

3.0 CHAPTER THREE: THE EMERGENCE OF THE *GIDAN ADDU'A* MOVEMENT

3.1 Introduction

Harold Turner rightly observes that Africa is the heartland of new religious movements.¹ These religious movements are always dynamic and mobile, and seek to address pertinent circumstantial issues. In all new religious movements, the vital issue is the offer of divine help, especially healing, security, success, wellbeing and protection from evil spirits. These to them are lacking in the mission-founded churches. They emerged, therefore, to fill a particular vacuum in the mission of the mission-founded churches. Some movements do develop features characteristic of 'para-churches', although at the initial stage, they claimed to be services within the church institution. By 'services', I mean ministries within the church. The Pentecostal-Charismatic movements that emerged in the Wukari area (as discussed in Chapter Two) initially aimed for renewal within the evangelical church, the CRCN. The movement (commonly known as 'Youth Fellowship') was an organ of the mission-founded church which met intermittently for prayers, Bible studies, camp meetings and night vigils within the local churches on week days. All members went back to their various local church affiliations on Sundays for worship.

3.2 The *Gidan Addu'a* and Its Independence

The Charismatic leaders of *Gidan Addu'a* established ministries in their residence outside the spiritual guidance of their church affiliation. An examination and analysis of the information gathered from respondents revealed several factors that called for this:

First, it appears that the Charismatic leaders still recalled their relational difficulties with the church leadership about speaking in tongues in the mid-1970s when they were finally ejected from the church. They thought that the worldview divide and relational difficulties may still recur.

Second, it seems the Charismatic lay leaders were using their 'spiritual experiences', backed up with selected scriptural passages, as yardsticks in the interpretation of life experiences. In this case, independence would give them freedom to adequately demonstrate their 'spiritual

¹ Harold W. Turner, 'New Religious Movements in Primal Societies', *International Review of Mission* (July 1973), pp.321-337 (327).

experiences'. They want to be relatively independent from the parent institution, so as to carry on their distinctive features and leadership.

Third, it is believed that the Charismatic lay leaders sought to address issues of life experiences which they considered to have been left out by the mission-founded churches. They perceived that the church leadership had failed to mainstream the 'theology of power' in the church worship, life and practice. They therefore perceived an absence of power in the mission-founded churches. The lack of this 'power' made the mission-founded churches unable to address people's life experiences which made them helpless and left their future bleak and precarious. To the Charismatic lay leaders, people facing social stresses and economic strains need to be guided on the fact that the living power of Jesus is able to deal with their daily difficulties. In their perception, people do not only come to church to hear the gospel of salvation, but also to receive assurance of their health, success, protection and security. Moreover, if the church could not assure people of their security in life, they may look for something that would give them confidence. This is because they live in a 'broken world' of suffering. The lay leaders' stance was that it is wrong to turn a deaf ear or close the eyes to everything, as the mission-founded churches seemed to be doing.

Fourth, in the interpretation of the *Gidan Addu'a* lay leaders, the church failed to define their role in the church. They were generally marginalised. Nevertheless, the ministry they have established has given them opportunity to express their charismatic gifts even outside the church.

Fifth, the lay leaders claim that the CRCN leadership failed to co-opt them into church services due to fear of losing popularity.² The Charismatic lay members assert that CRCN's leadership is operating 'exclusive democratisation of charismata,' as described by Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu.³ This is because the Charismatic lay members are not given space and opportunity to demonstrate their gifts as expected; an opposition to the 'priesthood of all believers.' Moreover, the CRCN leadership to a large extent still holds on to the cessation of *charismata* with the apostles. The Charismatic lay leaders, drawing from traditional and charismatic 'spiritual experiences', are sharing in Pauline democratisation of *charismata* to challenge the theoretical principle of 'Priesthood of all believers'. Allan Anderson argues that

² Nuhu Peace Nyajon, Interview, 16 November 2010, Takum; Isaiah Jirapye Magaji, Interview, 17 February 2011.

