-loving and God-fearing wife or mother for her home and family, is one of the greatest legacies any woman can leave for her family after her death" (*Why Do We Marry?*, 40–1).

[122] 27 July 2003.

[123] 2 June 2003.

warrior God and women are his foot soldiers: "Some of you are not violent", shouted Mama Francisca at the "Women in Action" as they marched around the room, stamping and shouting for the salvation of their husbands. "You need to be violent women!", she cried. "If you're not sweating, you're not praying!", reminded Pastor Allen at consecutive "Women in Action" prayer meetings. In Ghana's new churches, it is less feminine piety than spiritual "violence" that leads to women's "success" in their gendered relationships.

Valencia Quame draws a similar conclusion in her comparative study of women in Action Chapel and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG). In contrast to the Presbyterians, the prayer of the Action Chapel woman, Quame argues, is aggressive, bold and uncompromising: "While the PCG woman reverently touches the hem of Jesus' garment, the CAFM woman endeavours with boldness, to pull down the hand of God".[124] Moreover, the born-again women of the charismatic churches are guaranteed "winners" and "victors". You will win the battle for your husband, assures a marriage pamphlet: "You are on the winning side!".[125] In the context of charismatic beliefs about "abundance", "victory" and "success", it is simply not the "destiny" of any child of God to have to contend with an unhappy, unfulfilled or abusive relationship.

My research suggests that born-again women sometimes access spiritual power to mediate their gendered relationships in line with these expectations of "success". Women's use of spiritual power takes different forms, but the "power of prayer" is often central. The importance of "power" in connection with charismatic-style prayers featured prominently, for example, in the conversion narratives of female informants. They commonly compared their old churches (mostly Catholic and mainline Protestant) unfavourably with the new churches on the basis that "the born-agains really know how to pray". In some cases, prayer is primarily cathartic. The psychological function of charismatic faith as a provider of refuge and comfort for women in difficult circumstances has been raised,[126] and evidently it applies to the appeal of charismatic

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[124] Valencia Quame, "Christian Faith Communities and Their Approaches to the Concerns of Women: A Comparative Study Between the Christian Action Faith Ministries and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana", PhD thesis, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, June 1999, 135.

[125] Owusu-Ansah and Owusu-Ansah, *15 Ingredients*, 76.

[126] See Chapter Five.

Christianity in Ghana too. A number of born-again women commented that faith gave them "peace" in their minds. They said that they tend not to worry so much because "all the problems" can be given to God in prayer. A woman at Alive Chapel even described how her prayer life gave her the strength to deny her husband sexual access. Concerned about contracting HIV/AIDS as a consequence of his habitual promiscuity, she decided to withdraw completely from sexual relations with him (since he refused to use condoms). Her narrative reveals also how born-again women sometimes interpret and adapt the gender discourses of the new churches for their own benefit. When asked if her withdrawal from sex was at the advice of her pastors, from whom she was receiving marital counselling, she laughed and replied:

> No, no, I haven't told them about that. You are the first person I told about that, because if I say I don't give myself [to him], they will tell me that I should go and give myself . . . so I always consult my God.[127]

Sometimes when women access spiritual power to influence their gendered relationships and affect their husbands' behaviour, however, the power of prayer goes beyond catharsis. Whilst born-again women tend to reject any suggestion of a parallel between the "power of prayer" and appeals to "traditional" sources of esoteric power (fetish medicine, love potions and witchcraft), in both cases women appropriate spiritual power predominantly to influence male behaviour. A guest pastor at one of Alive Chapel's Friday prayer meetings, for example, advised women whose husbands are "misbehaving" (a euphemism for sexual promiscuity) either to bring him a piece of their husbands' clothing so he could pray over it or to pray over it themselves. He promised an immediate change in their husbands' behaviour.[128]

For some, then, prayer is more than a comfort or a refuge. Becky's story is a good illustration. Becky is a member of Solid Rock Chapel and a middle-aged mother of six who has lived in a violent marriage for about twenty years. Following a particularly difficult period for Becky at home, I asked what she thought she could do about her situation. She replied, with a smile: "I have done it already!". Becky explained,

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[127] Interview, 31 July 2003.
[128] 23 May 2003.

