

Site Visit Paper

CD 701 Worship Arts and Disciplines

Professor Amy Davis Abdullah

The Ancient Canterbury Cathedral of England and the Modern Charismatic

Pentecostal Perez Dome in Ghana, Africa

Palm Sunday Service Compared and Contrasted

By David A. Ostrander

The Canterbury Cathedral was founded by St. Augustine in 597 AD. Canterbury Cathedral is referred to as “England’s first cathedral and as “England in Stone”. “It is the mother church of the worldwide Anglican Communion, seat of the Archbishop of Canterbury, UNESCO World Heritage Site, and resting place of the royalty and saints”. This church has really stood the test of time and has had many historic events take place within its walls as well as many building projects in its 1400-year history. The famous Bishop Thomas Becket was murdered there by order of King Henry the II, on Dec 29, 1170. Archbishop of Canterbury Stephen of Langton worked on the negotiations for the Magna Carta sealed by King Jon in 1215.

In World War II on June 1, 1942, the church was bombed by the Luftwaffe but survived because volunteers put the fires out on the roof of the historic church. The church was built in 597 but in 1070 – 1077, it was rebuilt by Archbishop Lanfranc. Canterbury Cathedral stands as an excellent example of Gothic architecture.

www.canterbury.cathedral.org Our Story Canterbury Cathedral

The Anglican Church got its start when King Henry the Eighth wanted to divorce his wife because she could not bear him a son which was important in those days because a King needed an heir to continue his throne after his death. The Pope at the time refused his annulment so

theologian Thomas Cranmer, who became the first protestant Bishop of Canterbury in 1533 granted his annulment. The Anglicans departed from the Roman Catholic Church but kept the use of vestments and formal processions.

The Anglican's view on communion is important for this paper because they celebrate communion weekly at Palm Sunday service, the subject of this paper. According to the Rev. Barton Gingerich an Anglican priest at St. Jude's Anglican Church in Richmond, VA, "As for the doctrine of eucharistic presence, Anglicans believe in a real spiritual presence in which God's people are caught up into the heavens by the Holy Spirit to feed on the body and blood of Christ by faith. This view falls more in line with Reformed beliefs about the Eucharist rather than Lutheran sacramental presence. It certainly conflicts with Roman Catholic transubstantiation as well as "Memorialis" views in which the Lord's supper is a purely symbolic commemoration of Jesus on His sacrifice on the cross". The Anglicans have also had a strong missionary movement and have taken Christianity to Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Americas, especially during colonialization which has been frowned upon.

Christianity.com The Anglican Church

According to their website, Perez Chapel International is independent, Pentecostal, and charismatic. The church was started by Charles Agyinasare on March 29th, 1987, in Tamale in northern Ghana, as Word Miracle Church International. The Perez Chapel seats 20,000 people. The church has many smaller churches in Accra and around the world and is located in Dzorwulu, Accra, Ghana. They seek the well-being of people. Their website welcomes you by saying "Precious one, we are a community of Bible-believing Christians dedicated to your Spiritual, Physical, Economic, and Emotional well-being". And they are "a charismatic and

Pentecostal church that believes in the totality of the Bible and seeks to reach the world through the preaching of the gospel, accompanied by the power of God”.

www.perezchapel.org About US-Perez Chapel International

Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists, and other missionaries and denominations brought Christianity to Africa, but Africans added their own character and ways of adapting Christianity to their culture. Indeed, many who tried to convert Africans to Christianity failed because Africans were made to feel they had to leave their culture behind and conform to the white man’s culture which was foreign to them. Pentecostalism with its emphasis on the Holy Spirit and the spiritual realm is very popular in Africa because Africans see the world through a spiritual lens. The force of God fighting the force of evil. Emphasis on material prosperity is also important. Many Africans are very successful in life but there are many who are poor and needy who look to Jesus and the gospel for a better way of life for themselves and their families.

Lausanne.org Lausanne Global Analysis, January 2021: Volume 10|issued Pentecostalism in African Christianity

As you walk into the Anglican Church in Canterbury, the first thing that you notice is the beautiful structure of the church. Indeed, it is one of the oldest cathedrals in England and is the seat of the lead bishop of the church of England. The ceilings are high and vaulted with giant ornate columns lining each side of the sanctuary. The Perez Dome in Accra has a different feel. Indeed the Dome of the church is even higher than the Canterbury Cathedral and the church seats about 20,000, but missing is the ornate structure. No giant columns and no vaulted ceiling. But

in a very practical way, the church accommodates many more people. The chairs can also be removed for different events. The chairs at the Perez Dome are padded.