³ J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, "'God's End-Time Militia': Ecclesiology in Ghana's New Charismatic Ministries', *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 7, No.1 (June 2004), pp.31-37 (35).

charismata are given for the democratisation of Christianity: ‘...for henceforth, the ministry of the gospel would no longer be reserved for a select privileged and educated few, but would be revealed to whoever was willing to receive it and pass it on’.⁴ The dawn of the *charismata* has no distinction between the laity and clergy; all are expected to have the space and opportunity to serve because it is direct and task-oriented, and for the common good of the Church.⁵

Information gathered revealed that CRCN’s leadership, perhaps, other neighbouring mission-founded church bodies are accusing *Gidan Addu’a* Charismatic lay members that they are obsessed with power encounters to attract fame, popularity, and for other monetary gains; and that this results in self-authenticating, untold social problems in the society, while claiming divine impartation.

Observations and analyses have shown that when a Charismatic lay member in the CRCN perceived to have personal religious conviction for a particular task to be done, the leadership would set a long bureaucratic rule to be met. For example, the church would set an unconfirmed time frame for reflection and observation of the acclaimed conviction. On the contrary, it appears that the Charismatic lay member who perceived to have had ‘spiritual experience’ is convinced that it is a task of immediate action. The thought of the leadership is that spiritual conviction or the call of God does not necessarily imply undermining the spiritual oversight of the church. In contrast, the person so convicted thought that personal conviction does not necessarily require a church role. However, spiritual gifts are not personally owned. God graciously bestows them on individuals for the sake of serving and building up the church. Robert L. Saucy puts it succinctly: ‘...the ministry of the church is the ministry of the Spirit which is divided among the various members, each contributing his gift to the total work of the church’.⁶ The lasting effect of *charismata* depends on how the gifts are used and their intended divine purpose.

Sixth, the Charismatic lay leaders thought that ministries, though an organ of the church, must not necessarily be in the church because the church programmes would disrupt them.

⁴ Allan H. Anderson, ‘Global Pentecostalism in the New Millennium’ in Allan H. Anderson & Walter J. Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals after a Century: Global Perspectives on a Movement in Transition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), p.222.

⁵ Asamoah-Gyadu, “‘God’s End-Time Militia’”, pp.34-36; ‘Spiritual Gifts’ in Walter A Elwell & Philip W. Comfort (eds.), *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Database WORDsearch Corporation, 2006), pp.1222-1223 (1223).

⁶ Robert L. Saucy, *The Church in God’s Program* (Chicago: Moody, 1972), p.128.

On the contrary, the elders and ministers of CRCN observed that the independence of the Charismatic lay leaders revolved around secret agendas, for example, monetary gain, quests for power and popularity as well as ignorance of what ministry is all about. If the *Gidan Addu'a* Charismatics had known that 'ministries are organs of the church'⁷ which aimed at 'raising souls for the church'⁸ as claimed, they would have not established them outside the church's spiritual oversight. Ministry and the church are supposed to be soul mates, aimed at building up the body, the church.

The *Gidan Addu'a* as an indigenous religious movement emerged in the mid-1990s, from the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN), in Wukari. However, the *Gidan Addu'a* has various characteristics of AICs, and Charismatics attempt to synthesise biblical and pre-Christian beliefs and practices. The movement claims to be charting new ways of domesticating the Christian faith. It sees sickness or misfortune and wellbeing as integral parts of social, economic, political and religious consciousness, all of which are explained within a religious framework of spiritual agencies.⁹ The movement believes strongly that the 'natural causality' (explainable and unexplainable) of sicknesses has led to the breach in relationships. The movement draws its beliefs and practices heavily from the primal mind-set of the mystical causality of sickness.¹⁰ Some of the Charismatic lay leaders normally tell their clients (in secret) who they think might be the cause of their misfortune. They do this because of the claim of 'secret revelations' received through the 'Holy Spirit'. Sometimes, such Charismatic lay leaders would encourage the clients to go and confess or reconcile with the one whom they might have wronged to ensure wellbeing.¹¹ Almost all the clients have a belief in the personalistic cause of sickness, and that Satan is responsible, using demons, evil spirits, witches, sorcerers, occult powers and other malignant forces to inflict harm on

⁷ Caleb S.O. Ahima, Interview, 19 October 2009, TEKAN Headquarters, Jos; Joseph U. Ajaver, Interview, 25 October 2009, CRCN Lagos; Bulus Adama Gani, Interview, 17 November 2010, Takum; Joseph Mai-Riga Vyonku, Interview, 8 February 2011, Wukari.