> I prayed! I prayed so hard. All night I stayed awake to pray, even when he [her husband] complained [about the noise of her prayers]. The next day when my husband came home from work he looked at me and he said, "Woman! Don't open your mouth again. My whole day got messed up".[129]

Even Becky's husband attributed his bad day at the office to the power of Becky's prayers at home.

Other women prioritise the relationship between themselves and a prophet of God in their encounter with the power of the spirit world. For example, when Alice (a divorced mother of two) discovered that her co-habiting boyfriend was having sex with another woman in their shared house, she told me that she had a dream in which her pastor, Christie Doe Tetteh, had appeared to her and anointed her with oil. When she woke up in the morning and her boyfriend tried to have sex with her, he found that her body was covered in oil and he could not touch her. Soon after this, and under the guidance of Mama Christie who had prophesised that God wanted Alice to be single, Alice left the relationship.[130]

These stories illustrate some of the ways in which born-again women access spiritual power through charismatic practices and use it to try to mediate changes in their gendered relationships. In particular, the stories show how women sometimes try to address the gap between expectation and experience[131] in their marital and familial lives through personal appropriation of prayer, prophecy and spiritual power. I return to this point in my concluding remarks with regard to Anderson's concept of "enabling power".

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[129] Interview, 23 August 2003.
[130] Interview, 23 August 2003.
[131] Jean and John Comaroff write of the "chasm" between "desire and (im)possibility" in people's experiences of modernity and social change ("Introduction", xxx).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHRISTIANITY, GENDER AND CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY

This book began by outlining some of the methodological difficulties inherent in the study of other people's religious beliefs and practices. The opening chapter highlighted the tendency of some students of non-Western Christianity to assess the beliefs and practices of others in terms of their similarity to or difference from the beliefs and practices of our Western Christian "selves". I also suggested, however, that this may pose a problem for African intellectuals for whom issues of religious identity and cultural authenticity meet and sometimes collide. It is to this point that I want to return in my concluding remarks.

The issue of religious and cultural "authenticity" recurs in analyses of Christianity in Africa, particularly in regard to the rise of neo-Pentecostal or charismatic spiritualities. In contrast to the official theology of the Catholic and mainline Protestant churches, which, as Gifford notes, "remains firmly rooted in the West", Africa's new Christianity is often described as a more "inculturated" Christianity.[1] Philip Jenkins goes so far as to suggest that the emphasis on the supernatural in African Christianity represents not just a more inculturated Christianity but a more "authentic" expression of Christianity than the Christianity of the north.[2] Rarely has this issue of religious and cultural authenticity been considered in the context of Africa's new Christianity and gender. It is raised, however, by the work of the Ghanaian feminist and theologian Mercy Amba Oduyoye, whose assessment of the new churches is considered below.

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[1] Even Gifford, for example, who stresses the importance of American influences on the spread of charismatic themes, acknowledges that Ghana's new Christianity responds to African needs in a way that the mainline churches have not been able to do (*Ghana's New*, 198–9). Asamoah-Gyadu values what he calls the "indigenous" qualities of a religious movement that represents a culturally authentic expression of African Christianity (*African Charismatics*, 98).

[2] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Oxford and New York: OUP, 2002.

As a member of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians,[3] Oduyoye challenges herself to create a theology that is both an authentic reflection of the African experience of the Christian faith and a liberating tool that promotes the full humanity of women. The primary sources for her theology, which is intended to be both fully inculturated and liberating, are African culture and African women's experience:

> We cannot be a people who have extracted their stomach to fill the void with straw. How can we hold our heads up in the midst of the nation if we are but poor copies of Western culture and Western Christianity? The challenge is to retain our African [sic] without sacrificing women's humanity. Our vows to African culture should not demand the death of our daughters.[4]

The rise of Africa's new churches is given little attention in Oduyoye's work. However, when these churches are mentioned, they are viewed as a wholly negative religious and cultural development due to the damaging impact she perceives them to have on the quest for gender equality in African society. She is critical of the new churches because they perpetuate female domesticity and promote success-oriented individualism; and the latter, in Oduyoye's view, is neither African or Christian. She warns against the rise of a Christianity that "will soon flood Africa with a theology that is misogynist and domesticating making Africans hate their Africanness".[5]

In my concluding remarks I want to address Oduyoye's critique of the new churches with a view to clarifying preceding arguments concerning the nature and appeal of born-again Christianity in the context of Ghanaian gender politics, as well as addressing the problem of representation in the work of African feminist writers and theologians. In the process I hope to reveal something of the complexity of the

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[3] As Deputy General Secretary of the World Council of Churches in Geneva from 1991 until her retirement in 1996, Oduyoye has been the most prolific writer of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, which was launched in 1989 to challenge both the racist subtext of colonial theology and the sexist foundations of the inculturation project led by the male-dominated Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). For a detailed analysis of the work of the Circle see, Pemberton, *Circle Thinking*.

