

**GOOD NEWS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE AND SEMINARY
ACCRA**

**HISTORY OF THE WONDERFUL CHRIST HEALING
MINISTRY**

(1998-2005)

BY THERESA M. APPAH

TO

REV. DR. THOMAS ASANTE ODURO

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
 Chapter One – The Life and Early Call of Mary Quist	3
Birth and Parentage	
Education and religious upbringing	
Marital History	
Her Call	
Permission to minister Independently	
 Chapter Two – Establishing the Church	9
Religious Experience of Mary Quist	
The Name of the Church	
The First Congregation of the Church	
Early Challenges/Problems	
The Spread of the Church	
The Trend of Growth	
The Trend of Evangelism	
The Vision of the Church	
 Chapter Three – Beliefs and Practices	15
The Godhead	
Jesus Christ	
Holy Spirit	
Angels and Saints	
Salvation	
Prayer and Fasting	
Bible	
Baptism	
The Lord's Supper	
Marriage and Divorce	
Prophecy	
Training of Disciples	
Healing and Anointing	
Worship	
Attire on Fridays	
Rituals	
 Conclusion	22

Introduction

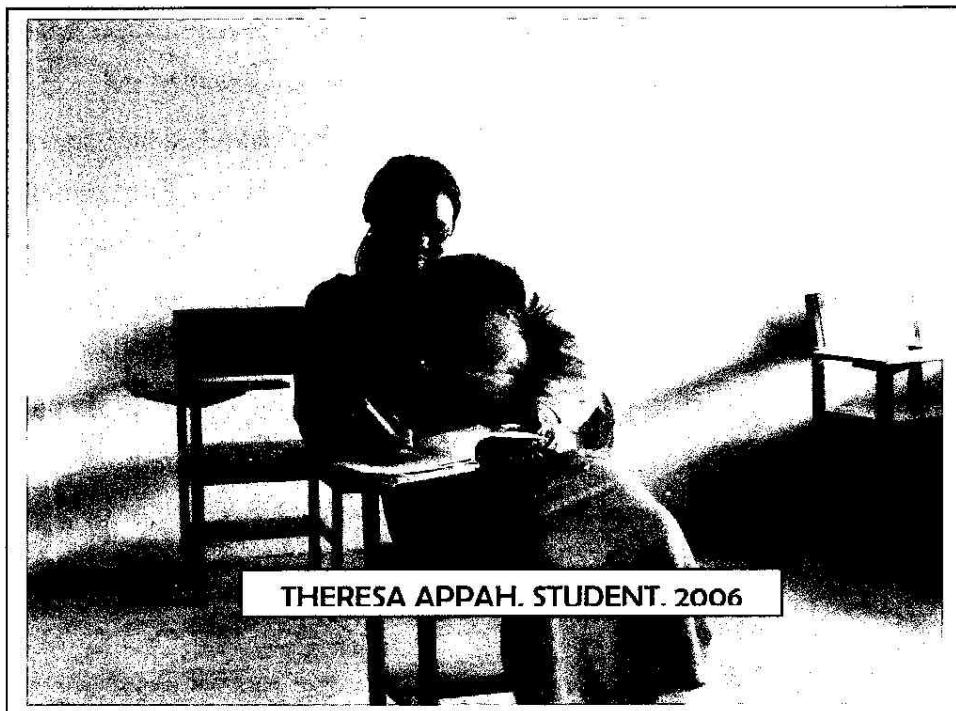
When I had the chance to study at the Good News Theological College and Seminary I was determined to write the history of an African Indigenous church. I decided to write the history of The Wonderful Christ Healing Church, being a member and a prophetess of the church. I began to have a close view of the history of the church, accessing its scanty documents, as well as its doctrine and practices.

One of my principal objectives for this long essay is to showcase the positive founding and the challenges of The Wonderful Christ Healing Church. It is obvious that Christ wants to see His church observing and practicing things that He has commanded them rather to see those following traditions laid down by men. Again without a written history of the church, many good things of this church may be lost forever.

Finally, this will also help others whom God has given the ability the opportunity to continue writing about this church. In which case, this denomination would be vibrant over the centuries because its challenges might have been met and its good aspects may show forth for continuation.

Acknowledgement

I thank God, the Creator of the Heaven and Earth for giving me the knowledge, strength and ability to begin and end this project. I also thank God for all the helpers he provided me to help come to a successful end. I wish to show gratitude to my Church History Lecturer who is in the person of Rev. Dr. Thomas Asante Oduro for taking me through this course and giving me the chance to write. He also taught me the importance of church history. Not forgetting Rev. Frank Botchway and Mary Gomashie, who initially read through the work and Rev. Ezekiel Nartey who thought it was necessary to pray for me when I was gathering my information. I would not forget Prophetess Mary Quist and her church elders for spending time out of their tight schedules to sit with me during my interviews with them.