⁸ Jonah Tsonatu, Interview, 7 December 2010, Wukari; Joseph Mai-Riga Vyonku, Interview, 8 February 2011, Wukari; Joseph Sanfo Zhema, Interview, 19 February 2011, Wukari.

⁹ Dantani, Interview, 8 February 2012; Agbu, Interview, 22 February 2011 & 16 February 2012; 'Freedom Ministry', 9 October 2009, 17 February 2012, Wukari; Observation, Wukari, Voice of Healing-Prayer Ministries, 8 February 2010, 5 February 2011; Observation, Wukari, Prayer and Healing Ministry, 12 October 2009, 6 March 2010, 21 & 23 September 2011, 9 October 2011.

¹⁰ Observation, Wukari, Prayer and Healing Ministry, 12 October 2009, 6 March 2010, 21 & 23 September 2011, 9 October 2011; Dantani, Interview, 8 February 2012; Observation, Wukari, Freedom Ministry, 9 October 2009 & 17 February 2012; Observation, Wukari, Voice of Healing-Prayer Ministries, 8 February 2010, 5 February 2011.

¹¹ Observation, Wukari, Freedom Ministry, 9 October 2009 & 17 February 2012; Observation, Wukari, Prayer and Healing Ministry, 12 October 2009, 6 March 2010, 21 & 23 September 2011, 9 October 2011.

humanity. The Charismatic lay leaders are simply re-interpreting the traditional concept of ultimate causes in new terms.¹² They often focus on waging war against satanic forces to deliver the sick (victim). The beliefs and expressions of the Charismatic lay leaders often reflect pre-Christian experiences of powers above and around people in the society. Moreover, the Charismatic lay leaders believe that all the extraordinary spiritual gifts are democratically given by God to whoever He decides to use, irrespective of status and career, for His ministry and not necessarily in the church.

Considering their beliefs in general, they believe that all sicknesses are sent by Satan. The fragmentation of relationships in the cosmos results in God withdrawing His protection, security and sustenance. This perception is drawn from the primal worldview that God sometimes sends evil forces to attack human beings, leading to a rupture in relationships and to sin. First, the ministries failed to understand that God sometimes allows natural evils for His unrevealed will as a test of our faith in Him.¹³ Second, the ministries believe that all sicknesses are curable through faith in God. To *Gidan Addu'a* Charismatic lay leaders, prayer is a way of invoking God through the Holy Spirit for healing and restoration. Third, some of the ministries believe that all sickness is spiritual and so needs spiritual response, in particular, prayer. Fourth, the ministries, as the Health and Wealth Gospel (HWG) advocates, believe that if a sick person does not get well, it is because of his own lack of faith. This seems to be the view of the Charismatic lay leaders in the Synoptic Gospels. Matthew and Mark, for example, depict Jesus as performing miracles on an account of the faith of His audience.¹⁴ Like HWG, the *Gidan Addu'a* Charismatic lay leaders base their belief on 'Faith' as a prerequisite to healing. The Charismatic lay leaders often conclude that failure to be healed is due to lack of faith (Mk.6:5-6).¹⁵ HWG asserts that only lack of faith can prevent God's promise from being realised.

Another trait across the ministries is the emphasis on *charismata* as a means of empowerment to heal sicknesses. The movement believes that these *charismata* are still active in the life of

¹² This is in line with Andrew Walls' view of changing worldview maps. Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transformation and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 2002), p.128.

¹³ Cf. Gen.12:17; Exod. 9:2-11; Num.12:1-10; Deut.28:22-61; Job 2:3,7-10; 1 Sam. 2:6; 12:14f; 2 Kgs. 21:7-14; 2 Chron. 21:14-18; Acts 12: 23; 13:6-11; Jn. 9:2f; Rev. 2:22f.

