

# Academic versus Spiritual: Theological Education and the Anointing of the Holy Spirit in Contemporary Prophetic Ministries in Ghana

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## ABSTRACT

Pentecostals in Africa generally prefer the anointing of the Holy Spirit to perform miracles over theological education that sharpens skills for good theological interpretations of the Bible without neglecting the activities of the Spirit. This situation creates a tension of priority between formal theological education and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. This essay examines theological education and the anointing of the Holy Spirit and how the two can complement each other for the benefit of both clergy and congregants. The focus of the paper is on theological education in contemporary prophetic ministries or newer Charismatic Churches in Ghana. The proposition of this paper is that formal theological education and the anointing of the Holy Spirit must be mutually engaged. However, many accredited theological institutions in Ghana do not consider the world-views of contemporary prophets in their curriculum; this has forced contemporary prophets to establish unaccredited Bible schools. In this article, I recommend that theological institutions review their curriculum to welcome the clergy of contemporary prophetic ministries.

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## Introduction

The issue of theological education and the anointing of the Holy Spirit has recently attracted scholarly attention. Scholars examined theological education and the anointing of the Holy Spirit in Classical Pentecostal Churches and early Charismatic Ministries worldwide. Warrington (2008, p. 180-81) observes that Pentecostals are generally not concerned with creeds, theological and doctrinal formulations; rather they are driven by the desire to be biblical, that is, endeavoring to conform to what is recorded on the pages of the Bible. This assertion better reflects the situation of Pentecostals in Africa. Hence, the early theological institutions or seminaries of the Classical Pentecostal Churches were called Bible schools. However, Asamoah-Gyadu postulates that the challenge for the Christian faith, particularly Pentecostalism in Ghana, is not the pluralistic nature of the Ghanaian religious landscape “but that its supposed adherents have become the proselytizing target of other faiths” (2009, p. 158-59). Therefore there is the need for a level of theological education rigorous enough to help Pentecostals stand firm in their faith.

Pobee and Kudadjie state that the purpose of theological education is to “conscientize, mobilize and motivate the people at the grass-roots levels for social change, and to work with them in identifying their needs, setting their own priorities and standards and recognizing the resources that are available to them for use in [social and theological] development” (2003, p. 77-82). However, contemporary prophets who are a stream of Pentecostal ministers in Ghana reject the approach of Pobee and Kudadjie. There is a popular notion among many contemporary prophets that formal theological education does not support spiritual formation, thus they prefer to go to Christian sacred places like mountains and prayer camps to pray for long periods, or be mentored by a senior prophet in order to receive the anointing of the Holy Spirit to begin ministry.

In reference to theological seminaries, it is commonly thought, as Agbeti writes that “appropriate academic and spiritual formation of...lecturers are the bedrocks of the [ministerial] formation of the students,...teachers [lecturers] ...are highly qualified academically and subtly spiritually” (1991, p. 25-32), to impart both academic and spiritual knowledge. However, contemporary prophets prefer a mentorship form of training over formal theological education (Aryeh 2015, p. 106). Prophet Dr. Eric Nana Kwesi Amponsah of Hope Generation Ministry International (HGMI) located at Weija in Accra, advocates training that would shape both the public and private life style of prophets to strictly conform to biblical teachings concerning Christian leadership.

By training, Prophet Dr. Amponsah means mentorship under senior prophets (Aryeh 2015, p. 106). Meanwhile, Asamoah-Gyadu (2009, p. 80-81) and Amevenku (2014, p. 132-48) rightly hold that the phenomenon of not seriously seeking formal theological education is one of the factors that contributed to the numerical decline of pioneers of prophetism in Ghana’s Christianity - African Indigenous Churches (AICs). To avoid the recurrence of a numerical decline of contemporary prophetic ministries, there is the need for research into how formal theological education and the pursuit for the anointing could interface for the common good.

To achieve the goal of defending the idea of theological training and spirituality playing a complementary role, we will discuss the works of some scholars on the issue of theological education and the anointing of the Spirit in prophetic ministries in Ghana. Mentorship and Bible schools in contemporary prophetic ministries will be discussed; and suggestions for how formal theological education could attract contemporary prophets will be analysed. In this study, formal theological education in the Ghanaian setting refers to theological education received from seminaries/institutions that are duly accredited by the National Accreditation Board and prospective students would have to apply for admission based on required academic qualifications. Non-formal theological education refers to theological education received from unaccredited schools and institutions including mentorship in contemporary prophetic ministries.