The chairs at the Canterbury Cathedral are hard in contrast to the chairs at St. Augustine that the Archbishop of Canterbury sits on. His chair is made of Petworth marble and was made to replace the original chair that was destroyed in a fire in 1174. The seat would be hard but has a cushion. The two services start out very differently. The Perez Dome Chapel opens with praise and worship. The music has a rhythmic beat that the people dance to! And you do see women and children dancing at the altar. The altar is open, and women and men dance before the altar. A young girl leaves her prayer request on the altar and prays. The beginning of the service has many English choruses. Many are also sung in the Twi language. An English speaker can follow along because many of the choruses will be sung in both English and their native language.

Meyi Nyame Aye

I will Praise the Lord

I will Thank Him

I will praise the Lord Hallelujah!

Ten women singers line the platform in red robes with white pieces. A woman steps up the pulpit and begins to lead in more worship choruses.

Oh Jesus, Oh Jesus

Our presence is Heaven to me

Oh Glorious God, We praise Your Name

We lay our crowns and worship You

And a man steps to the pulpit. He is dressed in a suit and tie. He reads the scripture, 2 Cor, 7:18,

“We all with open faces are being changed from glory to glory”. He encourages people. “You

are not where you began. You may not be where you want to be, but you are not where you began”. He speaks in English but it’s translated into the native language. He takes the offering and spends time telling people how they can give online.

Most people have their cell phones on them and can give online with the use of their phone in the service. After the offering, the keyboardist does an instrumental followed by a male lead singer and a choir of about 30 male and female singers. They sing:

‘By His stripes, I have been healed
Life everlasting, He has shed His blood for me.
He has paid all my debt!
He has forgiven all my sins!
I surrender all, All to You my blessed Savior I surrender all.

The congregation is dressed in their traditional African clothes. They are very colorful. No one comes to church dressed in work clothes. They put on their Sunday best. They stand and sing with worship and some sit. There are men and women and children in the congregation. The opening service of Canterbury Cathedral is very different. The service opens when about half the congregation is present but soon the chapel is full. Most of the people are older but there are also children and younger people. A woman standing on an elevated platform reads from the Old and New Testaments. She announces that the Bishop of Canterbury will soon arrive. Soon the Bishop arrives with his procession. One person waves incense that is connected to a chain. Most of the people with him are men. They walk slowly past the people on either side to be seated on the altar. All the congregants are given palms that are shaped in the sign of the cross. A choir in white robes sings “Sing Hosana, Sing Hosana, Sing Hosana to the King of Kings!

The choir is extremely skilled. There are two sections. They stand on a raised platform behind the bishop. The choir is made up of adults and boys. Most of the choir is white but one of the children is black. A conductor stands in front of them. The traditional Palm Sunday scripture from Matthew is read as a donkey leads the bishop and his ministers to their seats behind the altar. They have red robes with white inner vestments. The choir sings the entire passion narrative from Matthew in a dramatic form! The singing was amazing. After the dramatic reenactment by the choir in song, the bishop reads a list of laments that are paused by Lord Have Mercy. Although there is no sermon in this service, the sermon was sung by the choir and preached in the various scripture readings and laments. The service is concluded by communion and a benediction.

Benediction

“May the Father who so loved the world that He gave His only Son bring you by faith to His eternal life”. The congregation responds. “Amen”. May Christ who accepted the cup of sacrifice in obedience to the Father’s will keep you steadfast as you walk with Him the way of His Cross”. “Amen”.

“May the spirit strengthen us to suffer with Christ that we may share His glory set your minds life in peace”. “Amen”.

And the blessing of God Almighty the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always”. “Amen”.

Go in the peace of Christ”. Congregation “Thanks be to God”.

Archbishop Charles Agyinasare, the pastor of Perez Dome International steps to the pulpit and asks the people to raise their bibles and say that they are what the word of God says they are. His message is from Luke 19:31- 40 and He reads the text. His message is in 6 points. Jesus was willing to die for us. He went toward Jerusalem knowing He would sacrifice His life for us so we should be willing to do the same. He uses typology and says that the donkey Jesus said to lose was neglected like many God wants us to reach. He wants the people brought to Him. He says there will be opposition to the gospel as when the disciples tried to loose the donkey but the owners tried to stop them. He says the gospel will cost us something as when the people put their clothes on the donkey for Jesus to sit on and put their clothes and palm branches on the road. Lastly, he says we must glorify God because if we don't the rocks will cry out. An altar call closed out the service followed by singing.

Both services were scriptural in their own ways. Theologically, both were very sound. They both centered around the gospel. By examining their Christian traditions, we gain a better understanding of our own.