Abstract

This study is intended to gain insight into the Ghanaian Pentecostals’ understanding of the victory in Christ over human suffering and evil. It examines Ghanaian Pentecostal Christology, with reference to Scripture and traditional Akan religion and culture, on the problem of evil and suffering and the enjoyment of the good life. The occurrence of evil and suffering is problematic for human existence. Among Ghanaian Pentecostals, there is a consistent search to understand and cope with the reality of evil and suffering. This effort revealed through their sermons, songs and practices, and it is these that constitute the major sources for this study. To achieve my goal, this study employed the empirical, comparative, phenomenological, evaluative and systematic methods of doing participatory qualitative research.

Against the backdrop that there is ample evidence of Ghanaian Pentecostals’ need for answers to the baffling presence of evil and suffering, the question of the person, nature and work of Jesus Christ becomes critical. Currently, the Church of Pentecost (COP), our case study, presents us with two church paradigms whose divergent positions on the topic constitute the fulcrum of this study. In the COP we have the prayer centres led by lay leaders whom I designate grassroots prophets in this work. These grassroots prophets, representative of COP’s common believers, like their counterparts in the New Prophetic Churches (NPCs), see evil and suffering as supernatural in origin and propose rigorous ritualistic methods to deal with them. The leadership of COP (Ghanaian Pentecostal churches), however, does not consider this approach adequate for dealing with the matter. The COP leadership maintains that to realise the full enjoyment of the good life from the good God a Christian discipleship is needed that responds to all aspects of Ghanaian life: spiritual, psychological, social, economic, and political. This means that Christ’s disciples appreciate the religious, socio-economic and political dynamism of evil and suffering and conscientiously make attempts to make the world a good place for human existence.