In the context of this study, the anointing of the Holy Spirit refers to the gift of the Spirit of God in the life of an individual Christian that enables him/her to perform supernatural acts such as healing, exorcism, prophecy (foresight and insight into future events and present happenings), and performance of miracles (1 Corinthians 12-14). It is a reflection of the mission statement of Jesus to minister liberty/freedom and healing to the afflicted (Luke 4:18); and Peter's testimony concerning the relationship between Jesus and God that enabled Him to perform miracles. Many practicing Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians in Ghana perceive the anointing of the Holy Spirit as charismatic gifts to perpetuate the miraculous work of Jesus, the apostles, and the early Christians. Persons who do not manifest charisma to heal the sick, exorcize demons, prophesy, and perform miracles are not considered anointed. This perception has the potential of limiting the work of the Holy Spirit, since astute preachers, teachers, and theologians may also be anointed by the Holy Spirit.

The term *Prophet* in this study refers to Christians who claim to have extra-sensory ability or perception enabling them to enquire and receive information from/by the Holy Spirit for seekers or enquirers. Persons who exhibit such prowess were referred to as prophets by members of the Church or by the individuals themselves. They are seen as being able to diagnose the cause of illnesses and misfortunes, and prescribe solutions. They can, at will, have knowledge of present and future happenings and can use this to the benefit of seekers/members. It is significant to mention that biblical prophets are not the same as contemporary prophets in Ghana. Prophets as recorded in the Bible were more interpreters of the written word of God (Bible), covenant enforcers between God and His people, social reformers, campaigners against evil and sin, and promoters of social justice though they sometimes perform the roles attributed to prophets in Africa (Isaiah 1:2-20; 5:8-23; Jeremiah 2:2-4; Ezekiel 6; Hosea 4-10; Amos 3; Micah 2:1-11). Matthew argues that Israelites prophets were not interpreters of omens or diviners, though they occasionally interpret omens. Their main concern and message was to "challenge the establishment and the social order, to remind the leadership and the people of their obligation to the covenant with Yahweh, and to warn the people of the punishment that would surely ensue if they violated this covenantal agreement" (2012, p. 19).

The above non-biblical features of contemporary prophets in Ghana deeply resonates with the character of prophets, medicine men, diviners, and seers in African

traditional religion. The phenomenon attracts many to the Church, because some Ghanaians prefer to find spiritual causality for issues in their life and receive information concerning the future without investigating the source of power of the so-called prophet. Thus, it is a marketing strategy for people to refer to themselves as prophets. The idea that prophets could receive spiritual information at will is at variance with the biblical gift of prophecy where the gifted may prophesy occasionally and she/he is primarily an interpreter of the Bible.

## **Some Scholarly Reviews**

There are a range of scholarly views about theological education for Pentecostals in Ghana, many of them focused on the Classical Pentecostal Churches and Charismatic Ministries. The works generally discuss contextualization of formal theological education in the African context. The following four opinions emerge out of the literature consulted:

1. Formal theological education of all Church denominations in Africa must be contextualized;
2. Contextualization of curriculum of leadership training of Pentecostals in Africa is vital;
3. Formal theological education must be prioritized over the anointing of the Spirit; and
4. Formal theological education must complement the anointing.

### ***Formal Theological Education of All Denominations in Africa must be Contextualized***

Asamoah-Gyadu discussed the contextualization of formal theological education in the African context. He holds that the new religious milieu in Africa demands that a review of theological education, either formal or informal, must take serious cognisance of religious plurality, the challenge of Islam, religious space in the media and religious experience. According to him, “the lack of spiritual power or the loss of it after receiving [formal] theological education has led to a situation where the sheep [congregants] are either blown by any wind of doctrine or have simply become vulnerable to some of the religious wildlife available in modern African society” (Asamoah-Gyadu 2010, p. 13). Asamoah-Gyadu’s view seeks to find a place for power and relevance in the curriculum of formal theological education in Africa. This will help meet the salvific and existential needs of the church in Africa. His work helps identify elements that need to be contextualized. However, he did not point out how they should be contextualized and how the quest for power and religious experience could co-exist with formal theological education.

### ***Contextualization of Curriculum of Leadership Training of Pentecostals in Africa is Vital***

Using the analogy of the shade of the mango tree as a lecture venue, Easter (2013, p. 1-22) identifies and describes ways of leadership training of Pentecostals in Africa focusing on: contextualization, the context of training and the role of the Spirit. The mango tree analogy refers to a lecture venue where the student can bring her/his life experiences

to bear during lectures. He explains that African Pentecostals bring their life experiences to the lecture hall; therefore African socio-cultural ways of learning must be considered in formal theological education. He added that formal theological education for Pentecostals in Africa must be committed to 'incarnational and participatory learning' that recognizes the Spirit as the supreme teacher who keeps the class active. He concludes that formal theological education must empower students for mission. Easter identified the ways in which African Pentecostals learn. They do not come to the class as a kind of *tabula rasa* (blank slate), but with life experiences as presuppositions. They engage with the lecturer as participants not just listeners. He also identified the role of the Spirit as the most influential in teaching and learning. However, his work was limited to the Classical Pentecostal Churches.