CHAPTER ONE

The Life and Early Call of Mary Quist.

Birth and Parentage

The general overseer and leader of the wonderful Christ Healing Ministry is Prophetess Mary Quist. She was born at Odum Kumasi in the year 1939 to Mr. Albert Quist and Prophetess Abba Gyesiwa.

The date of birth of Mr. Albert Quist, the father of Mary, is not known. He was, however, born in Osu Kinkawe in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. Because of paternal inheritance, prophetess Mary Quist is a native of Osu Kinkawe. Mr. Albert Quist was trained as an auto electrician. He worked from 1937 to 1946 with the Workers Brigade and later on joined the Ghana Police as a professional driver and an auto-electrician. Besides driving, he had the responsibility of training young police constables who were interested in learning to be auto electricians and drivers. He performed the responsibility very well and was awarded a certificate of admiration by the Police Service.

The hometown of Abba Gyesiwa, the mother of Mary, Afrangua, a village of about five miles from Saltpond, in the Central region of Ghana. She was however born at Aboabo, a suburb of Kumasi, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Her date of birth was not recorded but it is believed that she was born on the day the first train arrived in Kumasi. She grew to be a trader in foodstuffs. Auntie Abba, as people popularly called her, also learnt skills in baking from her maternal grandmother.

Mr. Albert Quist and Auntie Abba Gyesiwa, who were both staunch Methodists, got married and gave birth to Mary. As time went on, Auntie Abba's family noticed that a strange spirit was tormenting her (Abba). It was detected that the strange spirit was the same spirit that tormented her elder sister living in Abakrampa in the Central region, eventually her sister became a fetish priestess. Her parents did not want her to be trained as a fetish priestess, so they took her instead to a church called The Power Healing Church to be delivered from the powers of the perceived strange spirit. The action was against the wish of her husband, who wanted her to be a fetish priest.

Prophet Kwaku Sarfo, the leader of the Power Healing Church, continuously prayed for her and some other sick people at the church. Auntie Abba stayed at the

church house for many years even after being delivered from the spirit. She later became a disciple in the church. She was gifted with prophecy and healing. She practiced these gifts in the Power Healing Church. She later on left the Power Healing Church to the Twelve Apostles church where she was officially anointed as a prophetess.

Mr. Albert Quist divorced Auntie Abba because he could not have a fetish priestess as a wife. Prophetess Abba decided not to marry again after her divorce. She continued with her service to the Lord and also to take care of her daughter Mary Quist.

Education and religious upbringing

Mary Quist started school in the year 1946 when she was seven years old. Two years into her education at primary three, she stopped going to school with the reason that the teachers had beaten her with a cane. Her grandmother refused and took Mary and stayed with her at Afrangua. Mary stayed with her until she was fourteen years, she then moved to live with her Abba Otuaa, an aunt, at Abankrapa. This aunt of hers' was the fetish priestess discussed above. Her stool name was Okomfo Panin Weisiamoah, trained by the High Priestess (Okomfo Panin) of the Laterh Shrine. Okomfo Weisiamoah was popularly known as Maame Weisiamoah.

Before Maame Weisiamoah's call, she was a member of the Catholic Church and the president of the St. Theresa's Guild. During Mary's stay with her, she helped her prepare herbal concoctions for the sick and also helped her in trading as she was a good trader too.

Marital History

Mary Quist got married at the age of twenty-one in 1960 to Mr. Kodjo Mensah, a twenty-three year old Carpenter at Abankrampa. The marriage lasted for only one year because they had no child. Mary left her matrimonial home to Kumasi to live with her mother, who was a prophetess at Ebenezer Twelve Apostles. Mary later got married to Mr. Heikens, a chemist, in his mid-twenties. They gave birth to a baby girl but the girl died two (2) days after birth.

When Mary was in labor, her mother did not take her to the hospital but made her labor in the house till she gave birth. For this reason Mr. Heikens divorced her. He paid all alimony he was asked to pay and that ended the second marriage. All this while, Mary was a staunch member of the Roman Catholic Church. "Why me?" was the only question

she kept on asking herself because of her predicament. She tried to hold on to her faith, remembering Hannah's story in the bible.

Mary got married to Kwaku Sarfo, a forty-five year old prophet and leader of Power Healing Church in Kumasi. Prophet Sarfo already had a wife and two daughters. His wife was Deborah Sarfo and his daughters were Akua Sarfowa and Afie Daisoh Sarfo. The Prophet practiced polygamy and for that matter, married three more wives after Mary. She had a daughter with prophet Kweku Sarfo called Joanna. Mary's daughter Joanna is a teacher and is married to Mr. Kofi Ejah, a chartered accountant. They are blessed with a son called Richard Ejah now a student at the Institute of Professional Studies, Legon.