[4] Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "Women, Culture and Theology: A Foreword", in Protus O. Kemdirim and Mercy Amba Oduyoye (eds.), *Women, Culture and Theological Education*, Enugu, Nigeria: West African Association of Theological Institutions, 1998, 35.

[5] *Ibid*.

charismatic movement as a global phenomenon and the difficulty of assessing its approach to local gender politics in terms of its similarity to, or distance from, Africa's religious and cultural milieu.

In her deconstruction of African "tradition", Oduyoye challenges what she views as culturally prescribed gender norms that prioritise women's obligations to others. She argues that the values taught by religion and socialisation within African culture generate "uncritical polemics" that "tend to confirm the prevailing demands on women to suppress the full development of their own potentials as human beings so they might be promoters of the development of those around them".[6] She describes African women who abandon themselves to "other-directed" activities with what she calls a "martyr-complex":

> They live as people who believe that their well being is in promoting the well being of all around them. They do not need to attend to their own well-being specifically. They have no independent identities and do not wish to name themselves; it is sufficient to be named by others as daughter, wife, mother and grandmother. Nothing else seems to matter.[7]

My research indicates that the gender discourses of charismatic Christianity both affirm and challenge this cultural polemic. The complexity of the phenomenon, however—the degree to which it draws on international and indigenous, historical and contemporary ideas about religion and gender—often means that the "counter-cultural" elements of its discourse emerge only in tension with other elements. For example, the representation of women as the primary saviours of men, which is reminiscent of the idealisation of feminine piety by nineteenth-century evangelicals, is undermined by the emphasis on female individualism and the importance of Self as a child of God, which stems largely from contemporary forms of "feel-good" North American evangelicalism.[8]

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[6] Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "The Circle", in Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Musimbi Kanyaro (eds.), *Talitha, qumi! Proceedings of the Convocation of African Women Theologians 1989*, Accra: SWL Press, 2001 (1990), 23.

[7] Mercy Amba Oduyoye, "The Search for a Two-Winged Theology", in Oduyoye and Kanyaro, *Talitha*, 52.

[8] See, for example, the "Building Self-Image" section in Christie Doe Tetteh's *Celebrating Womanhood* in which she advises women to build a positive self-image by learning to see themselves the way God sees them: "What do you see in your mirror? The size of it is not very important. What does your mirror reflect when you look into it? Definitely your mirror says the following; You are cute! Good looking, adorable, admirable, ready to face your day or it suggests the following; You need a little face powder here or there, a touch on the eyeliner, a little lipstick or brushing of your hair. Your mirror gives you a true reflection of what you look like! Remember you

The expectation that women should put the welfare of others above their own is similarly undermined by expectations of "success" and "victory", which create tension between women's obligations to others and their individual trajectories. In terms of female religiosity, in charismatic Christianity—in contrast to some traditional Christian spiritualities and elements within the prevailing culture—the emphasis shifts from self-denial (the piety of suffering) to self-affirmation ("you are on the winning side!").

This is not to suggest that charismatic Christianity in Ghana represents a particularly radical or, as Asamoah-Gyadu suggests, "innovative" gender discourse.[9] Whilst it challenges aspects of "tradition" it does so in a way that resonates broadly with the prevailing concerns of state feminism; namely, to promote "women's empowerment", but within the constraints of an ideology of gender complementarity. That is to say that charismatic Christianity tends to challenge established norms less through "confrontation" than "in terms of ambiguities which assist undramatic subversions and local stratagems".[10]

It is also not clear that the gender discourses of charismatic Christianity represent a self-conscious reformation of traditional Christian spirituality. As Wolfe remarks about contemporary evangelicals in the United States, it simply does not make sense for them to alienate women, who "have become so important to the success of conservative Christianity", by expounding fundamentalist rhetoric about traditional gender roles and the evils of the women's movement.[11] In Ghana too, a religious movement is unlikely to flourish if it does not, on some level, appeal to large numbers of women. It might be argued, therefore, that the new churches are driven as much by market demand as they are by overtly theological concerns.