Whitt (2013, p. 23-34) agrees with Easter that formal theological education for African Pentecostals must be contextualized. The church in Africa is mushrooming at a pace that demands renewal of the methodological approach to formal theological education. He suggests that inherited missionary methods of instruction that have proved to be ineffective should be ignored because they were not able to nurture the church, resulting in the decline of Christianity in the West (2013, p. 24). According to him, since Africans are generally synthetic or holistic and the Westerner analytical in their approach to studies "it is in this arena that the West has also departed from sound pedagogical instruction. Less stress needs to be put on the classroom, particularly in its lecture-oriented model" (2013, p. 32). However, it is open to question how much the decline of the Church in the West was due to formal theological education as there are numerous factors in Western societies themselves that are also affecting the Church. An example is secularization which led to social and political parity that reduced reliance on the Church for the provision of social amenities (Chaves 1994, p. 749-774).

Whitt further explains how African Pentecostal leaders approach studies and on this basis identifies some weakness in the Western developed curriculum, used in formal theological education in Africa. Nevertheless, his views virtually suggest that receiving formal theological education from the West is irrelevant for the African context. Although some components of Western inherited curricula ought to be reviewed, it must be done systematically and carefully since many seminaries in Africa use books written by Westerners especially in the study of biblical languages. It is certainly our experience that curriculum written with Westerners in mind needs major revision for the African context. For example, Ekem and Kissi (2010) revised the works of J. W. Wenham's *Elements of New Testament Greek*, E. G. Jay's *New Testament Greek: An Introductory Grammar*, N. C. Croy's *A Primer of biblical Greek*, and G. Hadjiantoniou's *Learning the Basics of biblical Greek* by entirely presenting conjugation of verbs before the declension of nouns. They also demanded that exercises at the end of each lesson should be translated into the mother-tongue of the student. However, they failed to translate the vocabularies at the end of the book into a Ghanaian mother-tongue.

Bogere (2013, p. 35-52) agrees with Whitt that there is the need to make formal theological education nurture the character and competence of students. He proposes a shift from classroom lectures to an outdoor type which would offer students the opportunity to balance theory with practice because Africans learn by experience or

observation. According to him, 70 to 80% of the study should be held outside lecture halls since it is in line with training principles in the Old and New Testaments, which are mainly mentorship based. But just taking the same activities “outside” does not make them like mentoring. A mentorship type of training makes the student the pivot and the lecturer is not a “know-it-all guru” but a facilitator. Bogere rightly points out how African students approach learning. However, his proposal of 70 to 80% “out of lecture hall training” is unbalanced. Often, time spent on theory (information transmission in the classroom) helps to better prepare the individual for ministry. However, if the training requires competency that can best be achieved mainly by out of lecture hall training, then his suggestion can be observed.

Kärkkäinen (2014, p. 22-36) discusses four models and ethos of theological education. He explains that “Athens” represents a method of formal theological education from classical Greek philosophy. The goal of Athens is to transform the character of students to have knowledge of God, not knowing God. “Jerusalem” refers to formal theological education that is missional in approach, where Jerusalem is considered as the mother of Christian mission. “Geneva” denotes a confessional approach to formal theological education, where knowledge of God is dependent on the creeds and other doctrines of the Church. “Berlin” refers to the intellectual influence of the Enlightenment on formal theological education where theological convictions are critically analyzed in the light of contemporary knowledge.

He added that although Pentecostals seminaries prefer “Athens” they should be aware of the good influences of the Enlightenment and modernity which must be considered. He further indicated four polarities in the theology of theological education of Pentecostals from which they must choose: “academic versus spiritual, doctrinal versus critical, practical versus theoretical and tradition-driven versus change-driven” (2014, p. 36). The use of “versus” in Kärkkäinen’s four polarities indicates tensions between the two. This work makes a helpful contribution to the argument about “academic versus spiritual” training in contemporary prophetic ministries in Ghana.