Her Call

Though Mary Quist was married to Prophet Sarfo, she held onto her faith in the Catholic Church but at a point in time, she began to experience the visitation of a strange spirit, which made her speak in tongues whenever she prayed. She did not know the difference between the spirits and as a staunch Catholic, she did not believe in the operations of all the gifts of the Spirit mentioned in the bible.

In 1959 Mary Quist had the same experience with the spirit so in 1961 when she again began to experience it, she thought it was the fetish spirit that had possessed her auntie and mother but her husband Prophet Sarfo confirmed it as being one of the gifts of God. A section of the bible that teaches about the gifts of the spirit was read to her but she did not believe it because of the Catholic worldview of spirits.

Mary visited many Prophets, Ministers of God and fetish priests hoping to be told that she could be delivered or exorcized but they were all in vain. She did not want to become a fetish priestess, a prophetess, or a Minister of God because she thought she could never be or do it for she saw her life style was not right before the Lord. She, therefore, left to stay with Sergeant Kwesi Barfo, her uncle, in Accra in 1962.

When Mary moved to Accra, she fell so sick that her uncle led her to Dr. Clark Cooke, a medical doctor at the 37 Military hospital in Accra. Dr. Cooke, after sometime, referred her to the Accra Psychiatric hospital but it was also declared that Mary had no mental problem. Madam Esther Mintah, a nurse, introduced her to prophetess Agnes Moaro who lived at Pig-Farm near Malata in Accra.

Prophetess Agnes prayed and asked Mary to stay there for a three-day intensive prayer which she did and on the third day, Prophetess Agnes sent for her uncle and told him "until your niece accepts the fact that it is God who is calling her into His ministry as a worker, she would end up messing up her life; she will not have her freedom from this unknown sickness".¹

Immediately, her uncle agreed and asked Prophetess Agnes to begin training Mary. In February 1963, Prophetess Agnes cleansed Mary by bathing her with sponge, soap and blessed (Holy) water mixed with Florida water and a kind of oil called "protection oil". Seven lighted white candles were used to surround her and she held a cross in a form of a rod with her two hands and made a vow saying "I swear by this rod and cross to worship God, to work for him in truth and with all my strength and never to worship any god other than Him so help me God, Amen". Mary continued with her discipleship training for the next three years in the mission house of prophetess Agnes Moaro.

One Friday night, Mary had a revelation in which she claims to see the angel Gabriel telling her that he is the angel sent from God to work with her. The angel gave her directions and warned her to abstain from having sex and that if she was able to do so, she was going to be very powerful and do miracles that even men could not do. So she told her trainer Agnes Moaro who interpreted the vision to mean that she had to divorce her husband Prophet Sarfo for the vision to become real. Mary took the interpretation in good faith and acted on it. Her husband allowed her to leave her marital home.

Within one year, Mary was promoted to the position of a cupbearer, which is one of the stages of promotions to becoming a prophet or prophetess in the Twelve Apostles Church. Though she went to meet others who were in training before her, she was promoted quickly through her works and way of responding to the teaching both physically and spiritually. She claimed that Twelve Apostles Church was not a church that often or even went out for evangelism but any time she was possessed by the spirit of the angel Gabriel she went out for evangelism carrying her bible and converted a large number of people to the church; this contributed to her quick promotion.

¹ Interview with Prophetess Agnes Moaro, Twelve Apostles Church, Pig Farm, Accra

Permission to minister independently.

Mary asked permission to move out of the Garden² to rent a house so that she could be able to evangelize effectively. She was permitted to do that, so she rented two rooms at Pig-Farm, a suburb of Accra, not far from her church premises. She organized morning and evening devotions with the people in her compound and later on in her community and within two months, she had won about twenty people who held prayers on Wednesday, Friday and went to church with her at Prophetess Agnes's garden.

After sometime, Prophetess Agnes commissioned Mary to build a wooden structure at her (Mary's) house where she could have Sunday services. Agnes encouraged Mary not to hesitate to call on her (Agnes) whenever she encounters any problem. Mary visited her trainer in the evenings for instructions and paid her dues to her trainer.