In contrast to Oduyoye's critique that the new churches do not represent an authentic African response to contemporary gender politics,

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have been created in the image of God so have faith and confidence in yourself and create a good opinion about yourself because what you see in the mirror affects your self image" (20–1). Similarly, the evangelist Evelyn Obeng Darko advises women on "Developing a Healthy Self Image" with a three-point guide to joining the "smile and accomplishment club": "Make up—Dress up—Go up!" (Darko, *Womanhood*, 95–97).

[9] *African Charismatics*, 55. The same might be said about contemporary American evangelicalism. Few, for example, would seriously suggest that the thousands of American women apparently "dieting for Jesus" are not also dieting for the benefit and approval of more mortal men.

[10] Martin, *On Secularisation*, 145.

[11] Wolfe, *Transformation*, 134–5.

in this book I argue that charismatic Christianity is firmly rooted in Africa's religious imagination. Again, the complexity of the movement clouds the picture. On one level, the new churches seem to reject African culture, primarily because it is perceived as a source of satanic influence, but also because it is seen as the custodian of customs and values that damage women and produce irresponsible men. Ghana's new Christianity looks to external models of society with which to identify. Overwhelmingly, these models stem from the United States, primarily because American society symbolises modernity, prosperity and success. In terms of gender, however, American society also symbolises the value of "women's empowerment" and "modern" gender relations.[12] It is this apparent rejection of African culture that Oduyoye objects to so strongly in her critique of the new churches. The motivation for her theology is the search for African answers to African problems. For Ghana's charismatic Christians, however, Africa is the problem. Yet, the interaction between the movement's local and external dynamics is more complex than this suggests. On a different level, the beliefs and practices of the new churches are rooted firmly in Africa's religious imagination.

As discussed, African religion addresses the impact of spiritual forces on the happenings of everyday life, and it is partly through such a world-view that the new churches mediate and interpret Ghana's shifting gender politics. Gendered relationships and the gendered behaviour of individuals are perceived by the charismatic churches to be directed, at least in part, by the activities of forces in the unseen world. The representation of men as victims of spiritual manipulation seems to undermine somewhat the social reform aspect of charismatic gender

[12] The position of women in Africa is compared unfavourably with the position of women in Europe and North America, who, due to their "agitation for liberation", are perceived to enjoy greater freedom and recognition than African women. Christie Doe Tetteh writes: "The condition of non-African women is by far much better than that of their African counterparts. In Africa, women are seen as creatures whose brains cannot produce anything reasonable. Of the eight women who have held the positions of Heads of States of Government, none is African" (*Celebrating Womanhood*, 33). Eastwood Anaba also uses the United States as a cultural role-model and even extols the virtue of the women's movement there: "If you change the way you think you can change your destiny. When people ask your occupation, what do you say? Housewife? In America they are bridging the gap. In our culture one man can marry seven women, but a woman can't marry seven men. I would never be a second wife! American women said 'No!'. What men can do, women can do. Listen, daughters of Zion, your season has come. Take up your bed and walk. Stop being a hitchhiker. Live your own destiny!" (Action Chapel, 4 June 2003).

discourses and it may be the case that the reformation of *machismo*, which is central to analyses of Pentecostalism and gender elsewhere, is not the key paradigm in Ghana. This suggestion does not exclude the possibility of individual behavioural change—the personal narratives of born-again men seems to attest to this—but it does suggest that social change may not be the key to understanding the appeal of charismatic Christianity in Ghana.

The complex dialectic between the social and the spiritual is raised in a comment commonly made by born-again Ghanaians themselves about the new churches. The new churches, they say (often in contrast to the older denominations), have "power" but lack "character". What they mean by this is that while the born-again churches are more effective at accessing the power of the spirit world, they are less concerned, or less able, to address the behaviour of individual believers. It is my argument that the appeal of the new churches lies primarily in their spiritual, not their social, efficacy.[13] Women, in particular, are attracted to the charismatic churches because the churches provide them with access to the power of the spirit world through which they try to influence their relationships with men. In contrast to Oduyoye's view that the new churches are not African, this book concludes that the appropriation of spiritual power to mediate gender relations reflects the continuity of the new churches with established modes of African religiosity.