### ***Formal Theological Education must be Prioritized over the Anointing of the Spirit***

Lewis (2008, p. 69-86) argues that the ethos of classical Pentecostal life is focused on ministerial formation and Christian spirituality. He is referring to scholars such as Allan Anderson (University of Birmingham), Gregory Boyd (Bethel Seminary), Walter Hollenweger (formerly of University of Birmingham), among others, who left the Classical Pentecostal Churches for the following reasons. First, there was the anti-intellectual ethos of Pentecostalism which expresses itself in the popular saying that “leave your head at the door”. In other words, they should not allow reason to interfere with what is taught and done in the Church. Second, there was the issue of personality or celebrity-cults of leaders, due to their charisma, with many people seeking their help to solve existential needs. In such cases, being filled with the Holy Spirit was perceived as making the leader immune to immorality. The third issue was the theological issue of the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the speaking of tongues as evidence. Formal theological education would have helped address these issues

### ***Theological Education must Complement the Anointing***

Brodie (2011, p. 47-65) explores the dilemma of prospective Pentecostal ministers over the issue of whether formal theological education should be preferred over the anointing or vice versa. He argues that CPC generally favoured the anointing over formal theological education. However, they realized the need for formal theological education in order to build a good footing for their converts and to improve the capacity of ministers to properly interpret the Bible. This led initially to the establishment of short term theological education, which later culminated in building seminaries and providing full-time formal theological education. However, some members believe that “colleges [seminaries] are therefore not intrinsically inimical to genuine spirituality, by virtue of their essential nature” (Brodie 2011, p. 58). It is the neglect of the faith of the forbearers of Classical Pentecostal Churches by being bookish that was the problem (2011, p. 53, 59). It is strange that those who rejected books were themselves writing books for others to read.

This suggests that Classical Pentecostal Churches were previously against teachings by Bible scholars, and advocated for people who did not receive any formal theological education to teach by virtue of being filled with the Spirit. In this regard, Brodie concludes that formal theological education and the anointing should play a complementary role rather than being seen as contradictory because practice cannot exist without theory. Being anointed without seeking formal theological education leads to unnecessary competition among Churches, based on uninformed doctrinal formulations (Brodie 2011, p. 61). Notwithstanding, formal theological education without the anointing leads to sheer intellectualism without power to solve some existential needs (Brodie 2011, p. 60-61).

The view of Brodie is that the anointing of the Holy Spirit and theological education must play a complementary role; nonetheless his study was mainly focused on the Classical Pentecostal Churches in the West and Southern Africa. In view of Brodie’s assertion, I argue that formal theological education must be given a priority over the anointing because theory precedes practice. This is based on the assertion that “a framework for allowing ‘practice to bubble up into theory,’ and ‘theory to bubble up into practice” (Stokes 2005, p. 103) must be allowed. However, theory brings about a range of practices and “that practices may be based upon different theories” (Stokes 2005, p. 103). There are contexts where practice informs theory (principles that govern practice). It is a complex phenomenon which will be studied for the Ghanaian context in a subsequent paper.

### ***Contemporary Prophetic Ministries’ Criticism of Formal Theological Seminaries/Institutions in Ghana***

Many founders of contemporary prophetic ministries were initially members of Traditional Western Mission Churches, which include, among others, the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church Ghana, the Methodist Church Ghana, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Alternatively they were members of Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches such as the Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God, the Apostolic Church Ghana, and Christ Apostolic Church, just to mention a few. They usually left such Churches due to

the perception that the activities of the Spirit, particularly prophesying, were not encouraged and pursued in the Church. Churches were almost dead when it came to prophesying in the power of the Spirit to provide for the existential needs of the audience. In other words, these people want a “lived religion” that is “unofficial” in the sense of spontaneous and not institutional, which is a means of experiencing the Spirit to provide some existential needs.

Wilkinson and Althouse state that, “Lived religion is an attempt to get at the ‘unofficial’ ways in which people practice their religion. It is also an attempt to make sense of the ways in which ‘official’ religion responds to the unofficial. Lived religion investigates the spectrum of spirituality, experience, religiosity, individuals, and identities” (2012, p. ii). However, the activities of the Spirit to solve some existential needs can be experienced within the normal worship practices such as singing, the sacrament, and during preaching.

If the Church is considered not to be vibrant and prophecy oriented, it implies that the institutions that train its leaders are also dead and do not teach the activities of the Spirit that enable prophetic activities. For example, some pastors in contemporary prophetic ministries refer to Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, the foremost ecumenical seminary in Ghana as a “theological cemetery” (Omenyo 2008, p. 41-57). However, Agbeti responds that “lecturers at this seminary challenge and break down ‘students’ self-conceited, holier than-thou attitude; it has first to die to give place to an open minded attitude to the Christian faith” (Agbeti 1991, p. 34).