Most of the people who came to Mary for prayers were barren women, mentally retarded, market women and men who wanted good jobs, progress, promotions in life. She prayed and God answered her and all who had their requests granted joined her prayer group. Mary Quist had no choice than to move to a bigger place as the number of sick people increased. She moved to Madina (New road) another suburb of Accra in 1966. She later on acquired four plots of land near the Institution of Professional Studies (I.P.S) through the help of some members of her congregation. She began to build her Garden, which was completed in 1971. She moved into the Garden in 1972. Two years later, in 1974, prophetess Agnes led her to Kromantse, the National Headquarters of the Twelve Apostles Church, to be commissioned and ordained a prophetess by Bishop Michael George I, the Head Prophet of the church.

As a process leading to her ordination, she stayed at Kormantse fasting and praying for 40 days. She was trained on the dynamics of Christian counseling and the administration of a Garden. The ordination training was under the tutelage of Bishop Michael George I, and Mariam Arthur, senior prophetess of the Ebenezer Twelve Apostles church, Kumasi. After the ordination, Bishop George I gave her the mandate to heal the sick, prophecy and help in other ministerial work in the church.

In 1980, Mary Quist was recorded to have had the largest Twelve Apostles Garden in the Greater Accra Region. Her work grew very wide and fast. Mary Quist

² A mission house or congregation in the Twelve Apostles Church is called a Garden.

always gave gratitude to her first church elders with whom she established the church. They were Major Sarfo of Burma Camp who was a soldier, Ebenezer Danquah who was an Assistant Superintendent of Police in Ghana Police Service, Nana Ofori Atta, a traditional chief (Gyasihehene) of Koforidua and his wife, and Deacon Diana Atta of Yamoransa of Central Region. God touched the hearts of these people to help her financially.

Difficulties

The growth of Mary's Garden was not without difficulties. Mary Quist faced many problems and difficulties in the first six years after being ordained as a prophetess. Her first problem began after she had told the wife of one Alhaji Seidu, then the Madina Chief, about the vision she saw concerning a tree planted in the middle of Alhaji Seidu's compound. According to Mary, the tree was the cause of death of all Alhaji Seidu's children. The tree was cut down and Alhaji Seidu reported her to the police that she had falsely accused him of being a wizard. She was sent to court but found not guilty and was set free. Then a series of deaths plagued some church members, mostly pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children. Thieves also broke into the Garden carrying away everything including a newly born baby boy, but the baby was brought back after two days alive. She was accused for the loss of the baby boy because she had no son but God rescued her from all these problems.

Chapter Two

Establishing the Church

Religious Experiences of Mary Quist

Even though Mary encountered many problems in the Twelve Apostles Church, her church continued to grow. A strange thing happened to her on the 17th of November 1995, which was a Thursday night. She narrates a dream she had,

“I was performing different types of rituals and many sick people were getting well. I was using a dove’s blood, lamb’s blood, colored candles turned upside down and many other ritualistic articles. There were some I had never done or performed before and some I had never used, but among all this, I did not use the bible. Incidentally when the people got well or healed, they left but did not live long and then die. Suddenly, I saw that the clouds came down and I was taken away by the clouds into another place like a very beautiful temple. I saw very few people but they were very happy and sang in loud voices, they were holding hymn books from which they sang and bibles in their hands but I had no bible so I was sitted aside and no one spoke to me. The words in some of their songs sounded like they were singing against me. Just then, a door opened, a man nicely dressed came out with a book in his hand, he opened it and asked me some questions from the book but I could not even answer a question or remember any of the questions. He called me by my name and said ‘go and use this book’. He handed his bible to me. I took it and the clouds carried me back. I found myself on my bed.³

The dream compelled her to begin thinking about defecting from the Twelve Apostles but it was not easy when she mentioned it to her church elders. The elders were not happy and, therefore, left Mary’s Garden. Most of the members also left. Prophetess Mary Quist, nevertheless, defected from the Twelve Apostles church and named her church the Wonderful Christ Healing Church in 1998. According to Prophetess Mary Quist, from the year 1995, when she had the revelation and decided to defect from the Twelve Apostles Church all her church elders left. She was left with only seven (7) members. According to her although it first bothered her she has now regain all her confidence.

She wrote a letter to Bishop Michael George II, the head prophet of the Twelve Apostles headquarters at Kormantse, about her revelation and desire to break away from

³ Prophetess Mary Quist Founder/leader of Wonderful Christ Healing Ministry, Accra

the church. She wanted to keep their doctrines and the name T.A.C but Bishop George II refused, saying the name went with its doctrines.