As shown in Chapter Three, "power" in pre-colonial Ghanaian society originated in the spirit world.[14] It was non-gerontocratic and gender-neutral. In contrast to "authority", spiritual power was accessible to anyone equipped with the knowledge to use it. The importance of spiritual power, and of those with the knowledge to access it, persists in contemporary Ghanaian society and, as in pre-colonial society, women who often lack "authority" continue to wield "power" by accessing the spirit world. Ghana's charismatic churches provide women with what Anderson calls "enabling power",[15] which, as Ellis and ter Haar note, "allows people to take control of situations they are otherwise unable to master".[16] Women in Ghana's charismatic churches mediate and interpret

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[13] I am aware that many Ghanaians would not recognise the dichotomy between the social and the spiritual that this comment implies.

[14] See Akyeampong and Obeng, "Spirituality", 507.

[15] Allan Anderson, "Pentecostal Pneumatology and African Power Concepts: Continuity or Change?", *Missionalia*, 1, 1991, 65–74.

[16] Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds*, 97. Jean and John Comaroff argue similarly that in the context of African modernity, ritual—"an experimental technology intended to affect

gender politics through a spiritual idiom, and they assert influence on their own gendered relationships "by indirect means"[17] through their access to the power of the spirit world.

This is women doing politics "from below". For some women, the use of spiritual power to negotiate gender relations may be a lower risk strategy than an appeal to the structures of state feminism. When Becky's daughter, for example, reported her father to WAJU (the police unit for cases of domestic violence) for committing offences against her mother, the father accused his daughter of witchcraft and took her to the fetish priest for treatment. Becky suggested that when her daughter returned home she had been beaten, which Becky implied had happened as a result of her daughter's appeal to the authorities. As shown in the previous chapter, it was only when Becky turned to prayer that she felt she began to have an impact on her husband's behaviour towards her. The power of the spirit world appears to have troubled Becky's husband more than the structures of state feminism.

Assertions about women's religious "agency", however, should be treated with some caution. As Ellis and ter Haar note, women who take the use of spiritual power too far "risk being accused of witchcraft, turning this spiritual power into an illegitimate force. In short, the use of spiritual power by women can be dangerous if it transgresses the limits set by men".[18] A distinction between the legitimate and the illegitimate use of spiritual power is manifest in the charismatic churches also. This was illustrated by an unusual occurrence at Action Chapel. Towards the end of a Sunday service there, Bishop Duncan-Williams announced that no one was to leave the auditorium after the final collection, as was the norm, because there was something important he had to do concerning a member of the church. There was a hushed silence when he returned to the stage. "There is a young woman here", he boomed,

> who I have been observing for some time. My pastors have tried a number of times to offer her salvation through deliverance, but she refuses to submit. There is nothing left for me to do but expose her as an agent of darkness and banish her forever from this church.

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the flow of power in the universe"—represents "the efforts of people to empower themselves, thus to assert a measure of control over worlds often perceived to be rapidly changing" ("Introduction", xiv; xxx).

[17] Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds*, 98.

[18] *Ibid.*, 99.

He pointed to a woman seated high up in the back of the auditorium. Everyone turned round to look. "Don't turn round! We don't need to stare at the devil. Yes you!", he shouted at her, "You know I mean you. Stand up! Security will show you out", and two large men picked her up and carried her out of the church.

Members of Action Chapel told me that this woman had persistently been making attempts to "seduce" the resident bishop with prayers, magic powders and love potions. It was after the woman was found to have delivered cooked food to the bishop's office, which because of the presumed use of a love potion carried both sexual and esoteric connotations, that her expulsion from Action Chapel occurred. What this incident seems to suggest is that the use of spiritual power by born-again women is considered legitimate only insofar as it corresponds with charismatic beliefs about the proper role of feminine religiosity. Spiritual power that is used for purposes other than the salvation of men or the attainment of the marital ideal risks being condemned as witchcraft and thus demonised. In other words, the agency of women as social and religious actors is constrained by the power of the institutional and discursive structures within which they operate.