Lecturers at Trinity Theological Seminary were considered to be bookish, theoretical and lacking the knowhow for effective ministry by the Spirit by many prophetic advocates. The view of the advocates may find support in Walls’ statement that “...without spirituality theological education is empty and barren” (2011, p. 1-12). It is not clear what Walls meant by spirituality; however, since spirituality involves some kind of knowledge and commitment, it can be argued that the decision to have formal theological education is a spiritual exercise. Mante (1995, p. 12, 20) adds that Christian spirituality involves a continuous commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and having a sound mind.

By contrast, contemporary prophetic ministries understand spirituality in terms of charismatic (spiritual gifts) exhibitions. A formal theological seminary that is spiritual is expected to have lecturers who speak in tongues for hours together with the students, perform miracles, heal the sick, and prophesy. The danger is that if Christian spirituality is defined solely on the parade of spiritual gifts, then any non-Christian who demonstrates some spiritual gifts that resembles that of the Christian faith can easily be perceived as a spiritual Christian. This is not to argue that spiritual gifts are not necessary, in fact it is critical in Christianity.

Advocates of contemporary prophetic ministries refer to knowledge received from formal theological seminaries as “head knowledge” which often has a negative connotation; a theory that is not relevant to solving the existential needs of society. Persons academically inclined were always asked by prophets and their advocates, to leave their head (academic prowess) at the Church entrance and enter with their hearts.

For example, Rick Naiiez said “that one Pentecostal speaker stated that he [Rick Naiiez] with the others [academics] in the congregation were to ‘empty their minds and to battle the temptation to think about anything at all. They were instructed to refuse to allow reason to get in their way and to restrain their heads from blocking the route to their hearts” (Lewis 2008, p. 69-86). In other words, they think that academic prowess does not support spirituality, and it must be left out of the church.

By this behaviour, prophets and their advocates are in effect claiming to be spiritual, infallible, and their thoughts sacrosanct. It could be argued that such expressions are a means of preventing critical minds from engaging their unsubstantiated assertions. For example, in commenting on African prophetic movements, Lewis contends that “being Spirit-filled [is regarded as a] guarantee [for] right behaviour....[However], sexual promiscuity and financial misconduct are rampant within its ranks, and little is done about this unless a scandal becomes public” (2008, p. 75). “Touch not my anointed” (Ps. 105:15) is used to forbid any criticism. “So scholars and others who try to call these ministers to account are disenfranchised, marginalized, or told to be quiet for being ‘too critical” (Lewis 2008, p. 69-86). However, the scholars are Christians and therefore anointed (1 John 2:27) as the minister is, but just functioning in a different capacity.

## **Theological Education in Contemporary Prophetic Ministries in Ghana**

Contemporary prophetic ministries in Ghana perceived formal theological education to be the antithesis of spirituality. Therefore they prefer mentorship training over formal theological education because formal theological education does not equip students to deal with spiritual issues such as casting out of demons (exorcism), prophesying, and working of miracles in general. This line of thinking is referred to as “interventionist theology” by Asamoah-Gyadu (2013, p. 126), which is unique to contemporary prophetic ministries. Formal theological education is perceived as limited to equipping students philosophically to present arguments concerning the Bible with very limited and insignificant training on how to spiritually minister to the existential needs of the audience.

Prophesying and performing miraculous acts are considered by prophetic ministries as a proof of one’s ministry, rather than appropriate interpretation of the Bible. This view is based on the world-view of many African societies, which includes the belief that there are evil spirits that hinder one’s success and that there are tutelage spirits (guardian spirits) that could be consulted to aid success (Sarpong 2002, p. 94-96). Contemporary prophetic ministries seek to bring this world-view into Christianity by being agents able to engage the Spirit to aid success for Christians. Another reason for the emphasis on prophesying and performing miraculous acts is that, traditional religion in Africa is not influenced by intellectual concepts and ideologies, but by the power to know and discern happenings in the spirit realm and cause desired change. Since the worship services in contemporary prophetic ministries are less intellectual and less doctrinal, they easily attract non-Christians (Asamoah-Gyadu 2015, p. 8) who are seeking to know their destiny and receive miracles without necessarily being converted.

In the attempt not to be indoctrinated by an academic approach to the interpretation of the Bible and to have spiritual power to minister to the existential needs

of their audience, contemporary prophetic ministries have two forms of mentorship training: personal mentorship and mentorship from “Bible schools” which may also be referred to as formalized mentorship training.