The Name of the Church

Prophetess Mary Quist, whose gifts are healing and prophecy, began praying about the name to be given to the church she planned to establish. She claims that it was revealed to her that Christ was the master healer and that he healed without drugs. He healed wonderfully and so she chose the name Wonderful Christ Healing Ministry and told her elders who accepted it wholeheartedly. This happened in 1997. Name of the Church

Mary Quist claims that the name of the church was revealed to her by angel Gabriel who told her to call the church St. Anthony Twelve Apostles Church, Garden No.2. The number was added to indicate that her Garden was the second one in Madina.⁴

In 1998 she officially changed the name to The Wonderful Christ Healing Ministry. She had Mr. Victor Mintah and Hannah Gyenfi as elders and seven old members also remained. She inaugurated the new ministry on the 27th March 1998. As a result, she broke the cross that was standing in the middle of the Garden and stopped wearing red dresses on Fridays. She also stopped using David bura Nsu (David's pool of Holy Water). As time went on, she stopped teaching the doctrines and practices of the Twelve Apostles Church. Mr. Victor Mintah, Mrs. Hannah Gyenfi and Lt. Kwame Adaakwa Amponsah, a soldier as her elders helped her to re-organize the ministry again both financially and physically.

The First Branch of the Church

Mrs. Hannah Gyenfi, an elder of the church, moved from her house in Adenta to live with her brother at Amasaman, a town north of Accra, due to a marital problem she had with her husband. She started morning devotion in her house at Amasaman. Later on, the people in the neighboring houses joined, so she organized evening bible studies with

⁴ At that time every Twelve Apostles Church was allowed to identify a Garden by prefixing it with a name. They were, however, warned not to exclude the name Twelve Apostles Church. Mary Quist maintained this name till she was excommunicated from the church.

them. Later on sixteen to twenty people joined her so it turned into a Garden in January 1998. As the number grew larger, Mr. Victor Mintah was sent there every Wednesday evening and Fridays to help Mrs. Hannah Gyenfi organize the fellowship. It became bigger so they sought permission to use a classroom in the Local Authority Primary school. Permission was granted, they, thus, began the first branch of Wonderful Christ Healing Ministry. Mr. Mintah was enrolled at the Good News Theological College and Seminary for an evening part-time training course to have enough biblical knowledge and be able to minister, lead the people and teach them the bible. Once every month, the whole congregation in Madina worshipped with the Amasaman branch and the Amasaman branch will also join the Madina branch to worship every first Sunday of the month.

Early Challenges/Problems

The Wonderful Christ Healing Ministry has always not wanted to discuss its challenges and problems such as the time it defected from the T.A.C because of the terrible experience, rejection, loss of members she went through. The church changed its ways of healing from performing rituals to the use of only herbs and sometimes, just prayers. This method brought a lot of changes, many sick people left and others stayed for a longtime that they had to leave unhealed and the few new members left just after a short time. Due to this, Mary Quist sometimes regret for obeying the voice she heard in the dream because at those times when she used rituals and sacrifices to heal while in the Twelve Apostle Church things were smooth; she had many members. In December 1999, the fence around the Garden was burnt down by the family of a Nigerian lady who had died during her healing process in the garden. It took neighbors sometime to put the fire off and this brought about a change; instead of the wooden fence, cement blocks were used.

Another problem she detected too was that, her own church was situated in a residential area where new Charismatic Churches have sprung up. This has made attendance to her church very poor. She has vowed to provide a solution to this teething problem.

The Spread of the Church

Since the reform of the church in 1995, the church has had three (3) Gardens, i.e. congregations, two in Amasaman and one in Madina. The one at Madina is the headquarters. The church has been at a stand still in its expansion and even as I write, the two branches in Amasaman are malfunctioning due to lack of good management and land disputes. The Garden at has a member population of about thirty members; seven men, ten children and twelve women were regular members whilst about seven are irregular. Amasaman is a town where people believe in African traditional worship and practices so the members wanted to worship at a church that is reputed to have rapid answers to their spiritual problems.

The reasons for the slow growth of the church are many. In my interview, one of the former members said the pastor there did not perform *sunsum nwoma* (spiritual work or practices) and he also does not heal because he does not have the gift of healing. He also does not know how to use herbs to heal – something that prophetess Mary Quist knows very well.

At the time the church was founded, people respected spiritual churches (i.e. African Instituted Churches) and believed that things that could not be done elsewhere were possible in the spiritual churches. People could not afford hospital bills; as such they turned to the spiritual churches for healing and those who rushed there were people who were ignorant about their health problems. They had no knowledge about the various diseases that afflicted them; instead they have a notion that these diseases were spiritual and, therefore, should be solved spiritually. Most people at that period believed in witches, so they thought most of their illnesses were caused by witchcraft. So when the church changed its form of healing, they thought it could not solve those problems and so they left. They had strong beliefs in the occultic practices of the former church and did not believe that God could use herbs to cure them.