For Oduyoye, this sort of spiritualisation of Ghanaian gender politics belongs to an Africa of the past. Whilst she is critical of the mission churches' failure to take seriously Africa's spiritual realities and to deal effectively with the concerns of their African converts,[19] she is equally critical of what she describes as the charismatic churches' pre-modern affirmation of witchcraft and harmful spirits.[20] African Christianity needs to be inculturated but not, as far as Oduyoye is concerned, at the expense of revisiting what for her is Africa's spiritualised past. For Ghana's born-again Christians, however, the impact of the spirit world on everyday life is very much a part of the present and they require a Christianity that inculturated or not—and to some extent inculturation is a preoccupation of African intellectuals and Western academics—deals effectively with spiritual realities. Herein lies the appeal of the charismatic churches.

If Oduyoye and Africa's other women theologians are "to take seriously the constraints women feel in their lives",[21] they may need to

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[19] Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986, 41.

[20] Pemberton, *Circle Thinking*, 85.

[21] Oduyoye, *Hearing and Knowing*, 132.

recognise the extent to which the spiritualisation of Africa's social worlds shapes the concerns and experiences of many African women. When Oduyoye writes of "constraints", she writes of the "structures" that women find "oppressive" and limiting. However, for some women, their experience of "structures" has a spiritual dimension as well as a social one. The material presented in this book suggests that many women in Ghana's charismatic churches interpret "structures"—gender politics and their own gendered relationships—primarily through a world-view that is spiritualised.[22]

In the final part of these concluding remarks I want to return to a comment made in Chapter One in order to explore its implications in light of the material presented in the book. I suggested that charismatic Christianity is a "very postcolonial phenomenon", by which I meant that the charismatic movement represents an instance of "hybridity", an example of the local interpreting, adapting and transforming the global. I want to explore this idea with regard to the roles and identities of pastors' wives and female pastors in order to highlight the extent to which Francisca Duncan-Williams and Christie Doe Tetteh are themselves postcolonial hybrids and representative of the charismatic movement's continuity and disjuncture with Africa's pre-colonial and colonial realities.

In her study of women and democracy in contemporary Africa, the African-feminist writer Ifi Amadiume draws a distinction between professional and national elite women, whom she calls "daughters of imperialism", and grassroots women, whom she calls "daughters of the Goddess".[23] The former, she argues, work "in partnership with the contemporary state and the global model of power"; they are the product of a colonial heritage that taught a generation of elite women not to challenge patriarchy.[24] The latter, on the other hand, represent "community-oriented African women leaders working with traditional African matriarchal models of power".[25] According to Amadiume, the

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[22] Broadly speaking, therefore, I agree with Hodgson on the need to "incorporate and analyse spiritual forms of power with political and economic ones", and on the importance of understanding "the relationship of spirituality to the production, reproduction, and transformation of gender relations" in an African context (Dorothy L. Hodgson, *The Church of Women: Gendered Encounters Between Maasai and Missionaries*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005, x).

[23] Ifi Amadiume, *Daughters of the Goddess, Daughters of Imperialism: African Women, Culture, Power & Democracy*, London and New York: Zed Books Ltd, 2000.

[24] *Ibid*., 3.

[25] *Ibid*.

"daughters of imperialism" and the "daughters of the Goddess" represent dichotomous categories that operate within "different moral systems".[26] Amadiume's book is, first and foremost, a critique of what she calls "developmentalism"—discussed in my book as the international "Women in Development" discourse[27]—but it feeds into wider debates about gender politics and cultural authenticity. I raise it here in order to demonstrate the difficulty of positioning figures like Francisca Duncan-Williams and Christie Doe Tetteh within African-feminist debates about culturally authentic models of female leadership and association.

On the one hand, Francisca Duncan-Williams is, to use Amadiume's term, a "daughter of imperialism": she accesses much of her power and authority through her relationship with elite males within the charismatic movement. Her Pastors' Wives and Women in Ministry Association is modelled on secular wives associations—"no other form of women's organization has evoked such outrage and condemnation", notes Amadiume[28]—and her leadership style is reminiscent of the First Lady Syndrome that Amadiume also critiques.[29] Christie Doe Tetteh is less obviously a "daughter of imperialism", because her unmarried status means that she does not fit so easily into the model of female leadership established by modern political elites. Her authority, however, does to some extent stem from external—predominantly male—sources, and in terms of modern "imperialism" she is in many ways an embodiment of the influence and appeal of "global Americana".