### ***Personal Mentorship Training***

In personal mentorship, the candidate (mentee) offers her/himself to the service of the mentor and is expected to attend to the personal and ministerial needs of the senior prophet (mentor) which includes domestic services such as cleaning and running various errands. The mentee then becomes the “spiritual” son or daughter of the mentor and may live in the same house with her/him. It can be likened to the prophetic guild of Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, which were located at Gibeah, Rama, Bethel, Jericho, and Gilgal (1 Samuel 10:5; 1 Samuel 19:18-24; 2 Kings 2:3, 15; 4:38) respectively. The purpose of the prophetic guild was to have continuity in the prophetic ministry in Israel (Oladejo 2011, p. 115-136). Training of would-be priests in African traditional religion also takes the form of personal mentorship. The would-be or trainee priest/priestess would have to vacate his/her home of residence to join the mentor priest throughout the period of training. He/she is expected to run errands for the mentor priest and attend to his/her personal needs such as cooking, washing, as well as attending to the physical needs of some seekers/adherents to the shrine, just to mention a few.

The mode of instruction in this system is informal: the mentee is expected to learn by observing the mentor. It is justified by Old and New Testaments mentorship strategies of training that are grounded in an unflinching relationship between the mentor and mentee (Bogere 2013, p. 39). This style of training may be seen as a form of what Kelsey and Edgars refer to as the “Athens” model of philosophical education where the goal is transformation and character formation of gaining the wisdom of God, not about God, and “the emphasis therefore falls upon personal development and spiritual formation” (Kärkkäinen 2014, p. 24).

In many cases, if not all, the mentor is not formally theologically educated (Joshua 2016, p. 173-91), but charismatically gifted in the area of prophetic diagnosis of issues in the past, and present, and able to offer solutions for the future. The protégés in this model are mostly members or leaders in the ministry of the mentor and desire the charismatic gifts of the mentor. There are no academic qualifications as prerequisites for mentees; they would only have to show that they desire the gift of the mentor and are ready to serve her/him.<sup>2</sup> Mentees do not pay fees but could “sow seeds”<sup>3</sup> for a harvest of prophetic gifts. “Graduation” of the mentee (to establish his/her own ministry) is based on the reception and manifestation of the charisma of the mentor. This resonates with the African traditional religious requirement for graduating would-be priests/priestesses at various shrines (Opoku 1978, p. 75-77). The academic and moral life of the mentee does not really matter in this form of training. This emphasis allows the mentor to build a kind of

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<sup>2</sup> Prophet Bernard Opoku, interview by the author at the Church premise in Koforidua, September 10, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Seed sowing is given money to a woman/man of God (prophetess/prophet) with the belief that one has given to God and God would pay back according to the desire of the giver.

personality cult and assume that being filled by the Spirit is assurance of good moral behavior (Lewis 2008, p. 74-75), which is not correct.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2005, p. 65-66) has pointed out that this mode of training has not been very beneficial to the African Independent Churches because the death of a senior prophet (mentor) leads to an abrupt end of training and this has contributed to the numerical decline of the African Independent Churches. Amevenku (2014, p. 140-143) adds that the lack of formal theological education by the African Independent Churches has restricted biblical interpretation to the popular level. Hermeneutics designed to understand the original meaning of a text and explain it for a contemporary audience was not championed, resulting in eventual numerical decline. Asamoah-Gyadu points to “an overall numerical decline, verified by two church attendance surveys conducted in 1988 and 1993 by the Ghana Evangelism Committee. For example, attendance in the Musama Disco Christo Church declined by 17 percent..., the Twelve Apostles Church declined by 22 percent, and the African Faith Tabernacle by 23 percent” (2005, p. 29-30). We can argue that personal mentorship alone does not guarantee good theological education for mentees but it allows the mentors to impose their personal egos on the protégés and force them to surrender their personal ambitions.

### ***Mentorship Bible School***

Mentorship Bible school is the amalgamation of personal mentorship and some aspects of formal theological seminary/institution curriculum. Mentorship Bible schools in Ghana include Apostle Brookman Ewusie Boateng’s Brookman Prophetic Academy located at Haacho in Accra; Bishop Sam Owusu’s Champion’s Ministerial College located at Achimota near the Achimota Hospital in Accra; and Bishop Shambach Amaniapong’s Shambach Theological College located at Odorkor Official Town in Accra. The distinctive feature of mentorship Bible schools is that they add some courses similar to those taught in formal and accredited theological seminaries/institutions (such as introduction to the Old and New Testaments, philosophy, Christian preaching, Christian leadership, Christian counseling, evangelism and Christian ethics) to personal mentorship as discussed above. This is so because some of the leaders concerned have some level of formal theological education at the certificate or diploma level.

These courses are taught by the founder/mentor and persons who hold a certificate or diploma from accredited formal theological seminaries/institutions and believe in the ministry of the founder/mentor. In some situations, where the founder/mentor did not have any basic formal theological education, a senior pastor from a sister Church is hired to teach. Just like the parallel case of the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya, these teachers are “not professional educators but pastors and evangelists” (Joshua 2006, p. 13); consequently, they are not equipped to critically discuss the kind of issues under discussion in theological fields.