Another reason for the slow growth of the church is the church's insistence on some practices that have become obsolete with the passage of time. Examples of such practices are the wearing of gowns when going to church, the removal of footwears when worshipping and the prohibition of women from wearing trousers even in the mission house.

The Trend of Growth

During the reforms, all the members left so at the beginning, growth was very slow, but when people realized that the healing was still going on, they began to come back. Healing has, thus, become a means of evangelism in the Church. When the people came for healing, some of them stay as members whilst others leave to their previous churches. This kind of evangelism has not worked very well for the church, some how between the year 1995 and 1999, people were beginning to be aware of what was taking place in Wonderful Christ Healing Ministry. However, some people still wanted the Twelve Apostles Church because they thought it gives rapid results to their needs than the Wonderful Christ Healing Ministry.

Trend of Evangelism

The church has only one way of evangelism and this is by healing. After healing, people give testimonies about what God has done and this will cause others to come to the church. The church has no evangelistic team. Open-air evangelistic campaigns are absent in the church's calendar. Most of the people who come do not stay as members just about half percent do whilst the others go back to their worship places.

The church has never thought of any evangelism team and has not also thought that its lack of evangelism could lead to slow growth. The church has been training the disciples to be good healers so as to be able to have a large congregation and it is done by helping the senior prophetess during the process and collecting of the herbal medicine that are to be used.

Vision of the Church

It is the dream or vision of the church to have Gardens outside Accra since the headquarters itself is not growing due to the awareness of healing in the hospitals and the free medication in the country and the number of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches that are springing up and doing similar ministries. In the area of worship, the old method of worshipping was considered archaic and showed lack of civilization.

Chapter Three

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The God Head

Members of the Christ Healing Ministry believe in only one God, the Creator of heaven and earth who is all-knowing, all-powerful and eternal. According to the church, God is the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Members make this confession in the church every Sunday before worship. It is also believed that any one who disobeys the senior prophetess through whom God speaks to His people in the church has disobeyed God.

Jesus Christ

The church believes Jesus Christ to be the only begotten Son of God the Father who was born of the Virgin Mary. He is believed to have died and risen on the third day and ascended into heaven seated on the right hand side of His Father. It is also believed that it is through Him that human beings shall have salvation and that Jesus is the only one who can and has been able to fight and defeated Satan.

Holy Spirit

The church believes the Holy Spirit to be the third person of the God Head and is invisible. The Holy Spirit is believed to be the representative of Jesus Christ on earth and a force that can come upon some one like the senior prophetess and enables her to do things that are not common or usual things like telling the future. They also believe the force of the Holy Spirit is not limited and it is a gift from God but not given to everyone or body in the church. The church believes strongly that the Holy Spirit can be invoked. The invocation is called '*sunsumfre*.' The Holy Spirit is sometimes invoked by clapping of hands and singing with joy. When possessed, one could dance, jump, run or weep, speak in tongues or any other language on earth. One can also see invisible things.

It also has a vision of moving to Northern Ghana to establish branches there not only to heal but also help spread the Word of God to the remotest part of Ghana and to bring healing to the secular society.

Angels and Saints

The church believes in angels and dead saints. It is believed that these can possess one as or in the form of a spirit and make one speak in tongues and other languages as the Holy Spirit does. Angels and saints are similarly invoked as the Holy Spirit. The church, however, believes there is a difference between the works of the angels and saints and that of the Holy Spirit. They believe that what the angels and saints cannot do, the Holy Spirit can do. Michael, the archangel, is believed to be a warrior. Gabriel is believed to be the messenger. Raphael is believed to be the mighty healer. Other angels are Angel Kru (Bofoo Kru) and Angel Mohammed (Bofoo Mohammed). Some of the saints the church believe in are Saint Anthony, a saint who is believed to seek the interest and welfare of children and Saint Sarah, a saint who is believed to reveal secrets. The church also has angels like bofookru (Angel Kru) and bofoo Mohammed (Angel Mohammed).

According to Mary Quist "We know that some of these angels and saints are not in the bible but I believe they exist because they possess me and speak through me and also do wonders through me. Therefore all the members too must believe in them and failure to believe in these angels and Saints is failure to believe in God and therefore such a person has no salvation." ¹

Salvation

The church believes that salvation depends on Jesus Christ through His death, resurrection and ascension and that it is for this purpose that He was sent down on earth and it is a grace from God. The church believes that one's own works merits salvation; thus, one's good works while on earth ensures one's salvation. The church also believes that once ones sins are forgiven, he has salvation and so salvation is seen as a complex blend of many things. They also believe that sin can be a hindrance to salvation.