However, Christie Doe Tetteh and Francisca Duncan-Williams are also "daughters of the Goddess". Alongside their identification with modernity and the goods of modernity, charismatic women leaders draw on traditional models of power and authority. They utilise symbols of mothering and motherhood to establish a relationship of nurture and authority with their female (and, to a lesser extent, male) congregants. Francisca Duncan-Williams and Christie Doe Tetteh create networks of patronage based on models of female clientalism, through which

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[26] *Ibid*., 7.

[27] See Chapter Three.

[28] Amadiume, *Daughters*, 98. She criticises wives associations as instruments of "class reproduction" (234).

[29] She argues that whilst Maryam Babangida, for example, presented herself as the traditional consort of a head of state and a champion of women's development who encouraged Nigerian women to use the "feminine attributes" for the good of the nation, Mrs. Babangida was also actively engaged in constructing her own networks of political power and support (*ibid*., 234–9).

other women access power and resources. Most importantly, perhaps, as religious experts they demonstrate privileged access to spiritual forces through which other women encounter the power of the spirit world. These models of power are not matriarchal, however, but then "traditional" does not necessarily imply "matriarchal" as Amadiume suggests. As Chapter Three showed, even in the pre-colonial period women leaders (even queen mothers) often accessed power primarily through their relationships with men. The women leaders of Ghana's charismatic churches, then, draw on multiple models of power and authority in which "modern" and "traditional" patterns often co-exist and overlap.

Francisca Duncan-Williams and Christie Doe Tetteh are religious and cultural hybrids. African feminist writers like Oduyoye and Amadiume, who are themselves intellectual hybrids,[30] create a false dichotomy—unintentionally perhaps[31]—between what is and what is not authentically "African" in the making of modern gender politics. The charismatic women analysed in this book disrupt this dichotomy, just as the hybrid nature of charismatic Christianity itself raises questions about the notion of cultural authenticity: what is and what is not "authentic" in the cultural politics of modern Africa, and, more importantly perhaps, who decides?

The problem of dialogue between African women writers and the women they claim to represent is raised by Carrie Pemberton who describes the problem she herself had as an outsider trying to express the desires and longings of African women theologians while still respecting their autonomy and authoring: "how was I to articulate or interrogate anything of their vision?", she asks.[32] Pemberton recognises this challenge also, however, in the relationship between African women intellectuals and the women they claim to represent. Literacy, urbanisation

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[30] Pemberton notes that the theology of The Circle is a response to "enlightenment paradigms". This is apparent in Oduyoye's work insofar as she presents a postmodern deconstruction of tradition and the Christian scriptures, and her analytical and critical enquiry is based on paradigms of human equality and feminist analysis (*Circle Thinking*, 167).

[31] Amadiume acknowledges, for example, that her categories are "working analytical tools" that do not represent the realities of "plural systems" and "multiculturalism" (*Daughters*, 3).

[32] Carrie Pemberton, "Whose Face in the Mirror? Personal and Post-Colonial Obstacles in Researching Africa's Contemporary Women's Theological Voices", in Ursula King and Tina Beattie (eds.), *Gender, Religion and Diversity: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, London and New York: Continuum, 2004, 252.

and access to the goods of the world economies, she argues, sets African women writers and theologians "in a relationship of cultural distance from the women for whom they claim to speak", and she highlights a reluctance to allow African women to speak when their voices do not conform to the cultural values and social vision of Africa's intellectual elite. "The subject", argues Pemberton, "must speak, however unpalatable the content might be".[33]

The question is, to what extent does the experience of Christie Doe Tetteh or Francisca Duncan-Williams—or indeed the women they minister to—inform the theologising of African theologians like Oduyoye? When Oduyoye claims to be "covenanted to articulate the concerns of women",[34] to which women does she refer and to which of their concerns? African intellectuals and students of non-Western Christianity are equally implicated in the politics of representation and in the production of knowledge about the religious beliefs and practices of others.

[33] *Ibid.*, 261.
[34] Oduyoye, "The Search", 47.

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