The mentorship Bible school is owned by founding prophets of a ministry and is a sub-ministry/arm of the main ministry of the mentor. It appeals to both members and non-members of the ministry of the founder/mentor as potential students.<sup>4</sup> Applicants

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<sup>4</sup> Observer participation at Brookman’s Prophetic Academy located at Haacho station in Accra

have to fill out application forms and pay fees either weekly or monthly. Programs range from a three-month certificate to a six-month diploma.<sup>5</sup> The prerequisite for admission is the ability of the prospective candidate to read and write in the English language and their demonstration of God's call by manifestation of gifts as stated in 1 Corinthians 12:1-8 or Ephesians 4:12.

Students/mentees are expected to attend lectures, seminars, all-night services, deliverance (exorcism) sessions, prayer meetings, revival programs, and crusades organized by the mentor regularly.<sup>6</sup> It is expected that, at the end of the program, candidates' gifts would be sharpened and equipped for mission. Flamboyant graduation ceremonies are usually organized at the end of each program and certificates awarded. This form of mentorship training attempts to combine personal mentorship and some minimal level of formal theological education curriculum so that contemporary prophets and their ministries can remain relevant for the changing times in Ghana.

The Mentorship Bible school shows that the leadership of contemporary prophetic ministries has realized the need for formal theological education but they are not comfortable with formal theological seminaries/institutions due to the perception that being academic is the antithesis to genuine spirituality. Yet about 30% of the usual academic program have been added to personal mentorship.

The difference between the two is that personal mentorship training has no specific duration. Graduation largely depends on the ability of the mentee to demonstrate mastery of a prophetic gift, which may not be a spiritual exercise in some cases; whilst the mentorship Bible school has a specific duration leading to graduation. However, in both forms of training, there are no strict academic requirements for admission. This may be because many people who teach at this mentorship form of training and the students have low levels of education. In a research project on prophets who preach in market places in Ghana, it was found that about 85% completed basic school or Junior High School (Aryeh 2015, p. 52). They cannot be admitted into formal theological seminaries/institutions because the minimum entry qualification is a very good pass at the Senior High School level or equivalent. However, some founders/mentors who operate mentorship Bible school have taken on the academic title of "professor". Among them is Prophet Dr. Amponsah of Hope Generation Ministry International, and Archbishop Charles Kofi Nyame of Destiny Foundation Prayer Ministry International located at Dome Kwabenya in Accra.

Nenty and Biao (2013, p. 1-20) hold that a would-be professor must publish articles in reviewed journals, publish books and write book chapters. They must be cited by other scholars, list the number of academic conferences attended and papers presented, and demonstrate knowledge in other fields of studies other than his or her main area of expertise, among other requirements. It is obvious that these mentor prophets do not even come close to the normal requirements for being considered a professor. They want to submit that what they teach may be equated to what professors

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<sup>5</sup> Global Ministerial Bible College located at Kwashiman opposite Been-To Complex, Hand flyer.

<sup>6</sup> Bishop Samuel Owusu's Champion's Ministerial College located at Achimota Golf Club Area near the Achimota Hospital.

teach in the universities and seminaries. One wonders why some contemporary prophets take on academic titles in addition to ministerial and ecclesiastical titles since they considered professors in formal seminaries as dead to the works of the Spirit, particularly prophetism.

## **Complementary Rather Than Contradictory**

From the burgeoning discussion concerning personal mentorship and mentorship Bible school, it can be concluded that many people with contemporary prophetic ministries have realized the need for formal theological education but do not have the academic qualification or feel reluctant or over-qualified to apply for admission to such programs. Charismatically gifted persons find it difficult to submit to institutions or to have someone teach them. For that reason they also do not belong to ecumenical bodies. The existence of Mentorship Bible schools seems to suggest the prophets see a complementary role between academic and spiritual factors rather than a contradiction. It is obvious that in these schools, the academic component comprises between 20% and 30% of the curriculum, whilst the spiritual component of training consists of between 70% and 80% of the curriculum. Thus between 70% and 80% of the total period of lecture time is spent on fasting, prayer, all-night vigils, revival services, prayer meetings, and crusades among others. Bogere (2013, p. 40) argues that in view of the fact that Africans culturally learn predominantly through field observations, it is appropriate to adopt between 70% and 80% field experience.