Prayer and Fasting

Prayer and fasting are believed to be essential elements in the church and it shows or tells God the weakness of man. They also believe that prayers and fasting shows ones seriousness in approaching God. It is believed to be the only tool to fight the devil

because it calls God to act quickly. The church believes that the prayer of the prophets and prophetesses are more effective than that of the congregation and so after all prayers or fasting, the prophetess is called to sum it up and because of this some people have moved to stay in the Garden or mission house for prayers. The church also believes that one is impure before God in prayers if he or she does not abstain from sex during the period of prayer.

Bible

The church believes that both the Old and New Testament contain the authentic message of God and both are held in the same respect. The church believes the bible to be true and complete. The church also believes that apart from the bible, any message that comes from the Holy Spirit, angels and Saints when possessed by the senior prophetess is equal and true from the Lord our God.

Baptism

The church practices baptism by immersion, sprinkling and dedication of children. Only the senior prophetess does baptism and issues baptismal certificates. No teaching is done. Anyone who wishes to join the church and consents to church's beliefs and practices is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is done on Saturdays at the sea or any running water. During baptism, one is taken to the sea or stream on a Saturday with some members and the church elders of the church to bear witness of the baptism. The people gather around in a circle with the person to be baptized standing or kneeling in the middle, whilst they all pray committing the person into God's care. The person is taken further in the sea or stream making sure the water touches the prophetess' knees. She holds the person and prays for the person and before ending the prayer, she ends in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. At the mention of name of the Father, she dips the person in the water and she repeats the same procedure with the mention of the names of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Then the person is brought out of the water. The church believes in the oneness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit but claims that they have three names that is why the one being baptized is dipped thrice in the running water.

The Lords Supper

The Wonderful Christ Healing Ministry believes that Jesus Christ gave or had the Last supper with his disciples in the upper room; he had, therefore, commissioned all Christians to do it in remembrance of Him. In spite of this belief, the church has never practiced it. The reason that in the Twelve Apostles Church it is only the Bishop who is allowed to officiate it, so when Mary left the Twelve Apostles Church, she did not know how to do it and does not know who should partake and when it should be officiated.

Marriage-Divorce

The church believes in marrying monogamy. It believes in divorce also. One is allowed to remarry after his wife or her husband is dead or has died. The church also accepts divorce after a woman or man has attempted to kill his or her partner or caused adultery. But sometimes, the partner is pardoned for committing adultery.

Prophecy

God is believed to be a God of prophecy and that He speaks and works directly through His prophets. Prophecy⁵ is, as a result, is one of the active doctrines in the church and the head prophetess is the ultimate source of Gods revelation to the church. The church also believes in prophecy from Satan and the head prophetess only determines it. False prophecies are those that do not go hand in hand with the bible, those that do contradict God's word and those that do not come to pass.

Training of Disciples

The prophetess has the power from God to train and ordain younger prophets and prophetesses. With these functions in mind the head prophetess is seen as the mediator between God and the members and people sometimes come to contact God through her. Prophetess Mary Quist has, as a result, trained nine people, seven being women and two men. These disciples were all trained through the Elijah and Elisha method of discipleship. They went round with her on assignment as they studied. Currently all her

⁵ Prophecy is predictive in the church.

disciples have defected to different churches due to some problems neither her nor the disciples is ready to disclose.

Healing and Anointing

The cornerstone of the church is healing and it is by God's grace that one is healed. The church, as a result, believes in divine healing so the church believes that attending hospital is not necessary. When one is sick, he/she goes to see the prophetess and she will give him/her herbs and if she finds out that it does not work, she will realize that it is spiritual and has to consult God for divine healing. Sometimes candles are used to pray for a sick person depending on the person's situation. Healing has to do with much praying and fasting by both the sick person and the prophetess. It is also believed that some sickness are caused by witches and wizards and therefore God being the almighty has power over them and could rescue the person so that the person is healed or cured.

Many non-biblical and extra-biblical practices are used to heal in the church. The church relies on other means aside from the gift from God to heal. For instance, water from the traditional healers is used sometimes to heal barren women and the mentally retarded patients. Sick persons are at times taken to the cemetery at midnight for spiritual cleansing (bath). Rituals from the book entitled *The Sixth and the Seventh Book of Moses* are used at times. Rolling on the ground as a prayer posture, which is practiced when asking for forgiveness of sins. It is believed that this was a popular way of praying in the Old Testament times.

Saying prayers at the beach at midnight is also done at times. Mary Quist, at times, uses a talisman she has made herself. Prepared oils and soaps are sold to the church members from time to time. These oils and soaps are made from the dried skin of a chameleon, some herbs and some perfume from India. It is believed that, they produce quicker healing.

