For over thirty-five years the independent Pentecostalist movement in Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) has been profoundly influenced by the work of two highly dedicated and forceful men, Peter Anim and James McKeown. For a short period in the late 1930's these men worked together in an attempt to establish the British-based Apostolic Church in the southern part of Ghana, but parted company after a dispute over the question of faith healing and the use of medicine. In the years following this break, both Anim and McKeown went on to develop their own separate organisations despite many obstacles and difficulties. While the two churches these men created—the Christ Apostolic Church and the Church of Pentecost—are independent African bodies, they are at present represented on the Ghana Evangelical Fellowship, together with such overseas churches as the Apostolic Church and the Assemblies of God. In this article we examine the careers of Anim and McKeown, their meeting and the dispute which divided them, and their independent church-building activities from 1939 onward.

Peter Anim

Peter Anim was born in Boso, a village in the Volta Region of Ghana, on 4 February 1890. He attended the Basel Mission school in his home village and became a member of the mission church. In 1917 he began reading copies of *The Sword of the Spirit*, a magazine produced by Faith Tabernacle of Philadelphia in the United States. 1)
This publication, which contained the views and teachings of the sect’s founder and leader, Pastor A. Clark, made a deep impression on him, stressing as it did the total effectiveness of prayer founded upon unswerving faith and constant vigilance against the contaminating effects of contact with the sinful world. The Faith Tabernacle doctrine was something quite new to the young Anim and he reacted positively to it:

“Though I had intellectually believed the Bible before, I never had the truth presented in a more realistic way that posed faith as a voluntary trust instead of an intellectual attainment.”

However, it was not until 1920, the year in which his wife died, that he felt himself converted to Faith Tabernacle teachings. At this time he:

“made a confession of my past sins, repented and sought the plan of salvation which held the faith and the teachings of the Apostles and had for its motto: ‘Earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints.’ ”

In 1921 Anim experimented with faith healing in order to overcome an attack of guinea worm. He wrote to Pastor Clark for advice in this matter and the American replied with a reference to the promise of healing contained in 2 Chronicles 16:9. When he recovered his health, Anim left the Basel Mission fold and moved to the small town of Asamankese, which lies about fifty miles north-west of Accra. Here he formed a small assembly of Faith Tabernacle believers and began a revivalist type campaign throughout the locality. After one revival meeting in 1922 Anim and his followers were given a plot of land by the chief of Asamankese and it was upon this plot that they constructed their church building. After another such meeting in 1923 Anim claimed that:

“after the closing of the evening service, several Christians and heathens reported of having seen the Glory of God in the form of a Pillar of Fire on the top of our church building. Glory be to God!”


2) P. N. Anim, The History of How the Full Gospel Church was Founded in Ghana. (Graphic Press, Accra, no date). I.

3) Anim, ibid., I.

4) Anim, ibid., I.