Easter (2013, p. 13) argues that field experience creates the atmosphere for the participatory classroom of the Spirit. Conversely, Brodie states that “theory is required to guide and test practice, while practice, as the concrete outworking of theory, is essential in providing theory with feedback about the validity of its tenets in pastoral, evangelical and missionary context” (2011, p. 60). It is correct that many Africans learn by observation; however, there cannot be practical learning without supporting theory. In other words, theory precedes the practical. Hence, I argue that the theory component of formal theological education in Ghana should be more like 70% of the hour spent and the practical 30%. This is not sacrosanct in all contexts. It is dependent on the context, and what is being studied, since humans learn and/or teach differently.

The amount of time spent in the classroom determines how effective one could be in ministry although there may be a few exceptions. The African Independent Churches initially rejected classroom formal theological education as Westernization. Soon, they began to decline numerically, and one of the reasons for the decline was lack of formal theological education of their clergy. Since they were not theologically educated, their biblical interpretation was shallow primarily based on popular views that excite the congregants, not the exposition of the authorial intended meaning of scripture for a contemporary audience. This contributed to the decline of such Churches because the members were not firmly established in scriptural teaching and therefore were vulnerable to false teaching and social pressures that drew them away from the Church (Amevenku 2014, p. 138, 40). The lack of theological education was due to low level education of its leaders. Baëta (2014) observed that prophets of the African Independence Churches of 34 congregations in the Ahanta District were mostly illiterates. Only one

could speak and write English language. For that reason, membership and other records of the Church are not well kept (p. 10-11). Such issues led to a collaboration between the African Independent Churches, the Mennonites, and the Lutherans to establish Good News Theological Seminary, located at Oyibi, to train their ministers (Amevenku 2014, p. 137).

The “anointing” without relevant supporting knowledge of biblical concepts in context often leads to divisions by perceiving groups who do not support one’s assertions as enemies (Brodie 2011, p. 61). It has the potential to lead into spiritism, syncretism, religious fundamentalism, and baseless emotionalism because there is a poor understanding of what is Christian spirituality or the anointing. This does not mean that intellectual or academic prowess should be pursued at the detriment of spirituality because in Africa, religion must necessarily demonstrate power over the activities of evil spirits. Neither extremes should be encouraged. Kärkkäinen (2014, pp. 29) argues that the goal of theological education is ministerial formation, therefore theological education should be relevant to society.

Asamoah-Gyadu (2010, p. 5-6) points out that some lecturers in seminaries/institutions in Ghana studied under secular professors in universities in the West. This has influenced their world-view greatly. Although students appreciate their degrees and the knowledge they have acquired, they would also like to know about how to heal the sick, exorcise demons, and prophesy because this is what faces them and their audience daily in Africa. This does not suggest that receiving formal theological education from the West is not good and in fact many theological seminaries/institutions use text books from the West to teach in Ghana.

The issue is that, whilst theological colleges are receiving and using Western text books to teach, the African world-view must be considered. There is a gap between what is taught in class and what is practiced in some ministerial fields. Seminaries in Ghana seem to concentrate on training clergy to manage the church. There should be an opportunity also to train persons who claimed to be prophets to function as the Christian prophets found in the Bible. This will reduce the menace of false prophets in Ghana and eliminate traditional religio-cultural practices conducted by self-styled prophets, such as, prophets selling relics and prophylactics such as stones, oils, water as *sunsum akwankyere* (spiritual direction), items which are also given by traditional African prophets to their adherents (Aryeh 2015, p. 213-16).

It is significant to mention that Trinity Theological Seminary has a one year Certificate in Ministry program that has no strict entry requirements for applicants. Any one in ministry who can speak and write in English language can apply for admission. Many Pentecostal and Charismatic ministers and lay persons have taken advantage of the opportunity to receive some level of formal theological education under professional educators. Centre for Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics at Trinity Theological Seminary also has programs in biblical studies for persons who could not attend regular mainstream lectures or want to improve their knowledge of biblical languages. However, there is the need to organize a program with the prophetic ministries in mind that will heavily consider the religio-cultural world-view of Africa reflected in Christian prophesying.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that academic education and the anointing of the Holy Spirit must complement each other where priority is given to theological education. Contemporary prophetic ministries in Ghana emphasize spirituality over intellectualism. They perceive a tension between being spiritual and academic. Being academic is considered the antithesis of spirituality. Therefore the clergy of contemporary prophetic ministries are not comfortable with receiving formal theological education from the well-established and accredited theological seminaries/institutions. This has led to the establishment of personal mentorship and mentorship Bible schools.

However, there cannot be effective practice without spending quality time on relevant theory. The two extremes must be avoided. Theological education and the anointing of the Spirit must play complementary roles, giving perhaps about 70% of the attention to academic studies and about 30% to mentoring and practical field education. The reason is that academic study will provide the foundation, the necessary theoretical and conceptual frame work within which practice will take place.

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