Rituals

The church believes in rituals as the fastest way of solving problems. The church, therefore, performs rituals and has a special ritual room. It is a small room where

everything is white and everyone who enters should be dressed in white clothes without any footwear and uncovered hair (women). One enters under instruction or directed by the angels or the senior prophetess Mary Quist, who performs the rituals. Candles, doves, cords, Bibles and many other items are used as directed by the angels or when the Prophetess thinks it necessary.

Worship

The church's formal worship takes place on Sundays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In addition, individuals may worship at anytime convenient to them with a disciple or the prophetess who is around for supervision and directions. The church worships in any uncompleted building. On Sundays, worship begins at 10:30 a.m. and ends at 12:30 p.m; on Wednesdays and Fridays worship starts from 7:30 p.m. and ends 8:30 p.m. Sunday is the day on which the word is preached in detail, in other words, Sunday has been set aside mainly for the sharing of the gospel. It is the pastor who normally conducts the worship.

After the sermon, the angels are invoked, by singing *ebihindwon* - an Akan or Fanti lyrical style of singing. Most of the songs are composed from stories from the Old Testament. They are sung with handclapping and drumming. Though there is a time set aside for the close of worship, the service does not close until the angels have left but sometimes, the angels come without been invoked during worship days. They come to heal, give directions or offer prayer request to people by telling them what to do.

Wednesdays worship usually focuses on the sick. The church prays to God to heal the sick. A short sermon is preached. No Angels are invoked on this day but sometimes they come by their own to heal the sick.

Fridays worship is very important in the Church so I would devote much time on that. and its main activities are officiated by the Prophetess Mary Quist. Friday worship is when the sick living in the mission home and even those outside are brought in for healing. Some people also come for prayers, others to consult the angels for directions. All church members are expected to attend this worship and take it very serious. The

pastor preaches a short sermon. During these times, covering of the head's with a scarf is strictly enforced.

The angels are invoked before or after worship or even during the worship. The angels cast away bad (evil) spirits in people by commanding them to leave in strange languages, making them carry a bible on their heads whilst the worship goes on or make them carry a white bowl of water while standing in the middle of the worship centre. A disciple stands behind the possessed persons and sing, clap for whatever spirit that possesses him to descend for questioning.

After the particular spirit has descended the prophetess Mary Quist questions the spirit. Some of the questions are:

- ‡ Who are you?
- ‡ Where do you come from?
- ‡ Why are you living in this person?
- ‡ What do you need from this person and when do you intend to leave?

These questions are asked depending on the type of spirit it is. Most of these spirits answer by saying they are married to them, some also say they need something from them. The spirit is then given what it asked for but it does not take it physically, it directs the prophetess Mary Quist the prophetess where to put the things at and at a particular time of the day. This person is then washed with Holy Water and Florida water and other perfumes like Dandula and Sasarabia, which are all perfumes to drive away the spirit.

On Fridays, predictive prophecies are given to people and depending on the message, prophetess Mary Quist has to perform some rituals because every prophecy comes with a direction to accomplish it. Most rituals are performed on this day. Friday worship has no particular time of closing because others even wait till herbal medicines are prescribed by angels.

Attire on Fridays and its Significance

On every Friday, all people are expected to wear red outfit, no matter the style. They are also expected to have their hair covered. The red outfit is put on till Saturday morning. The altar clothes and every cloth in the mission house or garden are changed to red till Saturday morning. It does not matter which church one belongs to, once one

decides to come worship with Wonderful Healing Church on a Friday, one is expected, in addition, fast, signifying the suffering of Christ's death on the cross; on that faithful Friday when He was crucified. The church goes on to explain that Christ did that for mankind to be saved. As a result, during that period when one is in red attire and fasting, Christ sees how serious that person is and abides or remembers him or her as He promised. That person is supposed to be saved from all his or her problems.

CONCLUSION

The Wonderful Christ Healing Ministry has, no doubt, helped many people in diverse ways. The slow growth of the church, however, has become a great concern for Prophetess Mary Quist and her elders. For the church to grow rapidly, some of the people who were once members of the church but want to remain anonymous are of the view that the following proposals can accelerate growth:

- 1 Having bible teaching service as one of the ministries in the church.
- 2 The other pastors to attend a Bible College or Ministerial training that they are able to teach and interpret the bible better.
- 3 The youth, being the bedrock of every church, should be encouraged to attend bible schools so that through them discipline will be installed in the church. This training will provide a good leadership for the youth to take over after the current church leaders and also help them to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.
- 4 A strong evangelism team who will go out to proclaim the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ needs to be appointed.
- 5 The administration of the church needs to be more democratic instead of doing the wishes of only the leader, angels and saints. Attention should be given more to the bible instead of angels and saints.
- 6 For the church to grow, it should be based on the knowledge of the bible and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.