¹⁴ Cf. Matt.13:58, 'And he did not do many mighty works (*dunameis*) there because of their unbelief. Norman Perrin, *The New Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), p.225.

¹⁵ Tsonatu, Interview, 2 March 2012. See also, Bruce Barron, *The Health and Wealth Gospel* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity, 1987), pp.71-73.

believers, and have been democratically (as expressed in Pauline epistles) not exclusively and dogmatically given to the church's leadership (as stressed in James 5). The Charismatic lay leaders always emphasise spiritual experience: hearing the voice of God directly and empowerment for spiritual warfare. The *Gidan Addu'a* Charismatic lay leaders draw from the possibility of being haunted by the evil spirits to stress the need for spiritual warfare. In all their weekly programmes, a day is set apart for spiritual warfare alongside daily spiritual warfare for the sick people.

This movement provokes the CRCN leadership because of its tradition of breaking forms of beliefs and practice. It also challenges the theological position maintained in CRCN since her inception of the cessation of *charismata*, especially miraculous healing. CRCN partly holds to the classic Protestant and older Calvinistic position that *charismata* are 'foundational,' meant for the initiation and spread of the Christian faith, and had since ceased with the apostles. The CRCN leadership perceives the contemporary claim of *charismata* as the aftermath of, not the priority in, the church's mission. The CRCN leadership does not resent the prayer-healing *per se*, but condemns the overemphasis in giving glory to Satan who had already been defeated by Jesus Christ. The CRCN leadership asserts that the Charismatic lay leaders are denying the complete work of Christ. It insists that the power of the Holy Spirit at conversion is still active, protecting and preventing the threats of the devil. What patients need are faith, humble prayer and the use of medication correctly prescribed by a physician from the hospital. This is because God values both the secular and the spiritual.

The CRCN stresses that healing, which began in the ministry of Christ, is still active within the conversion framework until its consummation at the *parousia*. The Charismatic lay leaders tend to emphasise that they left the old spirit powers (through visions and dreams); and have held on to the new Spirit [the Holy Spirit, had renewed the dreams, visions and auditions] for their diagnostic processes.¹⁶ The Charismatic lay leaders see the traditional 'spirit powers' as temporary pointers and their potencies are limited, but the Holy Spirit has the perpetual potency of protecting against the malevolent powers of witchcraft and evil spirits.

¹⁶ See M. West, *Bishops and Prophets in a Black City* (Cape Town: David Philips, 1975), pp.121-122; S. Hayes, 'African Initiated Church Theology' in S. Maimela & A. Konig (eds.), *Initiation into Theology* (Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers, 1998), p.176; Oduro et al, *Mission in an African Way*, pp.24-27; Anderson and Hollenweger (eds.), *Pentecostals After a Century*, p.217.

The *Gidan Addu'a* Charismatic lay members do not see their expressions as mere claims, but consider them as divinely imparted. In most cases, they stress that they have parted with the old sources. They stress this in the course of interpreting and applying life issues. Hence, they insist that the new source, the Holy Spirit, is their guide in all beliefs and expressions.

The next five chapters (Chapter Four to Eight) consider five selected ministries under the auspices of the *Gidan Addu'a* movement. Each of the ministry wrestles with a particular issue within its context. Each chapter discusses in depth the life story of each evangelist, tracing the origin of their religiosity with regard to healing back to their extended family bloodline. The study reveals the impact of their religious experiences and how they attempt to synthesise biblical and primal worldviews. It appears that this has not been without difficulty because they sometimes tend to adhere to the primal worldview, backed up by personal spiritual experience. In some cases, they integrate the two religious tenets. Their adherence to the primal worldview revolves around unique 'spiritual experiences' which they claimed to have ignited their vocation, calling and ministry. As this study reveals, they modified healing techniques and use the Bible to legitimise their beliefs and practices. This gradually generated controversies in family and society, including chaos, trauma, stigmatisation, victimisation and discrimination.